

THE DECISIVE ROLE OF OPERATIONAL TIME AND THE INFORMATION  
ENVIRONMENT IN THE ISRAEL-HEZBOLLAH WAR OF 2006

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Joint Planning Studies

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## ABSTRACT

THE DECISIVE ROLE OF OPERATIONAL TIME AND THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT IN THE ISRAEL-HEZBOLLAH WAR OF 2006, by Nathaniel B. Davis, MAJ, United States Army, 159 pages.

Why did the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 result in strategic failure for Israel? To date, the explanations for Israel's strategic failure have centered on the relatively poor performance of the Israel Defense Force (IDF), specifically as it relates to the employment of Effects Based Operations (EBO) and Systemic Operational Design (SOD) methodologies, an overreliance on air power, and a general lack of readiness for sustained combined arms operations by the ground forces. However, these explanations, while certainly contributing factors and sources of operational friction, do not adequately explain the reasons for Israel's strategic failure. This study examines each of the existing explanations to determine whether they can, individually or in unison, account for Israel's strategic failure. The explanations are found to lack exclusivity in their explanatory capacity as they do not account for how the time available to achieve the IDF's objectives was unexpectedly curtailed. An alternative hypothesis is offered whereby Hezbollah was able to force the culmination of the IDF offensive before Israeli strategic objectives could be met by using the media to exploit Israeli tactics and resultant civilian casualties in the Information Environment (IE), leading to a collapse of regional political support and a premature ceasefire. The significance of this study lies in the introduction of the concept of operational time and a better understanding of the potentially decisive role of the information environment in modern warfare.

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## ACRONYMS

1GW	First Generation Modern War
2GW	Second Generation Modern War
3GW	Third Generation Modern War
4GW	Fourth Generation Modern War
ATGM	Anti-Tank Guided Missile
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BDA	Battel Damage Assessment
CAMERA	Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America
CC	Critical Capability
CNN	Cable News Network
COG	Center of Gravity
CR	Critical Requirement
CSI	Combat Studies Institute
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
CV	Critical Vulnerability
EBO	Effects Based Operations
HMMWV	High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicle
IAF	Israeli Air Force
IDF	Israel Defense Force
IE	Information Environment
LAF	Lebanese Armed Forces
LOC	Line of Communication
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam

NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
OBJ	Objective
OTRI	Operational Theory Research Institute
RAND	Research ANd Development Corporation
RPG	Rocket Propelled Grenade
SOD	Systemic Operational Design
UN	United Nations
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

It was a quiet Wednesday morning in northern Israel; a day like many before, and many after, but on this particular day, July 12, 2006, events were about to spiral out of control, and months of planning on both sides of the tense border between Israel and Lebanon were about to be put into motion. During the night a detachment of Hezbollah fighters had breached an electrically monitored border fence and laid in wait for the opportunity they knew would come.<sup>1</sup> The patrol leader in sector at the time investigated the reported breach without success, but recounted that “It was a very frightening night. I thought at least 20 Hezbollah people had passed through the fence.”<sup>2</sup> The next patrol, scheduled for 8:00 a.m. the next morning, was comprised of reservists on the last day of their operational rotation. The reservists had what is commonly referred to in the Israel Defense Force (IDF) as an “end-of-term feeling,”<sup>3</sup> a dangerous mix of complacency and anticipation of returning home which imbues these transitional periods with increased risk. The patrol, consisting of two High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) or “Humvees” and seven personnel, instead of the usual eight, was delayed 45 minutes in its departure, but was soon patrolling the border road that ran parallel to the Israel-Lebanon border.<sup>4</sup> This had been the routine for border operations for the IDF’s Northern Command since Israel’s unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon in May of 2000, following a tumultuous 18 year occupation. In general, the spirit of the “rules of the game” that had developed between the IDF and Hezbollah during the occupation of southern Lebanon, where the IDF sought to avoid civilian targets in Lebanon and in turn Hezbollah would target its actions against legitimate military targets within the occupied

territory<sup>5</sup> persisted in border operations in 2006. Although flare ups occurred, and the rules were not observed in every case, a measure of predictability began to characterize the border game of cat and mouse between the IDF and Hezbollah.

As the delayed reservist patrol rolled lazily along its route, it turned a corner into an area of “dead space” where it could not be observed or supported by any other IDF post or element,<sup>6</sup> at which point the ambush was initiated. The trail HMMWV was destroyed immediately as it was engaged by a well hidden support by fire position on the Lebanese side of the border.<sup>7</sup> This was particularly good placement of a support by fire position due to the ability of the border fence to act as an obstacle to prevent IDF forces from assaulting directly into the ambush. All three IDF soldiers were killed within moments.<sup>8</sup> Nearly simultaneously, the Hezbollah assault element, located on the Israeli side of the border, engaged and destroyed the lead HMMWV.<sup>9</sup> Two wounded IDF soldiers were able to escape the vehicle and conceal themselves in the nearby vegetation.<sup>10</sup> Two more wounded IDF soldiers, Sergeant Udi Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, were captured by the Hezbollah assault team and spirited across the border into Lebanon where Hezbollah vehicles were staged to move the captives north and put distance between Hezbollah’s prizes and the IDF response which was sure to follow.<sup>11</sup>

The ambush and the resultant abduction of two IDF soldiers was a relatively minor action in a decades long protracted conflict, but in the span of the next 34 days 119 IDF soldiers,<sup>12</sup> hundreds of Hezbollah fighters,<sup>13</sup> and over one thousand civilians, mostly Lebanese,<sup>14</sup> would lose their lives, and roughly 1.2 million people would be displaced.<sup>15</sup> The IDF would be tactically embarrassed to a point not seen since the early days of the 1973 October War, triggering a political crisis in Israel. Initially caught off-guard with

the scale and intensity of the Israeli response, Hezbollah would be wounded militarily, but would emerge having captured the imagination of many in the region for its sustained and effective resistance against the IDF. Hezbollah would also be successful in preventing Israel from accomplishing its strategic objectives, a strategic victory in itself in the context of the often one-sided Arab-Israeli conflict. The Lebanese Republic, arguably not even a primary combatant in this war, albeit still in a technical state of war with the State of Israel, would emerge from the 34 day contest as the biggest loser. Lebanon would suffer a disproportionate share of civilian dead, wounded, and displaced, as well as \$4 billion in damage to structures and infrastructure,<sup>16</sup> reversing fifteen years of post-conflict investment and reconstruction, for which significant national debt was incurred.<sup>17</sup>

### The Current Understanding of the Conflict is Incomplete

The Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 resulted in strategic failure for the State of Israel. To date, the explanations for Israel's strategic failure have centered on the relatively poor performance of the Israel Defense Force, specifically as it relates to the employment of Effects Based Operations (EBO) and Systemic Operational Design (SOD) methodologies, an overreliance on air power, and a general lack of readiness for sustained combined arms operations by the ground forces.<sup>18</sup> These explanations, while certainly contributing factors and sources of operational friction, do not adequately explain the reasons for Israel's strategic failure. In fact, they mirror institutional preferences formed by the organizational culture of the IDF and reflect internal debates within the IDF that predated the war. The organizational culture of the IDF is primarily focused on the tactical level of war, and therefore often ignores strategic risks and misses

strategic opportunities as they neither train, select, or encourage their military officers to think at the strategic level. Many within the IDF were skeptical of the new Chief of the General Staff, Rav Aluf (Lieutenant General) Dan Halutz, an Israeli Air Force officer, and a proponent of air power as well as EBO and SOD. The nascent implementation of EBO and SOD methodologies in the IDF required a new conceptual language and terminology, as well as a greater level of operational understanding on the part of officers unaccustomed to focusing outside of the tactical realm. Additionally, many in the IDF lamented years of military budget cuts and a reduction in combined arms training as the IDF was forced to adopt a constabulary role in the wake of the Second Intifada and continued tensions with Palestinian organizations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The relatively poor performance of the IDF during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 provided fodder for those wishing to advance their own agendas within the organization. In other words, the IDF learned the lessons that it wanted to learn, not necessarily the lessons that it needed to learn. The lessons that the IDF wanted to learn from the war were derivatives of arguments made before the war rather than lessons learned from a true examination of the war itself.

Alternatively, Hezbollah was able to force the culmination of the IDF offensive before Israeli strategic objectives could be met by exploiting the Information Environment (IE). At the outbreak of the war, following the abduction of two IDF soldiers by Hezbollah during a brazen raid inside Israel's borders, the Arab world reacted by remaining uncharacteristically silent. Saudi Arabia even went so far as to suggest that Hezbollah had provoked the crisis.<sup>19</sup> This response was unprecedented in the Arab world, and was certainly related to Hezbollah's status as a Shia organization and an instrument

of Iran, and Sunni Arab apprehensions with the seeming advance of Iranian power in 2006. Hezbollah responded, in part, by seeking to erode the tacit support in the region for Israeli operations. Hezbollah understood Israeli capabilities and tactics and recognized that if it fired rockets at Israeli cities, this would trigger a massive aerial and counterfire response from the IDF. Accordingly, Hezbollah often baited this reflexive IDF response by firing rockets from heavily populated civilian areas. Even when rockets were fired from relatively remote locations, populated areas were still used as staging areas and depots for the storage and transportation of munitions.<sup>20</sup> The counter-rocket effort ran simultaneous to a massive air campaign, designed to achieve the outcomes envisioned by the EBO and SOD methodologies, whose targets were often located in populated areas. The resultant civilian casualties could then be exploited by Hezbollah by directing media attention and their own propaganda efforts toward these instigated events. As a result, regional media outlets such as *al-Jazeera* and *al-Arabiya* ran repeated images and stories of civilian casualties ostensibly caused by the IDF. This 24/7 regional media attention on civilian casualties in Lebanon began to mobilize public opinion through the proverbial “Arab street” which responded with mass rallies in Cairo, Beirut, Damascus, and Baghdad, among others. As public pressure began to mount, Arab leaders were no longer able to sustain their tacit support for the Israeli operation, and political pressure, leveraged through the League of Arab States to the United Nations (UN), forced a ceasefire before Israel’s strategic objectives could be met. Thus, the explanation that Israel met with strategic failure due to an overreliance on air power, a lack of conventional readiness, or the adoption of EBO and SOD methodologies by the IDF has considerable validity but is, at best, incomplete. An equally critical component of Israel’s

strategic failure is the fact that the IDF's own tactics were exploited by Hezbollah in the IE and used against the Israelis to great effect.

Western militaries generally conceive of informational objectives as being in support of military objectives, which in turn accomplish political objectives. However, Hezbollah inverted this model. Hezbollah conducted military operations in support of informational objectives, which in turn were intended to accomplish their political objectives. Hence, Israel and Hezbollah were fighting two very different types of wars with Israel operating on a third generation warfare model based on firepower, maneuver, and decisive military victory, while Hezbollah was operating on a fourth generation warfare model based on avoiding decisive military engagement while directly targeting an opponent's strategic centers of gravity.<sup>21</sup> Hezbollah also demonstrated that true hybrid warfare is not simply the mixing of conventional and irregular formations, tactics, and military systems, but also the ability to expand the battlespace into nontraditional domains with strategic effect.

Ultimately, the ability of Israel to achieve its strategic objectives hinged on the IDF's ability to achieve its military objectives within the time available for the operation. The current explanations for Israel's strategic failure address the IDF's capabilities and performance toward these ends, at times juxtaposed against Hezbollah's hybrid warfare capabilities, essentially half the problem.

The alternative explanation offered here addresses the other half of the problem, the time dynamic. Hezbollah's exploitation of IDF tactics and civilian casualties in the information environment, and the subsequent collapse of regional public opinion and political support, shortened the time available for IDF military operations to have their

desired effect. Thus, the difference between strategic success or failure can be understood as a function of progress toward military objectives and time. The strategist must not only determine how military objectives can be achieved and designed for strategic effect, but also how the time available for operations can be protected, or better yet, extended. While the examination of operational methodologies, institutional priorities, and tactical performance is interesting and relevant to this particular case, the relationship between the information environment, political support, and the dynamic of operational time will likely prove a more enduring lesson for the future of modern warfare.

### Key Questions

In order to determine whether this occurred, or even if the argument is probable, plausible, or possible, one must begin with the base question: Why did the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 result in strategic failure for Israel? To answer this question the current explanations for Israel's strategic failure must be examined. This begins with an analysis of the effects of EBO and SOD methodologies on the outcome of the war, and whether these effects were sufficient to cause Israel's strategic failure. Israel's overreliance on air power will be probed, as well as its impact on strategic failure. One must also examine the effects of the relative lack of conventional warfighting focus, training, and resourcing in the IDF prior to the war on its outcome, and whether these effects were sufficient to cause Israel's strategic failure. Once this study has examined all of these posited explanations, one must consider their combined effect to determine whether they were sufficient to cause Israel's strategic failure when acting in concert.

Given that the preexistent explanations reflected preexistent debates within the IDF, the role of organizational culture and institutional preferences in shaping the official

lessons learned must also be considered. To accomplish this requires a basic understanding of the sources of the IDF's organizational culture, as well as how that culture manifests itself in practice. Interestingly, the official lessons learned by the United States military closely mirror those learned by the IDF; accordingly it is reasonable to ask why the analysis of both organizations parallel each other so closely.

Turning attention to the alternate hypothesis offered here, one must begin by asking why the majority of Arab states initially, if tacitly, supported Israel in this instance, given the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The reciprocal question of how and why Arab political support for Israeli operations evaporated must also be examined. If regional political support for Israeli operations did indeed collapse due to the popular reaction to civilian casualties as portrayed in the information environment, the next logical question is whether Hezbollah intentionally instigated IDF attacks for exploitation in the IE, and whether this can be proven, or whether this is probable, plausible, or possible. Even if Hezbollah did not instigate such attacks the question remains whether, how, and to what ends that organization exploited the attacks in the information environment once they occurred. Finally, one must determine whether the exploitation of IDF attacks and civilian casualties in the IE, and the subsequent loss of regional public opinion and political support, thereby shortening the operational time available to achieve its military objectives, was sufficient to cause Israel's strategic failure.

In order to determine the significance of the answers to the previous questions one must consider the lessons that have been drawn from the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. Finally, one must consider what lessons the IDF should have learned from the war, as

well as the potential implications of those lessons for future IDF operations and modern warfare in general.

### Strategic Objectives

The first step in this process is to gain an understanding of the strategic objectives of both Israel and Hezbollah, or what it is that each side hoped to accomplish by their actions. As previously mentioned, while the exact moment and form of the conflict was not preordained, both Israel and Hezbollah had been inching toward war for months.<sup>22</sup> Hezbollah devoted five months to planning the ambush and abduction,<sup>23</sup> an operation whose logic could be traced to past experience as Hezbollah had established a precedent of exchanging captured Israeli personnel, or their remains, for Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.<sup>24</sup> The immediacy, intensity, and disproportionate nature of the Israeli response are also indicative of a preplanned operation, at least in the first few days of the war. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert sought to redefine the cycle of abduction and blackmail by taking a hard line with terrorist organizations in the region, an issue which he viewed as a weakness of previous Israeli prime ministers.<sup>25</sup> He also sought to redefine the strategic situation *vis-à-vis* Hezbollah along the border with Lebanon, and meant to use the next provocation along the border to that end.<sup>26</sup> In the words of Augustus Richard Norton, a Boston University Professor of International Relations and Anthropology, and retired United States Army colonel, “Both sides were clearly itching for a fight.”<sup>27</sup>

The State of Israel’s strategic objectives during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 were to:

1. Destroy Hezbollah (largely understood within Israel to be the Islamic Republic of Iran's proxy force on Israel's border) before Iran could achieve nuclear power status.<sup>28</sup>
2. If destruction of Hezbollah as a military and political force proved impossible, damage Hezbollah's military capability to attack the State of Israel.<sup>29</sup>
3. Restore the perception that the State of Israel was willing to respond to provocation with overwhelming force, as well as the credibility of the IDF as a deterrent force.<sup>30</sup>
4. Compel the Lebanese Republic to assume its sovereign responsibility to control its territory,<sup>31</sup> deploy the Lebanese Armed Forces south of the Litani River,<sup>32</sup> and implement United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1559, to include the "disbanding and disarmament"<sup>33</sup> of Hezbollah.<sup>34</sup>
5. Secure the return of abducted IDF personnel without a disproportionate prisoner exchange with Hezbollah.<sup>35</sup>

Israel's goal of destroying Hezbollah as a viable political-military organization prior to Iran achieving a nuclear weapon was designed to prevent the mutually deterrent effect of a heavily armed Hezbollah capable of intense harassing rocket attacks on Israel and a nuclear armed Iran. In such a scenario Hezbollah could help deter Israeli attacks against Iran's nuclear capability by threatening massive retaliatory rocket strikes against Israeli population centers, while Iran could deter Israeli attacks against Hezbollah by threatening the use of nuclear weapons. Allowing such a scenario to develop would alter the balance of power in the region and limit Israel's future options for dealing with both Hezbollah and Iran. Assuming that the destruction of Hezbollah as a political-military

organization proved impossible due to the cost of such an endeavor in time, resources, and political will, damaging Hezbollah's military capability to attack Israel was viewed as a minimum requirement to protect the Israeli population from Hezbollah's harassing fires.

Following the decisive defeat of Arab forces by Israel in a series of conventional wars in 1948, 1967, and 1973, the IDF had established a clear and effective deterrent against conventional attacks upon the State of Israel. However, by 2006 the Israeli deterrent effect, which was based primarily on the perception of the IDF by its enemies, had deteriorated as Israel had fought two protracted Intifadas against Palestinian militants, and had conducted unilateral withdrawals from Lebanon in 2000, and Gaza in 2005, moves seen as a sign of weakness by many in the region. The withdrawal from Lebanon in particular enhanced Hezbollah's regional standing and emboldened it operationally. By dealing Hezbollah a decisive blow, Israel hoped to renew its deterrent effect in general, as well as dissuade future Hezbollah adventurism.

The Lebanese Republic has, since its inception and by design, been a weak state. With political power divided among Lebanon's myriad of sectarian groups through a confessional system based on outdated demographic data, and the vestiges of a fifteen year civil war still present in the form of political parties, militias, an intentionally weak military, and international interference, the Lebanese Republic is unable, and in some cases also unwilling, to assert its sovereign control over the whole of the country or meet the basic needs of its people in all areas.<sup>36</sup> This situation has left a political-military-social vacuum which Hezbollah has filled, especially in the *al-Dahiya* suburb of Beirut and southern Lebanon, which Hezbollah uses as a safehaven to stage attacks against

Israel. By compelling the Lebanese Republic to deploy the Lebanese Armed Forces south of the Litani River to meet its sovereign responsibility to control its territory, as well as implement UNSCR 1559, which called for external actors to cease interference in Lebanon, as well as the disbanding and disarmament of militias within Lebanon, Israel hoped to remove the persistent Hezbollah military threat on its border while forcing Lebanon to do much of the difficult work that such an outcome would entail. As with *Jaysh al-Mahdi* in Iraq, the only way to truly defeat entrenched political-military-social organizations on the Hezbollah model is to effectively expand state control to those areas from which the organization derives its political power and legitimacy.

By the time of the abduction of the two IDF soldiers on July 12, 2006, Israel and Hezbollah had an established history of lopsided prisoner exchanges.<sup>37</sup> This pattern was complicated by the June 25, 2006, cross-border raid by Hamas and affiliated militant groups in which Corporal Gilad Shalit was abducted and Hamas demanded the release of Palestinian prisoners in exchange for his safe return.<sup>38</sup> In fact, Israel had intercepted Hezbollah communications between the two abductions in which Hezbollah leaders were attempting to influence Hamas to remain resolute in negotiations over the return of Corporal Shalit,<sup>39</sup> a position that would reinforce and strengthen Hezbollah's negotiating position once the July 12, 2006, had been executed. In this context, Israel hoped to break the cycle of disproportionate prisoner exchanges, which encouraged further abduction operations by Israel's enemies, by using disproportionate force to find a way to repatriate the kidnapped IDF personnel be it through rescue or negotiation from a position of strength, as well as deter future abduction operations.

Hezbollah's strategic objectives during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 were to:

1. Deliver on Hezbollah's *wa'd al-sadiq*, or "faithful promise," by securing the release of Lebanese prisoners held by Israel, to include convicted terrorist Samir Kuntar,<sup>40</sup> convicted Hezbollah spy Nasim Nisr, and alleged terrorist Yahka Skaf<sup>41</sup> (whom Israel claims was killed during a terrorist attack in 1978).<sup>42</sup>
2. Demonstrate Hezbollah's offensive military capabilities.<sup>43</sup>
3. Decrease the willingness of Israelis to combat Hezbollah forces.<sup>44</sup>
4. Decrease the aura of invincibility of the IDF within the region.<sup>45</sup>
5. Influence public opinion and political pressure within Lebanon against growing calls for Hezbollah to disarm.<sup>46</sup>
6. Once the fighting escalated into war, survive as a political-military organization, and provide meaningful resistance to the IDF in order to raise the regional and domestic profile of Hezbollah.<sup>47</sup>

Decades of civil war in Lebanon, resistance against Israeli occupation, and agitation on behalf of the Palestinian cause had left many Hezbollah fighters and Lebanese imprisoned in Israeli jails. Accordingly Hassan Nasrallah, the Secretary-General of Hezbollah issued the "faithful promise" in which Hezbollah seeks the release of its people who have been detained in the fight against Israel.<sup>48</sup> Based on the previous success of abduction operations and subsequent prisoner exchanges to this end, particularly the January 2004, exchange of a kidnapped IDF reserve lieutenant colonel and the bodies of three abducted IDF soldiers for 423 Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners, for which Hezbollah was rewarded in subsequent municipal elections,<sup>49</sup> the logic of the

July 12, 2006, abduction operation becomes clear. Israel had set a precedent of allowing Hezbollah progress toward the fulfillment of the “faithful promise” in this way, and Hezbollah sought to further this agenda.

In the years since Israel’s unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, Hezbollah’s offensive military capabilities had grown with the help of Iran and Syria. By 2006, Hezbollah maintained a significant rocket force capable of sustained harassing fires on Israeli population centers, advanced anti-ship and anti-tank missiles, and an operational capability superior to that of most non-state actors. The outbreak of war afforded Hezbollah with the opportunity to showcase its newly acquired capabilities.

Just as Israel sought to deter attacks by Hezbollah, Hezbollah also sought to decrease Israel’s willingness to attack Hezbollah positions and violate Lebanese territory and airspace. Hezbollah hoped to achieve this deterrent effect by demonstrating the capability to sustain harassing rocket fire on Israeli population centers and by causing as many IDF casualties as possible during combat operations.<sup>50</sup> Both of these techniques were intended to indirectly target the will of the Israeli people to engage in a military contest with Hezbollah.

While Israel sought to maintain its image as the region’s dominant military power, Hezbollah sought to degrade this image and the deterrent effect that flowed from the regional perception of IDF capabilities. Hezbollah hoped to achieve this effect by preventing Israel from achieving its strategic objectives, maintaining harassing rocket fire on Israeli population centers, and inflicting casualties on the IDF during combat operations.<sup>51</sup> Given the previous military dominance of the Israelis in the region and the common perception of IDF capabilities, blunting IDF operations, maintaining harassing

fire in the face of IDF counterfire operations, and presenting the IDF with greater operational difficulties and battle losses than expected would be sufficient to these ends. In short, the IDF had become a victim of its own success and mythology built up around its past accomplishments.

By the time of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, Hezbollah had been facing increasing pressure to disarm, both internationally and domestically. The *raison d'être* for Hezbollah's military forces had ostensibly been to defend and advance the interests of the Shia community during the civil war, and then to resist the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Following Israel's unilateral withdrawal in 2000, these justifications began to lose their force of argument. In 2004, UNSCR 1559 had explicitly called for the disarmament and disbandment of all militias within Lebanon; Hezbollah was the clear target of this portion of the resolution.<sup>52</sup> Domestic political pressure was also building for Hezbollah to disarm and by 2006, Hezbollah's refusal had become a source of ridicule in Lebanese pop-culture.<sup>53</sup> However, in early 2006, as part of a deal to break a political impasse over an investigation into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic al-Hariri, Prime Minister Fouad Siniora agreed to refer to Hezbollah as a "national resistance group" rather than a "militia," rhetorically distancing Hezbollah from the disarmament and disbandment requirements of UNSCR 1559.<sup>54</sup> Hezbollah claimed that it could not disarm due to its integral role in both deterring and responding to the Israeli threat.<sup>55</sup> By engaging in combat operations against the IDF, Hezbollah hoped to maintain some measure of the *raison d'être* of its military forces and credibly influence public opinion within Lebanon against attempts to force its disarmament.

Given the previous poor performance of Arab armies against the IDF and the indelible mark that history has left on the collective psyche of the Arab world, the bar for what can be considered success for an Arab force confronting the IDF has been set relatively low. Once the fighting escalated to war, for Hezbollah to not only survive the IDF onslaught but provide meaningful resistance could be viewed as success. By achieving such success, Hezbollah could capture the imagination of the “Arab street” and raise its profile and legitimacy, both domestically and regionally.

### Scope and Limitations

This study does not pretend to be a definitive account of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. Instead, it seeks to examine the existing explanations for Israeli strategic failure during the war and offer a new complementary explanation for how events exploited in the information environment contributed to that failure. In so doing this study seeks to increase understanding of the nature of information operations, fourth generation warfare, and hybrid threats through the case of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006.

This study is limited by the lack of availability of primary source material pertaining to Hezbollah and its objectives, internal debates, and operations. The author has attempted, where possible, to derive the outlines of these items through the examination of speeches and interviews given by Hasan Nasrallah, the Secretary-General of Hezbollah, and the book *Hizbollah: The Story from Within* by Naim Qassem, the Deputy Secretary-General of Hezbollah. When this is not possible the study relies on a mixture of books by authors with extensive Lebanese contacts, as well as media reports from the region. Nevertheless, gaps exist in what can be definitively determined when it comes to Hezbollah. To compensate for this lack of concrete information, there are times

when this study suggests an explanation by asserting the strategic and operational logic of a particular action or position, while supporting that assertion with those facts that can be determined, resulting in a narrative that provides a plausible explanation for what occurred. In this regard, parts of this study are theoretical, but offer insight on how to think about the nature of conflict in the information environment, fourth generation warfare, and hybrid threats.

On the subject of terminology, this study will refer to the war as the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. The war has alternately been called the “Second Lebanon War” in Israel, the “July War” in Lebanon, or the “Israel-Lebanon War of 2006.” A conscious decision was made to stay away from the terms “Second Lebanon War” and “July War” as the adoption of either term could be construed as an alignment with or affinity toward the position and narrative of Israel, Lebanon, or Hezbollah. The label Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 was chosen over the “Israel-Lebanon War of 2006” as the war was more accurately a war between the State of Israel and Hezbollah, fought primarily on the territory of the Lebanese Republic. Despite the fact that the State of Israel and the Lebanese Republic remain in a technical state of war, this particular conflagration involved Israel and Hezbollah as the principal belligerents.

#### The Concept of Operational Time

During the course of this research, it became clear that a dynamic was at play that is not adequately described by current doctrine. This dynamic may be termed “operational time,” to describe the time available for the pursuit of military objectives before some factor will cause an operation, campaign, or war to reach a culminating point. Operational time is both fluid and limited, can be increased or decreased by

specific changing circumstances, and can be influenced by both internal and external forces. As a concept, the utility of operational time lies in a new way of thinking about the culmination element of operational design.<sup>56</sup> Joint doctrine conceives of culmination as a point in time.<sup>57</sup> Operational time allows the military professional to think about culmination throughout time in depth in order to devise holistic ways to expand the operational time of friendly forces, thereby delaying culmination for those forces, while curtailing the opponent's operational time, thereby accelerating culmination for enemy forces. This is particularly useful for visualizing the battlefield as all elements of the operational environment, as well as all dynamics of military-political-economy, are impacted by time. The concept of operational time is applicable to all levels of war: the tactical, operational, and strategic, as it can have an impact on battles, campaigns, or the entire war, respectively. However, the number of factors that may influence operational time rises with the level of war.

Military thinkers have long considered time as a resource in military planning; operational time is how this resource can be described in an operational sense. Traditionally, time has been regarded in a static manner, as an inflexible given to be input into the military calculation. In this way, time, like other resources such as fuel or troops available, has often been regarded as finite, and able to be measured, planned for, and expended in regular and predictable increments, namely, seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years. However, operational time acknowledges the fluidity of the time element; a variety of internal and external factors may influence the time available for a given operation, campaign, or war. Military professionals must be aware of this potential for internal actions or external influences to positively or negatively influence

operational time. Factors that may influence operational time include, but are not limited to, resources available to sustain military operations, financial and budgetary constraints, the nature and institutional particularities of the governments involved, domestic public support for military operations, the perception of military operations in the international community, and the success or failure of preceding military operations.

A shortage of vital resources or a resupply of those resources may contract or expand operational time, respectively. This dynamic can often be identified within politically and physically isolated states who at some stage of conflict may find themselves running critically short of some vital resource. The example of Nazi Germany during the Battle of the Bulge is particularly illustrative of this dynamic. German forces, starved of fuel as the result of Allied air interdiction of lines of communication (LOCs) and contracting German territorial control over resources, to include the oil fields and petrochemical facilities of Romania, were limited in the duration, range, and scale of their operations, unless Allied fuel stores could be located and seized, in which case culmination of the offensive could be avoided and operational time of the operation could have been extended.<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, the state of a nation's finances and budget can also affect operational time as it can be expanded by revenues, reserves, lines of credit, and foreign aid, or contracted by expenditures and the loss of credit. In war, public finances are the sinews of power through which a state translates its economic potential into war material and military forces, and must remain uninterrupted if a war effort is to be sustained. An example of finances extending a nation's operational time is the effort to finance the American Revolution where the Continental Congress cobbled together an erratic stream

of financing in the form of printing paper currency, ordering direct provision of goods to the Continental Army from the states, the selling of bonds to individual investors, and foreign aid.<sup>59</sup> Although American financing during the war was never stable, the just in time nature of new sources of finance allowed the war effort to be sustained, each infusion temporarily extending the operational time available to the Continental Army to win the war. Conversely, economic stagnation and increasing budgetary pressures greatly contributed to the conditions that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and ended a half-century of global superpower competition, at which point operational time ended for the pursuit of Soviet objectives as the Soviet Union itself ceased to exist.<sup>60</sup> This example also illustrates that when operational time ceases due to the failure of a state's finances or budget, the more direct cause of the cessation of operational time is likely to be state failure or governmental collapse brought on by said failures.

Changes in government or institutional particularities of government structures can also influence operational time. Changes in government that result in the formation of a new government that is less inclined to an ongoing military endeavor can result in the curtailment or cessation of operational time. For example, the revolutionary transition between the rule of Kaiser Wilhelm II to the Weimar Republic abruptly ended the First World War, causing operational time to cease for German forces despite retaining the physical means to continue the struggle.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, the change of government following the electoral success of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party over the ruling People's Party in the March 14, 2004, Spanish election, following the al-Qaeda inspired Madrid train bombings of March 11, 2004, resulted in a change of national policy and the withdrawal of Spanish forces from the Coalition in Iraq, thereby curtailing operational

time for those Spanish forces deployed as part of the Coalition.<sup>62</sup> Conversely, the change to the head of government that allowed Winston Churchill to succeed Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in the opening months of the Second World War arguably increased the operational time of the British war effort as it installed a leader who was politically distant from the failed policy of Appeasement and who had been a vocal opponent of Nazi Germany for years.<sup>63</sup> The institutional particularities of government structures, such as election cycles or term limits, can also influence operational time. In making the decision to conduct the “Surge” in Iraq from 2007-2008, President George W. Bush, who was barred from seeking another term in office due to Constitutional term limits, had a measure of political immunity from growing opposition to the war, thereby allowing him to expand the operational time for Coalition forces despite a marked decrease in domestic public support.<sup>64</sup> Conversely, as the aforementioned example of the 2004, Spanish election shows, election cycles can influence operational time, something that can be exploited by the enemy. In this case, parliamentary democracies are particularly susceptible as any vote of no confidence in the prime minister or ruling coalition could potentially spark early elections, or politicians may make decisions in regard to operational time to avoid such a potentiality.

Public support, which can be gained or lost, is another factor that can influence operational time. To gain or increase domestic public support for a given military action will likely have the effect of expanding operational time, while a decrease or loss of domestic public support will likely contract operational time. This dynamic can be seen in the effect of media portrayal of the “Highway of Death” during Operation Desert Storm. The “Highway of Death” was a stretch of highway between Kuwait City and the

Iraqi border which was interdicted by Coalition air assets to prevent the organized withdrawal of Iraqi forces.<sup>65</sup> While tactically an effective exploitation of an Iraqi withdrawal, the media coverage of the carnage along the highway, the ease and efficiency with which Coalition air assets could engage and destroy targets, and the relative helplessness of the retreating enemy on the ground helped to cause a subtle shift in domestic public opinion that in turn prompted political leaders to reduce the planned duration of the conflict to a “100 Hour War,” thereby shortening the operational time available for Coalition forces to achieve their military objectives, such as the destruction of the Republican Guard.<sup>66</sup> The strategic impact of this dynamic can also be seen in the effect of the Tet Offensive on the war in Vietnam. Despite the tactical failure of the communist offensive, the collapse of an already frayed domestic public support for the war following the Tet Offensive decisively curtailed the operational time available for United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) to achieve sustainable results.<sup>67</sup> Conversely, when domestic public support can be decisively achieved, such as when a nation faces an existential threat, like that faced by the United Kingdom during the Second World War, operational time may be expanded to its limit.

Like public support, international support (or pressure), which can also be gained or lost, is another factor that can influence operational time. To gain or increase international support (or avoid international pressure) for a given military action will likely have the effect of expanding operational time, while a decrease or loss of international support (or the application of international pressure) will likely contract operational time. This dynamic of international support extending operational time can be seen in the example of United States support to the United Kingdom during the Second

World War. The initial provision of loans and war material through the Lend-Lease program allowed the United Kingdom to continue the war effort against the Third Reich, thereby extending their operational time for the British.<sup>68</sup> However, the intended effect of international support does not always materialize as is evidenced by the failure of British and French support for Poland to prevent its defeat or extend its operational time in any meaningful way in 1939.<sup>69</sup> Conversely, international pressure can curtail operational time as evidenced by the Suez Crisis of 1956. In this case President Dwight D. Eisenhower used threats to rapidly devalue the pound sterling and stop oil exports to the United Kingdom, thereby pressuring Prime Minister Anthony Eden to cease military operations and withdraw from Suez, effectively curtailing operational time for the coalition action undertaken by the United Kingdom, France, and Israel.<sup>70</sup> However, international condemnation without sufficient international pressure is unlikely to curtail operational time. At the time of this writing, this dynamic can be witnessed in the ability of Russian forces to occupy Crimea and potentially expand military operations into eastern Ukraine despite ineffectual protests from the West.<sup>71</sup>

Finally, operational time can also be extended or curtailed as the result of successful or unsuccessful military action, whether the critical result of that action is tangible or intangible. For example, General George Washington's bold winter victories at Trenton and Princeton during the American Revolution had the effect of extending operational time for the fledgling Continental Army by both providing a key moral victory at a critical juncture in the war, and substantially changing the material position of the British.<sup>72</sup> Conversely, unsuccessful military action can curtail or end operational time as evidenced by the Yorktown Campaign of the American Revolution. In this case,

General Lord Cornwallis sought to march to the coast in order to save his force and prepare for future operations, however the defeat of the British fleet by the French fleet at the Second Battle of the Virginia Capes, the successful isolation of British forces at Yorktown, the French and American seizure of redoubts nine and ten, and Cornwallis' subsequent surrender caused operational time to cease in a strategic sense for the British.<sup>73</sup>

Inherent in the concept of operational time at the strategic level is Prussian military philosopher Carl von Clausewitz's theory of the trinity between the government, the military, and the people, that should be kept in equilibrium if a war effort is to be sustained.<sup>74</sup> Operational time acknowledges the fluidity of the trinity and its bonds, expanding as the trinity becomes more stable, contracting as the trinity becomes less stable, and ceasing as the trinity collapses. Accordingly, at the strategic level, those factors that affect operational time affect it precisely because they affect some aspect of the trinity, thereby adding or subtracting stability to a given actor's war effort.

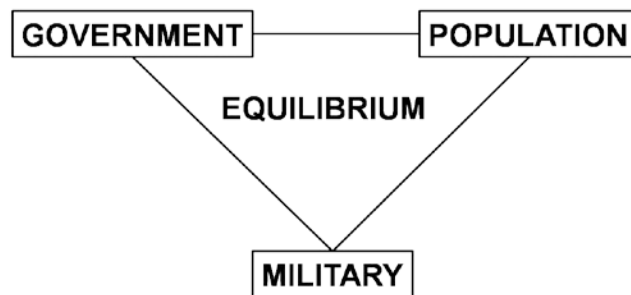


Figure 1. The Clausewitzian Trinity

*Source:* Created by author. Based on ideas contained in Carl Philipp Gottlieb von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), Book I, Chapter 1, 89. Original published in German in 1832 as *Vom Kriege*.

Military professionals must be aware that their actions have the potential to influence operational time in a positive or negative manner, and may subsequently determine whether or not the military force in question can accomplish its military objectives, and potentially, in more strategic cases, the outcome of the war. Military professionals must also be aware of external influences that could either increase or decrease operational time, and be prepared to either accelerate the achievement of their military objectives, or alter the military objectives to be obtained. An astute enemy will seek to design operations in such a way as to decrease the operational time of friendly forces. Conversely, friendly forces must attempt to influence the operational time available to the enemy.

This chapter has argued that the current explanations for Israel's strategic failure during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 are incomplete. The use of EBO and SOD methodologies within the IDF, and an overreliance on air power, combined with the relative lack of readiness for sustained combined arms operations were definite sources of operational friction but were insufficient to cause Israeli strategic failure as they only address the IDF's capabilities and performance. Alternatively, Hezbollah was able to force the culmination of the IDF offensive before Israel's strategic objectives could be met by exploiting IDF actions in the information environment, causing the collapse of regional support, and effectively decreasing the time available for IDF operations to meet Israeli strategic objectives. Key questions to be addressed by this study were identified and their logical sequence established. This chapter also identified the strategic objectives of both Israel and Hezbollah, as well as explained their basic logic. Finally, this chapter introduced the conceptual term "operational time" to describe the time available for the

pursuit of military objectives before some factor will cause an operation, campaign, or war to reach a culminating point. The next chapter is a literature review of a number of pertinent works that address the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, organizational culture as it relates to military systems, and the nature of fourth generation war. The literature review will identify the works, outline the arguments presented within, and identify the biases of the source where relevant.

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<sup>1</sup>Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff, *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah, and the War in Lebanon* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>5</sup>Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 83-4.

<sup>6</sup>Amos Harel, "Hezbollah kills 8 soldiers, kidnaps two in offensive on northern border," *Haaretz*, July 13, 2006, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/hezbollah-kills-8-soldiers-kidnaps-two-in-offensive-on-northern-border-1.192965> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>7</sup>Harel and Issacharoff, 3.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 3-4.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 3-4.

<sup>12</sup>Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Israel-Hizbullah conflict: Victims of rocket attacks and IDF casualties*, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/terrorism/hizbullah/pages/israel-hizbullah%20conflict-%20victims%20of%20rocket%20attacks%20and%20idf%20casualties%20july-aug%202006.aspx> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>13</sup>Jerusalem Post, “Hizbullah: 250 guerrillas killed in war,” *The Jerusalem Post*, December 15, 2006, <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Hizbullah-250-guerrillas-killed-in-war> (accessed May 7, 2014). This number is disputed with Hezbollah claiming 250 Hezbollah fighters killed, while Israel claimed that the number was 600.

<sup>14</sup>United Nations General Assembly: Human Rights Council, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Lebanon pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-2/1\** (United Nations Headquarters, New York, NY: United Nations General Assembly: Human Rights Council), 26, <http://www.cggl.org/publicdocs/20061205HRC.pdf> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>BBC News, “Middle East: Facts and figures: A ceasefire in the latest Middle East conflict in Lebanon and northern Israel came into force on 14 August. During five weeks of fighting hundreds of people died and thousands were made homeless,” *British Broadcasting Corporation News*, August 31, 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/5257128.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5257128.stm) (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>17</sup>Norton, 122, 142.

<sup>18</sup>Matt M. Matthews, *We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War*, The Long War Series: Occasional Paper No. 26 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2008), 1-2.

<sup>19</sup>Hassan M. Fattah, “Militia Rebuked by Some Arab Countries,” *The New York Times*, July 17, 2006, [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/17/world/middleeast/17arab.html?pagewanted=print&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/17/world/middleeast/17arab.html?pagewanted=print&_r=0) (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>20</sup>Anthony H. Cordesman, with George Sullivan, and William D. Sullivan, *Lessons of the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War* (Washington, DC: The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Press, 2007), 43.

<sup>21</sup>Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and The Stone* (Saint Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2006), 208. This book offers an in-depth explanation of the four generations of modern war as well as the role of fourth generation modern war in contemporary conflicts.

<sup>22</sup>Norton, 133-134.

<sup>23</sup>Harel and Issacharoff, 83.

<sup>24</sup>Norton, 116.

<sup>25</sup>Harel and Issacharoff, 9-10.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 70-71.

- <sup>27</sup>Norton, 135.
- <sup>28</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 6, 9-18.
- <sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 6, 29-30.
- <sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 6, 19-22.
- <sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 6, 22-29.
- <sup>32</sup>David E. Johnson, *Hard Fighting: Israel in Lebanon and Gaza* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011), 59.
- <sup>33</sup>United Nations Security Council, *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 (2004)* (New York, NY: United Nations Security Council), [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1559\(2004\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1559(2004)) (accessed May 7, 2014).
- <sup>34</sup>William M. Arkin, *Divining Victory: Airpower in the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2007), 6. Arkin draws this particular observation from an Israeli Cabinet Communique dated July 12, 2006, no longer available online.
- <sup>35</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 6, 30-32.
- <sup>36</sup>Norton, 11-12, 97-98, 102.
- <sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 116.
- <sup>38</sup>Associated Press, "Hama releases audio of captured Israeli," *Associated Press*, June 25, 2007, [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-06-25-israeli-palestinian\\_N.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-06-25-israeli-palestinian_N.htm) (accessed May 7, 2014).
- <sup>39</sup>Norton, 133-134.
- <sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 134-135.
- <sup>41</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 34.
- <sup>42</sup>Associated Press, "Hezbollah says Israel holding Lebanese prisoner: Hezbollah leader claims Lebanese soldier Yehia Skaff is still being held in Israeli prison, although Israel says he died in 1978," *Associated Press*, July 17, 2009, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3748213,00.html> (accessed May 7, 2014).
- <sup>43</sup>Norton, 135.
- <sup>44</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 34.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Norton, 132, 135.

<sup>47</sup>Esther Pan, *Defining Victory: The Differing Goals of Israel and Hezbollah* (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations, August 2, 2006), <http://www.cfr.org/israel/defining-victory-differing-goals-israel-hezbollah/p11232> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>48</sup>Joseph Alagha, "The Israeli-Hizbullah 34-Day War: Causes and Consequences," *Arab Studies Quarterly* (March 22, 2008), <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/The+Israeli-Hizbullah+34-day+war%3a+causes+and+consequences.-a0185487490> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>49</sup>Norton, 116.

<sup>50</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 34.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>United Nations Security Council, *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 (2004)*.

<sup>53</sup>Norton, 132-133.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 131-132.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>56</sup>Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, August 11, 2011), II-5, [http://dtic.mil/doctrine/new\\_pubs/jp3\\_0.pdf](http://dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_0.pdf) (accessed May 14, 2014).

<sup>57</sup>Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, March 15, 2014), 64, [http://dtic.mil/doctrine/new\\_pubs/jp1\\_02.pdf](http://dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf) (accessed May 14, 2014).

<sup>58</sup>Robin Neillands, *The Battle for the Rhine: The Battle of the Bulge and the Ardennes Campaign, 1944* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 2007), 274.

<sup>59</sup>E. James Ferguson, *The Power of the Purse: A History of American Public Finance, 1776-1790* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1961). For an appreciation of the true complexity and integration of the financing effort required by the American Revolution, see the book in its entirety.

<sup>60</sup>Martin Walker, *The Cold War: A History* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1993), 283-284, 314-322.

<sup>61</sup>Basil Henry Liddell-Hart, *A History of the World War: 1914-1918* (London, UK: Faber and Faber, 1930), 587-592.

<sup>62</sup>Al Goodman, "Spain threatens Iraq pull-out," *Cable News Network*, March 15, 2004, <http://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/europe/03/15/spain.election/index.html> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>63</sup>Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: Their Finest Hour* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949), 8-10, 15.

<sup>64</sup>Bob Woodward, *The War Within: A Secret White House History 2006-2008* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2008), 214.

<sup>65</sup>Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 370, 418.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, 370, 404, 412, 415, 418.

<sup>67</sup>Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1983), 575-577.

<sup>68</sup>Churchill, *The Second World War: Their Finest Hour*, 568-569.

<sup>69</sup>Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: The Gathering Storm* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), 344-345, 405, 407-408, 442-449.

<sup>70</sup>Alan P. Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century: Of Friendship, Conflict and the Rise and Decline of Superpowers* (London, UK: Routledge, 1995), 118.

<sup>71</sup>Karen DeYoung and Griff Witte, "Russia recognizes Crimea's independence, defying new U.S. and E.U. sanctions," *The Washington Post*, March 17, 2014, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-eu-announce-sanctions-following-vote-in-ukraine/2014/03/17/3223799c-add9-11e3-a49e-76adc9210f19\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-eu-announce-sanctions-following-vote-in-ukraine/2014/03/17/3223799c-add9-11e3-a49e-76adc9210f19_story.html) (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>72</sup>David Hackett Fischer, *Washington's Crossing* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004), 359-361.

<sup>73</sup>Burke Davis, *The Campaign That Won America: The Story of Yorktown* (New York, NY: The Dial Press, 1970), 117, 123-124, 158-166, 169, 225, 230, 264-265.

<sup>74</sup>Carl Philipp Gottlieb von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), Book I, Chapter 1, 89. Original published in German in 1832 as *Vom Kriege*.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The primary purpose of this chapter is to categorize and address the pertinent literature available on the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, identify the sources of current arguments and explanations for Israel's strategic failure, and provide a basic outline of the arguments presented within. Due to the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict there is no such thing as an unbiased source on the topic. Accordingly the review attempts to identify the perspective of the author in each case to provide their assertions and findings with a degree of context. The review includes a variety of perspectives and sources, primary and secondary, of varying substance and credibility. When questionable sources are present, they are included to either acknowledge an alternative perspective on a controversial topic, or to offer a glimpse into Hezbollah. In most cases it is a clear bias or perspective that raises credibility issues with a source. Therefore, when researching this topic, there is very little that can be taken as established fact, and much of our understanding must rely on a combination of the preponderance of the evidence and the weight of reasoned arguments. Finally, the review introduces sources of academic and theoretical work on the subjects of organizational culture as it relates to military systems and the nature of fourth generation modern war. These subjects are instrumental to understanding how the current explanations for Israel's strategic failure came to be articulated and accepted, as well as why an alternative, but complementary, explanation is important.

In the years following the war, two journalists for the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff published a history of the war titled *34 Days: Israel*,

*Hezbollah, and the War in Lebanon.*<sup>1</sup> This journalistic account is a good primer on the war and weaves causes, events, and consequences into a coherent and accessible narrative. The authors make a credible attempt at presenting an unbiased account and are duly critical of all parties. Significantly, the authors assert that Israel was not defeated in the war, but did meet with strategic failure when measured against its stated strategic objectives.<sup>2</sup> The authors attribute Israel's strategic failure to a combination of a lack of military experience among Israel's political leadership at the time, a rarity in Israeli politics, which led to a stark mismatch between the strategic objectives selected for the war and what military power could actually accomplish, as well as poor performance on the part of the IDF ground forces brought on by a combination of budget cuts and a lack of conventional training focus.<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, the authors found the IDF and its leadership far more willing to accept responsibility for their failures during the war than Israeli political leaders.<sup>4</sup>

In the wake of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, Israel formed the Winograd Commission, headed by former Israeli judge Dr. Eliyahu Winograd, to hold an inquiry into the causes of, assign responsibility for, and derive lessons from Israel's strategic failure in the war. The Winograd Commission ran parallel to a number of internal IDF reviews following the war and the findings were often cross-pollinated between the two strains of inquiry. In its final report, the commission found that Israel had encountered strategic failure due to a combination of poor decision-making by political and military authorities, a lack of strategic logic between achievable political end states and defined military objectives, an overreliance on and an inflated perception of air power, poor performance by IDF ground forces, and poor preparedness for the type of warfare

encountered.<sup>5</sup> Of particular interest to this study, the commission found that the ground offensive was launched too close to the end of hostilities to achieve its objectives, and therefore was unable to accomplish any strategic effect relevant to the post-conflict situation. In 2010, the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University in Israel published a paper entitled *The IDF and the Lessons of the Second Lebanon War* which sought to track IDF progress in meeting the recommendations of the Winograd Commission and other internal inquiries that followed the war.<sup>6</sup> The paper cited findings from other inquiries related to the IDF's poor performance to include the use of EBO methodologies, a lack of conventional training in the years leading up to the war, outdated and substandard equipment related to a lack of funding, a lack of operational training for general officers, and the role of politics vice professionalism in the selection and promotion of general officers. The paper is useful in breaking down these deficiencies into specifics based on warfighting functions, as well as providing a window into how the IDF chose to address these problems.

A number of post-mortem studies have been published by a variety of institutes, centers, and think tanks oriented on strategic studies, defense and security policy, and military affairs. The Combat Studies Institute at the United States Army Combined Arms Center published *We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israel War* as an "occasional paper" under the auspices of the institute's *The Long War Series*.<sup>7</sup> The author, Matt Matthews, focuses on events leading up to the war, Hezbollah preparations for war, and the conduct of the ground war by the IDF. The author attributes Israeli strategic failure to a combination of the IDF's embrace of EBO and SOD methodologies, and the poor performance of IDF ground forces, which he attributes to a lack of

conventional focus and budget cuts in the years leading up to the war.<sup>8</sup> These findings are not altogether surprising given that they mirror findings derived by the IDF after the conflict and also coincide with institutional preferences within the United States Army. Internal debates within the United States Army concerning the efficacy and relevance of EBO had turned against the methodology as its air power origins became increasingly pronounced. Additionally, the United States Army, like the IDF, had found itself focusing on counterinsurgency and stability operations to the detriment of conventional training and operations. The Israeli struggles in the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 offered an opportunity for those who opposed EBO methodologies and advocated a greater focus on conventional training in the United States Army to draw conclusions that supported their positions.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies, a bipartisan, non-profit think tank, published *Lessons of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War*, authored by Anthony Cordesman, George Sullivan, and William Sullivan, shortly after the war in 2007.<sup>9</sup> The authors draw lessons from the political, military, strategic, tactical, and technological aspects of the war. The broad message crafted by the authors can be summarized as follows:

The Israeli-Hezbollah conflict strongly suggests that the emphasis on high technology, conventional war fighting, or the “revolution in military affairs” . . . was fundamentally flawed. This misplaced reliance . . . based on using technology . . . as a substitute for force numbers and for human skills and presence. . . .

Defeating the enemy on the battlefield is never a strategic or grand strategic end in itself. . . . Grand strategy requires plans and operations that achieve the political ends and goals for which a war is fought. Victory consists of transforming tactical success into lasting political advantage.<sup>10</sup>

Explicit lessons include the need to match achievable political objectives to achievable military objectives, the need to be mindful of civilian casualties, and the need to keep the role air power in proportion to its capabilities. Significant to this study, the authors noted that Israel relied far too much on traditional military operations while ignoring the role of information operations, the importance of the media, and the perception of Israeli actions in the information environment.<sup>11</sup>

Immediately following the war, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a think-tank often accused of having a pro-Israel bias, issued a report entitled *Lessons and Implications of the Israel-Hizballah War: A Preliminary Assessment* authored by David Makovsky and Jeffrey White.<sup>12</sup> The report addresses the conflict from the Israeli perspective in both the political and military domains, and serves as a good summary source for military statistics related to the war. The report attempts to walk a fine line that argues that although Israel did not achieve its strategic objectives and the results of the war were inconclusive, the outcome does not necessarily constitute strategic failure for Israel as a number of the contours of the ceasefire agreement, such as the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces south of the Litani River, a greater UN presence along the Israel-Lebanon border, and renewed calls for Hezbollah to disarm from the international community, were favorable to Israel.<sup>13</sup> Sources of friction during the conflict identified in the assessment include a disconnect between political and military objectives, a lack of military experience at the highest political echelons of the Israeli government, a lack of IDF readiness due to a lack of conventional training focus and budget cuts in the years preceding the war, the inability of air power to effectively counter the rocket threat posed by Hezbollah, and the poor performance of reserve units relative to their active duty

counterparts. The authors indulge in a bit of wishful thinking by noting the early support of Sunni Arab states due to the perceived Iran-Syria-Hezbollah threat and portray this as a possible model for future cooperation between Israel and its Sunni Arab neighbors.<sup>14</sup> The problem with this assertion is that it ignores the shift in Sunni Arab support away from Israel during the war, and does nothing to explore the cause of this shift, or how such support may be garnered and sustained in the future. In short, it assumes that a strategic opportunity that did exist at the outbreak of the war still existed at the conclusion of the war, when in fact it had been squandered in this case, and complicated for future cases. That being said, the strategic logic for Israeli and Sunni Arab cooperation *vis-à-vis* the Iran-Syria-Hezbollah threat remains despite the inability of Israel to capitalize on it in this case.

Journalist and military commentator William Arkin authored *Divining Victory: Airpower in the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War*, published by the Air University Press.<sup>15</sup> The title is a play on “Divine Victory,” the term used by Hezbollah propaganda to frame the outcome of the war in its immediate aftermath. This work provides a detailed chronology of the war and an accounting of IDF air power targeting based on an analysis of destruction in Lebanon. The author argues that while air power was not decisive in the case of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, IDF air attacks were more effective and accurately targeted than generally assumed. Arkin contended that the intended strategic effect of these targets was undermined by the perception of the air attacks.<sup>16</sup> Regardless of IDF attempts to limit collateral damage or avoid dual-use targets, the regional and international publics perceived air power as a cold, impersonal, and wantonly destructive form of warfare. Hezbollah succeeded in crafting a narrative in which Lebanese civilians

appeared as targets of the IDF, and Hezbollah could claim to have survived the onslaught of IDF air power.<sup>17</sup> The author suggests that the answer for future air operations against hybrid threats is to balance the capability of producing physical effects against the need to craft a coherent and advantageous narrative that produces informational effects.<sup>18</sup>

The RAND (Research and Development) Corporation, recently published *Hard Fighting: Israel in Lebanon and Gaza* by academic and retired United States Army officer David E. Johnson.<sup>19</sup> This study, jointly commissioned by the United States Army and the United States Air Force, seeks to examine the IDF experience in the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, the lessons learned and the adjustments made by the IDF, the subsequent IDF experience in Gaza from December 2008-January 2009, during Operation Cast Lead, and draw conclusions relevant to the United States military. The author asserts that Israeli strategic failure stemmed from the cumulative effect of a perception among Israeli elites at the time that Israel had transcended major wars, a lack of understanding of Hezbollah's strategy, poor intelligence sharing and compartmentalization in the intelligence community, budget cuts in the years leading up to the war, the general unpreparedness of IDF ground forces for conventional operations, a lack of joint training between IDF ground and air forces, the adoption of SOD methodologies by the IDF, and the embrace of the revolution in military affairs and its reliance on stand-off firepower and the belief that these fires could effectively influence the will of an adversary.<sup>20</sup> Of particular interest to this study, the author briefly notes a series of events, amplified by the media, that began to erode support for the war, both domestically and internationally, and the negative effect that this erosion had on the operational timeline.<sup>21</sup>

Academic and retired United States Army officer Augustus Richard Norton has written *Hezbollah: A Short History* which serves as an effective primer on Hezbollah in its multifaceted role as a militia, political party, and a social welfare organization.<sup>22</sup> Norton's extensive contacts and time spent in Lebanon provide the reader with a broad and generally balanced view of Hezbollah and its place in Lebanese society. The author devotes a chapter to the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 which attempts to weave a consolidated narrative that considers the positions, perceptions, and objectives of the Israelis, the Lebanese, and Hezbollah. The narrative concludes by emphasizing the cost of the war to the Lebanese people and the increased popularity of Hezbollah, both regionally and domestically, in the immediate post-war period. Of particular interest to this study, Norton identifies the July 30, 2006, IDF bombing of Qana, Lebanon, and the massive civilian casualties that resulted, as a turning point in the war that negatively affected Arab popular opinion and the support of Arab regimes.<sup>23</sup>

Academic and former UN official Nubar Hovsepian compiled a collection of essays on the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 entitled *The War on Lebanon: A Reader*.<sup>24</sup> The dozens of contributors who provided essays for the book included the likes of historian Rashid Khalidi and philosopher Noam Chomsky. The reader has a decidedly anti-Israeli, and at times anti-American slant, while clearly painting a sympathetic portrait of Lebanon, the Palestinians, and Hezbollah. This bias presents a contrarian point of view to much of the material generally available in the West, although many of the assertions must be taken with a proverbial "grain of salt" and understood within that context. The essays consist of a fusion of personal diary entries from contributors who were in either Lebanon or Israel during the war, personal reflections on relevant past

experiences, and commentary on the war and its aftermath. The essays cover a range of topics to include the war and its consequences, the politics of the Lebanese Republic, the relationship between Israel and the United States, and Hezbollah. Of particular interest are the personal entries which provide a window into the experiences of the Lebanese and their perspective of Israel during the war, as well as an essay by mathematician and political activist Assaf Kfoury that relates the substance of a personal meeting with Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah in the months leading up to the war.<sup>25</sup>

Primary sources on Hezbollah, especially for the period of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 are sparse and largely inaccessible to Western researchers with a few notable exceptions. Secretary-General Nasrallah's interviews, especially around the time of the war, provide insight into the purpose of the initial abduction operation, the conduct of the war by Hezbollah, and the narrative Hezbollah used to frame the conflict, both during the war and in its immediate aftermath. Of particular interest is a July 20, 2006 interview with *al-Jazeera* in which Nasrallah correctly identified Israel's strategic objective of compelling Lebanon to assert its sovereign responsibility and curtail Hezbollah capabilities, and predicted that instead Lebanese political will would align itself with Hezbollah in the face of Israeli attacks and that Israeli political will and external support would wither as the war continued.<sup>26</sup> Also of note is an interview Nasrallah gave on August 27, 2006, just after the ceasefire, in which he admits to miscalculating Israel's response to Hezbollah's abduction of two IDF soldiers. In the interview, when asked whether, with the benefit of hindsight, he would conduct the operation again, he replied "I would say no, I would not have entered this for many reasons--military, social, political, economic."<sup>27</sup> Another useful primary source on

Hezbollah is Deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem's book *Hizbullah: The Story from Within*.<sup>28</sup> Originally published before the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, the book outlines Hezbollah's goals and vision, organization, history, regional and international relations, and political positions. However the third English edition contains an updated introduction which includes a portion on the war in which Naim Qassem identifies a prisoner exchange as the strategic objective of the abduction operation, confirms Hezbollah's surprise at the scale and intensity of Israel's response, and blames the war on the United States.<sup>29</sup>

The Strategic Studies Institute at the United States Army War College published a monograph by Stephen Biddle and Jeffrey A. Friedman entitled *The 2006 Lebanon Campaign and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy*.<sup>30</sup> This study attempts to categorize the way in which Hezbollah fought along a spectrum of conventional and asymmetric operations. Without using the word "hybrid," the study essentially defines Hezbollah as a hybrid threat, displaying aspects of both conventional and guerilla organizations. The authors cover a wide range of topics related to Hezbollah military operations during the war to include Hezbollah operational design, direct fire combat, harassing fires, unobserved minefields, the proximity of combatants to civilians, and military organization. Unfortunately the study does not meaningfully address the central role of information operations and perceptions in Hezbollah operational design.

There are a few sources that directly address the role of information operations in Hezbollah operations. The propaganda collection and analysis website psywar.org posted an article by retired United States Army Sergeant Major Herbert A. Friedman entitled *Psychological Operations during the Israel-Lebanon War 2006*.<sup>31</sup> This article provides a

survey of propaganda used by both Israel and Hezbollah during the war, providing examples and limited analysis. While the majority of the article focuses on Israeli propaganda, the section on Hezbollah does provide examples of Hezbollah propaganda, a summary of other articles written about Hezbollah propaganda, and a discussion of the role of propaganda in Hezbollah operations. Of particular interest is the use of propaganda to frame the outcome of the war as a “Divine Victory” of Hezbollah and the Lebanese people. Another online source focusing on Hezbollah’s use of information operations is *Backgrounder: Hezbollah’s Media Weapon* published online by the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA),<sup>32</sup> a pro-Israel, non-profit, media monitoring and research organization, often accused of being part of the “Israel lobby” in the United States. While many of the assertions must be understood within the context of this bias, and taken with a “grain of salt,” this article compiles evidence of media manipulation and intimidation by Hezbollah from a variety of news outlets.

Mainstream media and wire service reports are also important to the research for this study. These reports provide a plethora of raw data about events during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. In many cases, journalists will report on an event relevant to a broader trend while not providing context, analysis, or a linkage to that trend. At this point the report becomes a bit of raw data that can be strung together with other reports and information to establish or support a given trend or hypothesis. This is particularly the case with Hezbollah’s use of information operations, much of which was observed and reported on by the media or involved the media as part of Hezbollah’s design.

One of the works that this study relies upon for addressing the theoretical aspects of the case is political scientist Jeffrey W. Legro's book *Cooperation Under Fire: Anglo-German Restraint During World War II*.<sup>33</sup> This book examines the role of organizational culture in military organizations, particularly as it relates to decision making. The author finds that organizational culture more often accurately explains the military decisions made by states than theories of realism or institutionalism.<sup>34</sup> Legro uses an examination of restraint or escalation in unrestricted submarine warfare, strategic bombing, and the use of chemical weapons to make his case. Organizational cultures prove to be self-replicating, self-reinforcing, and therefore highly resistant to change; when change does occur it is often the result of a traumatic catalyst which forces the organization to change.<sup>35</sup> Organizational culture influences how an organization views itself and the outside world, and can determine or limit the options and decisions that will be available many years before the actual decision point is reached.<sup>36</sup> The findings are easily transferable to military systems in other places and times as many of the inherent dynamics of military systems, such as command, discipline, the need for doctrine, the need for weapons development, etc. remain constant fixtures. Accordingly, an understanding of the role of organizational culture in military systems will allow a more nuanced understanding of how the IDF reacted to the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, how it may have arrived at its lessons learned from the war, and what may have been overlooked in the process.

Another book that this study relies upon for its theoretical arguments is *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* by retired United States Marine Corps Colonel Thomas X. Hammes.<sup>37</sup> The book outlines the emergence of fourth generation

modern warfare over the course of the 20th century, and articulates its likely prevalence well into the 21st century. Fourth generation modern warfare is essentially an answer by weaker powers, insurgencies, and non-state actors to the conventional military strength of the modern Western nation state. Fourth generation modern warfare “uses all available networks—political, economic, social, and military—to convince the enemy’s political decision makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit.”<sup>38</sup> This form of warfare, like an informational version of air power theory, seeks to bypass an enemy’s military strength to directly attack the enemy’s will as the strategic center of gravity. As Hammes articulates, “fourth-generation warfare is about sending messages to decision makers—usually via the mass of people that support them.”<sup>39</sup> Accordingly Hezbollah, employing a fourth generation modern war model, conceives of war and operations in a completely different way than does the IDF. As a result, Hezbollah has been able to leverage great success in the informational domain, while Israel has often proven incapable of countering, and at time even oblivious to, its own vulnerabilities in this domain. When the logic of fourth generation modern war is applied to Hezbollah operations, the role of information operations in Hezbollah’s operational designs becomes clear, and the information environment emerges as the decisive domain.

This chapter has sought to categorize and address the pertinent literature available on the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, and identify the sources of current arguments and explanations for Israel’s strategic failure. The review covered journalistic accounts of the war, post-mortem studies of the war from a variety of political and military perspectives, and a variety of source material on Hezbollah. From the series of post-mortem

examinations a few trends emerged. While a myriad of explanations were provided, and not all can be addressed within the scope of this study, it is clear that there was no single overarching reason for Israeli strategic failure. Of the operational explanations, three tended to recur throughout most studies: (1) the adoption of EBO and SOD methodologies within the IDF; (2) an overreliance on air power; (3) the general unpreparedness and poor performance of IDF ground forces. Finally, the review introduced sources of academic and theoretical work on the subjects of organizational culture as it relates to military systems and the nature of fourth generation modern war. These subjects are instrumental to understanding how the current explanations for Israel's strategic failure came to be articulated and accepted, as well as why an alternative, but complementary, explanation is important. The application of fourth generation modern war logic to Hezbollah operations suggests that an additional reason for Israel's strategic failure may reside in an examination of the information environment and operations within that domain. The next chapter will discuss the methodology of this study and how arguments will be arranged to form a coherent and compelling narrative of the importance of the information environment during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006.

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<sup>1</sup>Harel, and Issacharoff.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 241-252.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 253-254.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 244.

<sup>5</sup>Eliyahu Winograd, *English Summary of the Winograd Commission Report* (Tel, Aviv, IS: The Winograd Commission, January 30, 2008), [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/30/world/middleeast/31winograd-web.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/30/world/middleeast/31winograd-web.html?_r=0) (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>6</sup>Amir Rapaport, “The IDF and the Lessons of the Second Lebanon War,” *Mideast Security and Policy Studies*, no. 85 (December 2010), <http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/MSPS85En.pdf> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>7</sup>Matthews.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 61-65.

<sup>9</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 38-41.

<sup>12</sup>David Makovsky and Jeffrey White, *Lessons and Implications of the Israel-Hizballah War: A Preliminary Assessment* (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2006), <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus60.pdf> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 4, 7, 18-20.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 18, 28.

<sup>15</sup>William M. Arkin, *Divining Victory: Airpower in the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2007).

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 150-158.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 157-158.

<sup>19</sup>Johnson.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 26-44.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 70-71.

<sup>22</sup>Norton.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>24</sup>Nubar Hovsepian, ed., *The War on Lebanon: A Reader* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2008).

<sup>25</sup>Assaf Kfoury, “Meeting Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah,” in *The War on Lebanon: A Reader*, ed. Nubar Hovsepian (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2008), 75-85.

<sup>26</sup>Ghassan Bin-Jiddu, "Interview with Hezbollah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah," *al-Jazeera*, July 20, 2006, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/interview-with-hezbollah-secretary-general-hasan-nasrallah/2790> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>27</sup>CNN, "Nasrallah: Soldiers' abductions a mistake," *Cable News Network*, August 27, 2006, <http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/08/27/mideast.nasrallah/index.html> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>28</sup>Naim Qassem, *Hizbollah: The Story from Within* (London, UK: Saqi Books, [2005] 2010).

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 35-41.

<sup>30</sup>Stephen Biddle and Jeffrey A. Friedman, "The 2006 Lebanon Campaign and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy" (Monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, September 2008).

<sup>31</sup>Herbert A. Friedman, "Psychological Operations during the Israel-Lebanon War 2006," *psywar.org*, <http://www.psywar.org/israellebanon.php> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>32</sup>Ricki Hollander, "Backgrounder: Hezbollah's Media Weapon," CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America), September 26, 2006, [http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x\\_print=1&ndx\\_context=7&ndx\\_issue=16&ndx\\_article=1205](http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_print=1&ndx_context=7&ndx_issue=16&ndx_article=1205) (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>33</sup>Jeffrey W. Legro, *Cooperation Under Fire: Anglo-German Restraint During World War II* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 22-25.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>37</sup>Hammes.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 291.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology that will be employed to answer this study's primary and secondary research questions. This work is an exploratory study seeking to reevaluate the currently accepted causes of Israeli strategic failure during the Israel-Lebanon War of 2006. The study is designed to determine whether the current operational explanations for strategic failure are sufficient and exhaustive, or whether a complementary cause, namely the exploitation of the information environment, may help to further explain why Israel met with strategic failure during the war.

The "Introduction and Background" chapter presented the idea that the current explanations for Israeli strategic failure during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 are incomplete. Current explanations, including the use of EBO and SOD methodologies within the IDF, an overreliance on air power, and the relative lack of readiness for sustained combined arms operations, primarily address the IDF's capabilities and performance. Alternatively, Hezbollah was able to force the culmination of the IDF offensive before Israeli strategic objectives could be met by exploiting IDF actions in the information environment, causing the collapse of regional support, and effectively decreasing the time available for IDF operations to meet Israel's strategic objectives. The introduction also identified key questions to be addressed by this study and established their logical sequence. The introduction identified the strategic objectives of both Israel and Hezbollah. Finally, the introduction also presented the concept of operational time

defined as the time available for the pursuit of military objectives before some factor will cause an operation, campaign, or war to reach a culminating point.

The “Literature Review” chapter introduced the pertinent literature available on the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. The myriad of operational explanations for Israeli strategic failure provided in the literature evince that there was no single reason for Israeli strategic failure. Of the operational explanations, three tended to recur throughout most studies: (1) the adoption of EBO and SOD methodologies within the IDF; (2) an overreliance on air power; (3) the general unpreparedness and poor performance of the IDF ground forces. The review also introduced sources of academic and theoretical work on the subjects of organizational culture as it relates to military systems and the nature of fourth generation modern war.

The remainder of this chapter will discuss how this study’s arguments will be arranged to form a coherent and compelling narrative of the importance of operational time and the information environment during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. In general, this is a qualitative study that will create a coherent and compelling narrative from the answers to various research questions, individual observations and pieces of data concerning the information environment, the concept of operational time, and the theoretical fourth generation modern war model, and will thus articulate the decisive role played by operational time and the information environment in Israel’s strategic failure. The results of this study hinge on a reevaluation and reordering of existing information about the war, and the weight of logical argumentation and strategic thought in support of the proposed narrative.

The next chapter, titled “Existing Explanations,” examines a number of operational explanations for Israel’s strategic failure. However, before this can be done it must first be established that Israel did indeed meet with strategic failure during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. The previously cited strategic objectives of Israel and Hezbollah will be reevaluated in relation to the actual outcome of the war. Once Israeli strategic failure is established, the study will move on to examining the causes of that failure. In order to determine whether current explanations are complete and exhaustive one must analyze each explanation, its plausibility and probable contribution to strategic failure, and answer the question of whether each explanation is sufficient, on its own merits, to explain Israel’s strategic failure. For the purposes of this study, the three recurring explanations cited above will be analyzed: (1) the adoption of EBO and SOD methodologies within the IDF; (2) an overreliance on air power; (3) the general unpreparedness and poor performance of IDF ground forces. Once all three explanations have been examined, their combined effect will be considered to determine if together they form a complete and exhaustive explanation for Israel’s strategic failure. The argument will show that while these explanations are certainly contributing factors to Israeli strategic failure, none would have been able to cause such failure on its own. While their combined effects are more likely sufficient to cause strategic failure, the argument will show that even in combination, strategic failure was not preordained. As previously noted, these explanatory factors are all oriented on the capability and performance of the IDF toward meeting its strategic objectives. Given that these explanations reflected preexistent debates within the IDF, it will be argued that these explanations were influenced by the IDF’s organizational culture and derived to reinforce

and advance organizational preferences and priorities. In order to reinforce this argument the sources and manifestations of the IDF's organizational culture will be outlined. The implication of the IDF deriving its primary lessons from preexistent debates and organizational preferences is that other potential lessons that did not correspond to these preexistent positions may have been overlooked, particularly in light of the previous argument that strategic failure did not necessarily and exclusively flow from the previously identified explanations. Finally the chapter will argue that lessons learned by studies in the United States mirrored those learned by the IDF due to post-war discourse and cross-pollination of ideas between strategic partners in the region, and similar organizational debates and preferences within the United States' military system.

Once it has been established that Israel did indeed meet with strategic failure during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, and that current explanations do not necessarily and exclusively account for that failure, the study will move to an examination of whether exploitation in the information environment is an explanatory factor.

The next chapter, titled "The Decisive Nature of Operational Time and the Information Environment" seeks to explore whether a better and more complete explanation for Israel's strategic failure results from combining the existing explanations with Hezbollah's exploitation of Israel in the information environment, and the subsequent limitation on operational time imposed by such exploitation. This chapter will begin by arguing that the majority of Arab states initially, if tacitly, supported Israel in this instance, due to a collective fear of regional Shia ascendancy seen at the time through a belligerent Iran pursuing nuclear weapons, an Iraq nominally under a new Shia-dominated government but being plunged into chaos by sectarian fighting and Shia

militias, an unapologetic and heavily armed Syria, and a Hezbollah state within a state in southern Lebanon. The chapter then argues that this support evaporated as a direct result of Israel's disproportionate response, the high number of resultant civilian casualties in Lebanon, and Hezbollah's exploitation of these casualties in the information environment. As the casualties mounted, the 24-hour news cycle broadcast images of the carnage throughout the region. As public opinion on the "Arab street" began to turn vehemently against Israel and IDF operations in Lebanon, increasingly large demonstrations were held in a number of Arab capitals. Israel's Sunni Arab supporters were therefore forced to withdraw their support and demand a ceasefire before Israel could accomplish its strategic objectives.

This sequence of events will be examined using the concept of operational time to argue that had the IDF's operational time not been curtailed, it is possible that the IDF could have made adjustments and continued the war effort toward a more successful conclusion. The logic of the fourth generation modern war model will be applied to the narrative to show that Hezbollah's exploitation of Israel in IE was likely Hezbollah's main effort, an effort that Israel did nothing to counter and even unwittingly assisted toward its ends. At this point an argument will be presented that Hezbollah has inverted the traditional model where information objectives support military objectives, which in turn accomplish political objectives, replacing it with a model where military objectives support the achievement of informational objectives, which in turn attain political objectives. This logic will further argue that the hallmark of a true hybrid threat is not simply the mixing of conventional and irregular formations, tactics, and military systems, but the ability to expand the battlespace into nontraditional domains with strategic effect,

consistent with the ideas of fourth generation modern war. Center of gravity analysis will then be employed to frame Hezbollah's strategy in terms of an indirect attack of Israel's center of gravity, the IDF, by targeting the critical vulnerability of international and regional support in the IE. The chapter will then argue that the exploitation of IDF attacks and civilian casualties in the IE, and the subsequent loss of regional public opinion and political support, thereby shortening the operational time available to achieve its military objectives, was sufficient to cause Israel's strategic failure, and that this factor is even more convincing when considered in concert with current explanations.

The final chapter, "Conclusions and Recommendations" will summarize the findings of this study, identify lessons that should be learned by the IDF based on those findings, as well as broader lessons for military professionals and the conduct of war in general. The chapter will conclude by identifying areas of possible future research.

This chapter has discussed how this study's arguments will be arranged to form a coherent and compelling narrative of the importance of operational time and the information environment during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. It has identified this work as a qualitative study that will create a coherent and compelling narrative from the answers to various research questions, individual observations and pieces of data concerning the information environment, the concept of operational time, and the theoretical fourth generation modern war model, and will thus articulate the decisive role played by the information environment in Israel's strategic failure. The next chapter will begin the necessary analysis by considering current explanations for Israel's strategic failure and whether these explanations are sufficient to present a complete and exclusive narrative of that failure.

## CHAPTER 4

### EXISTING EXPLANATIONS

The primary purpose of this chapter is to consider current operational explanations for Israel's strategic failure and whether these explanations are sufficient to constitute an exclusive narrative of that failure. However, before this can be accomplished, this chapter begins by arguing that the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 did indeed constitute a strategic failure for the State of Israel. Once this has been established, each of the current operational explanations will be examined for its plausibility and probable contribution to strategic failure, both individually and collectively. It will be shown that while the existing explanations are certainly contributing factors, they are not exclusive in their explanatory power, as there is room for additional complementary explanatory factors. The existing explanations will be linked to organizational culture preferences and debates that existed in the IDF prior to the war, suggesting that other potential lessons that did not correspond to these preexisting positions may have been overlooked.

#### Strategic Failure

To answer the question of whether the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 did indeed result in strategic failure for the State of Israel, one must first discuss whether Israel was able to attain its strategic objectives for the war. It is important to note that the claim is not that Israel met with strategic defeat, as the State of Israel certainly exited the war with the general stability and interests of the state intact. The claim is that Israel met with strategic failure by failing to achieve its war aims. In reference to Israel's goal to destroy

Hezbollah (largely understood within Israel to be Iran's proxy force on Israel's border) before Iran could achieve nuclear power status,<sup>1</sup> Israel clearly failed to accomplish this objective during the war. Hezbollah was not destroyed, either as a fighting force or as a political organization. In fact, in some respects Hezbollah was strengthened by the war. While Hezbollah's military capability was certainly damaged by the fighting, politically the war and Hezbollah's spirited resistance in the face of the IDF onslaught repaired the group's damaged domestic image and popular support<sup>2</sup> and captured the popular imagination in other places around the Arab world.<sup>3</sup> This increased popular support helped Hezbollah to reconstitute its military forces and consolidate its political positions following the war.<sup>4</sup>

In reference to Israel's goal to damage Hezbollah's military capability to attack Israel if the destruction of Hezbollah as a military and political force proved impossible, Israel can claim a measure of success. It is estimated that Hezbollah lost between 250 and 800 fighters, suffered significant degradation to its intermediate and long-range rocket forces,<sup>5</sup> and found its freedom of movement in southern Lebanon curtailed as a result of the war.<sup>6</sup> However, despite these military impacts on Hezbollah operations, the extent and long-term utility of this damage is not altogether clear. Despite a massive campaign by the IDF to target and destroy Hezbollah's ability to launch rockets into Israel, the last full day of the war saw 217 rockets, mostly short-range munitions, fired into Israel by Hezbollah forces,<sup>7</sup> the second highest daily total of the war.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, although damage was certainly inflicted on Hezbollah's military forces, the damage to Hezbollah's military systems, which would allow for the reconstitution of lost military capability and capacity, was only superficial. The regeneration of Hezbollah's military power became

evident in 2013 as Hezbollah intervened at a decisive moment in the Syrian civil war in order to shore up the regime of Bashar al-Assad.<sup>9</sup> In fact, Israel has since felt the need to use diplomatically risky airstrikes in both Syria and Lebanon to target suspected transfers of advanced weaponry from Syria to Hezbollah, and prevent further reconstitution and expansion of Hezbollah's military capabilities.<sup>10</sup> Finally, although the Lebanese government agreed to deploy 15,000 Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) soldiers south of the Litani River in accordance with UNSCR 1701<sup>11</sup> to assist the 11,000 strong United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and that they have "on more than one occasion . . . found weapons, military equipment and bunkers . . . including rockets, grenades, ammunition, RPG launchers, and Katyushas,"<sup>12</sup> such efforts at disruption have fallen far short of UNSCR 1701's call for the "disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that . . . there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese State."<sup>13</sup> In fact, some in the IDF believe that the situation along the border was preferable before UNSCR 1701, since before the resolution major Hezbollah dispositions were clearly discernable and marked by Hezbollah flags, whereas after the resolution, such overt indicators have been removed, although the Hezbollah threat persists.<sup>14</sup>

In reference to Israel's goal of restoring the perception that Israel is willing to respond to provocation with overwhelming force, as well as the credibility of the IDF as a deterrent force, the results were, at best, mixed for Israel. Israel clearly showed that it was willing to respond to provocation with overwhelming force as the massive Israeli response aimed at both Hezbollah, as well as the Lebanese state, was wildly disproportionate in relation to Hezbollah's capture of two IDF soldiers in a daring cross

border raid. However, the credibility of the IDF as a deterrent to Israel's enemies was not nearly as convincing. Following Israel's success in the Arab-Israeli War in 1948, the Six-Day War in 1967, and the October War in 1973, the IDF achieved near-mythical status as a result of its decisive performance in conventional operations, a status that had significant and long-lasting deterrent effect in the region. A period of low intensity conflict marked by a series of Palestinian uprisings followed. The IDF began to focus on tasks more suited to low intensity conflict and population control in response to a form of warfare that denied the decisive victory the IDF was designed to achieve. The unilateral Israeli withdrawals from southern Lebanon in 2000, and Gaza in 2005, while calculated political decisions in Israel, had been portrayed by Israel's enemies as setbacks and a sign of weakness.<sup>15</sup> A spectacular conventional military defeat of Hezbollah in southern Lebanon could have potentially revitalized the mythical perception of IDF performance, renewing its deterrent value. However, the failure of Israel to clearly achieve its strategic objectives, the relatively poor performance of IDF ground forces, and Hezbollah's ability to survive and offer competent resistance, as a hybrid force against a technologically and numerically superior conventional force, combined to weaken the deterrent effect of the IDF. As RAND Senior Political Scientist and former United States Army officer David E. Johnson remarked

The IDF's reputation as a competent military force—a reputation key to Israel's deterrent power—also suffered because of both the indecisive way in which operations were commanded and its poor performance in the field.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, the IDF's deterrent power was further eroded by the highly public debates in Israel that followed the war and questioned the judgment and performance of Israel's political and military leaders, and highlighted Israel's sensitivity to both casualties and

kidnapped IDF personnel.<sup>17</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, a national security analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) concluded that

In balance, the anger, the feeling that the survival of Hezbollah was a kind of victory, and the feeling that Hezbollah was the one Arab force that had successfully fought the IDF have probably combined to weaken Israel's ability to deter asymmetric conflicts, wars of attrition, and non-state actors.<sup>18</sup>

In reference to Israel's goal to compel the Lebanese Republic to assume its sovereign responsibility to control its territory, deploy the Lebanese Armed Forces south of the Litani River, and implement UNSCR 1559, to include the disarmament and disbandment of Hezbollah, Israel met with limited success, but ultimately harmed their long term interests *vis-à-vis* Lebanon and Hezbollah. The Lebanese state is, by design, a weak state. Israel had hoped that by unilaterally withdrawing from southern Lebanon, the Lebanese government and the LAF would fill the political and security vacuum left in the wake of the Israeli withdrawal. As a founding member of Hezbollah remarked at the time of the Israeli withdrawal, many Lebanese wanted to "live and let live," choosing to focus on Lebanon rather than seeking to continue a struggle against Israel in the name of the Palestinians, or any other foreign interest.<sup>19</sup> Prior to the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, there were growing calls within the complex and fragmented Lebanese polity for the disarmament of Hezbollah and its conversion into a more normalized Lebanese political party rather than a hybrid political-military organization. Due to their role in resisting Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, Hezbollah received some initial credit in Lebanon for Israel's withdrawal, however this praise was neither universal nor long lasting. As Hezbollah pushed up to the border and continued sporadic attacks on Israel, some worried that these continued Hezbollah actions were unnecessarily perilous and provocative.<sup>20</sup> Lebanese newspaper publisher Gibran Tueni openly questioned how

Secretary-General Nasrallah could justify risking the fortunes of the Lebanese people and state, without their consent, for the continued political and military intransigence of Hezbollah.<sup>21</sup> As Boston University professor and former United States Army officer Augustus Richard Norton has written, regarding the eve of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006,

Many . . . politicians were urging Hezbollah to disarm, especially after Syria pulled out its troops in April 2005. The group steadfastly refused, arguing that its armed wing was needed more than ever as the only credible force available to defend the country against an Israeli invasion. . . . In the weeks before the outbreak of open hostilities with Israel in the summer of 2006, popular skepticism of Hezbollah's refusal to disarm turned to mockery.<sup>22</sup>

If Israel wanted to compel the Lebanese state to exert its sovereign authority throughout its territory and effectively deploy the LAF south of the Litani River, it certainly did not help by inflicting massive damage on the Lebanese state. Lebanon had been rebuilding the state and its infrastructure since the conclusion of its civil war, a project largely funded through sovereign debt.<sup>23</sup> During the war, the IDF strategic bombing campaign destroyed much of the progress that had been made toward reconstruction.<sup>24</sup> Damage to the Lebanese state and its infrastructure further harmed the ability of a weak state and a fragile economy to function properly. The need to rebuild again after the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 only added to the sovereign debt problem of the Lebanese state and further complicated the ability of the state to function.<sup>25</sup> As sovereign debt increased, the ability of the state to address the economic needs of the people decreased, making many people more dependent upon sectarian non-state entities, like Hezbollah.<sup>26</sup> Despite the deployment of the LAF and the expansion of UNIFIL after the war, Hezbollah remains a dangerous and rearmed, if not as overt, presence on Israel's northern border. Perhaps the greatest damage Israel has done to its own interests through the war is in regard to the

prospect of the disarmament of Hezbollah. While broad public opinion within Lebanon had been slowly coalescing around Hezbollah's disarmament prior to the war, by kinetically and aggressively targeting not only Hezbollah, but the Lebanese state and infrastructure, at a time when Hezbollah was offering stiff resistance to the IDF, Israel succeeded in justifying Hezbollah's arguments against disarmament, and shifting public opinion in favor of Hezbollah's resistance. Polls show that during the war, 87% of the Lebanese population, including 80 percent of Christian and Druze, Hezbollah's toughest critics, supported Hezbollah's resistance to the IDF.<sup>27</sup> After the war, opinions on Hezbollah's disarmament fell along more sectarian lines.<sup>28</sup> In the final analysis, Anthony Cordesman concluded that

In practice, the future of efforts to control and to disarm Hezbollah depends far more on the outcome of the growing confessional tensions and struggles within Lebanese politics than on the outcome of the Israeli-Hezbollah War, UN action, or the Lebanese Army. The result of the war may well be that Israel's action has further polarized Lebanon on confessional lines, raising Shi'ite power and consciousness and the power of Hezbollah within Lebanon, but leaving a weak and divided state.<sup>29</sup>

In reference to Israel's goal to secure the return of abducted IDF personnel without a disproportionate prisoner exchange with Hezbollah, Israel clearly failed. The Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 did not secure the recovery of Sergeant Udi Goldwasser and Eldad Regev. Nearly two years after the conclusion of the war, Israel released convicted Hezbollah spy Nasim Nisr in exchange for the return of the remains of IDF personnel recovered by Hezbollah during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, but not including those of Sergeant Goldwasser or Regev.<sup>30</sup> A little over a month later, this was followed up by the release of convicted terrorist Samir Kuntar, four Hezbollah prisoners claimed to be the last Lebanese prisoners in Israeli custody, and the return of the remains

of nearly 200 fighters, in exchange for the return of the remains of Sergeant Goldwasser and Regev.<sup>31</sup>

Another measure of whether the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 was a strategic failure for Israel is whether Hezbollah was able to accomplish or make significant progress toward its own strategic objectives. Hezbollah was able to deliver on its *wa'd al-sadiq* or “faithful promise” by securing the 2008 release of Samir Kuntar, Nasim Nisr, and the remaining Hezbollah fighters being held in Israel in exchange for the remains of the two soldiers captured during the cross-border raid that initiated the 2006 war.<sup>32</sup> A precedent for disproportionate prisoner exchanges had been previously established in 2004 when Israel traded 23 Lebanese and 400 Palestinian prisoners for the remains of three IDF personnel captured by Hezbollah in a cross-border raid in 2000, and a living reserve lieutenant colonel in the IDF who had been lured to Beirut and abducted.<sup>33</sup> To be fair, this is what Nasrallah envisioned as the endstate of the initial cross-border raid that sparked the 2006 war. Nasrallah drastically miscalculated the Israeli response and in a post-war interview, when asked whether, with the benefit of hindsight, he would conduct the operation again, he replied “I would say no, I would not have entered this for many reasons--military, social, political, economic.”<sup>34</sup> Hezbollah was clearly able to demonstrate its offensive military capabilities through the flawless execution of its cross border raid<sup>35</sup> as well as other actions. Among these were the successful attack of the *INS Hanit*, an Israeli Sa’ar class corvette with an Iranian made C-802 Noor guided missile,<sup>36</sup> the significant and effective use of anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) against IDF armor,<sup>37</sup> and a sustained rocket campaign resulting in 3,790 rockets impacting in northern Israel, including 901 in populated areas, inflicting 42 civilian deaths and 4,262

wounded.<sup>38</sup> It is debatable whether the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 decreased the willingness of Israelis to combat Hezbollah forces, but to date there has not been any comparable conflagration between Israel and the Hezbollah, although sporadic reconnaissance, harassment, and interdiction operations continue along the border. As previously established, the war decreased the aura of IDF invincibility within the region. Through Israel's targeting of the Lebanese state and infrastructure, and Hezbollah's resistance against IDF attacks, Hezbollah has gained a respite in the political pressure that had been building prior to the war for its disarmament. In effect, the war validated Hezbollah's argument that it was necessary as the only force capable of meaningfully resisting Israel in Lebanon. Finally, once the fighting escalated from a cross-border skirmish into a war, Hezbollah's ability to survive as a political-military organization, and to provide meaningful resistance to the IDF could be portrayed by Hezbollah as a victory and used to raise Hezbollah's profile, both regionally and domestically. Within the region, Hezbollah's resistance captured the popular imaginations of many in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and throughout the Palestinian territories.<sup>39</sup> As soon as the war ended Hezbollah's propaganda campaign was in full swing declaring Hezbollah's "Divine Victory."<sup>40</sup> While the Israeli assault on Lebanon had coalesced Lebanese public opinion in support of Hezbollah's resistance, as the dust settled and the true cost of the war and Hezbollah's role in instigating it were considered, support for Hezbollah within Lebanon fractured along sectarian and political lines.<sup>41</sup> Overall, Hezbollah's ability to make a reasonable claim to victory and to accomplish or advance a number of its strategic objectives add to the case for Israel's strategic failure in the war.

The case that the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 was not a strategic failure for Israel is articulated most prominently by Israeli military historian and theorist Martin van Creveld in a 2008 opinion piece penned for *The Jewish Daily Forward*.<sup>42</sup> He acknowledges that “The war was indeed marked by a long series of failures.”<sup>43</sup> He states that Israel went to war with near unanimous support in the Knesset, favorable public opinion, and greater international support and leeway than Israel normally receives.<sup>44</sup> While true, van Creveld fails to acknowledge that as the war played out these initial conditions evaporated; early setbacks and a continuous rocket assault on northern Israel soured domestic public opinion, and international support collapsed as destruction and civilian casualties mounted in Lebanon. The crux of van Creveld’s argument for what Israel accomplished through the war, and why it should not be viewed as a failure, can be summed up by his assertion that “At least for the time being, Hezbollah appears to have had the fight knocked out of it. For well over a year now, Israel’s border with Lebanon has been almost totally quiet—by far the longest period of peace in four decades.”<sup>45</sup> However, a wounded enemy force does not equate to success in a strategic sense.

Martin van Creveld’s argument is best addressed through historical analogy. The battle of Gettysburg during the American Civil War was the bloodiest battle of that war and took an enormous toll on both armies.<sup>46</sup> Prior to Gettysburg, Confederate General Robert E. Lee had not been defeated in the field. Regarded as the “High Water Mark of the Confederacy,”<sup>47</sup> the battle of Gettysburg was General Lee’s first defeat and clearly resulted in the culmination of the Confederate campaign in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Following the battle, Confederate forces were able to withdraw south across the Potomac River, saving the Army of Northern Virginia from possible destruction. Weeks after the

battle, Confederate President Jefferson F. Davis dispatched Major Seddon, a brother of Confederate Secretary of War James A. Seddon, to General Lee's headquarters.<sup>48</sup> When faced with Major Seddon's negative assessment of newspaper coverage and public opinion following the battle, General Lee responded, in part, "sir, we did whip them at Gettysburg, and it will be seen for the next six months that *that army* will be as quiet as a sucking dove."<sup>49</sup> In fact, General Lee's assessment was correct, and the Army of the Potomac was relatively quiet for ten months until the initiation of the Overland Campaign in May of 1864.<sup>50</sup> This period of relative inactivity was due to a variety of reasons including the need to help the area around Gettysburg recover from the devastation left by the battle, the need for federal troops to help put down draft riots in New York City, the need to reconstitute significant portions of the Army of the Potomac, and Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant's promotion to Commanding General of the United States Army. However, the accuracy of Lee's assessment of the damage done to the Army of the Potomac or its subsequent inactivity did not change the fact that the Army of Northern Virginia did not achieve its strategic objectives, the campaign had been a failure, and the battle had been lost.

Similarly, militarily damaging Hezbollah, its subsequent "quiet" along the Israeli border, and Nasrallah's surprise at the scale and intensity of Israel's reaction to the initial raid do not equate to the achievement of Israel's strategic objectives. Hezbollah was not destroyed as a political-military organization; it has reconstituted its losses, and has subsequently been engaged to significant effect in Syria.<sup>51</sup> In fact, it is arguable that Hezbollah today is as much, if not more, of a threat than it was in 2006. For van Creveld, as for Lee before him, the argument that an enemy has been damaged and has since not

engaged in meaningful combat is not an argument for having been successful in some previous action. The argument that Israel was successful in a strategic sense by damaging Hezbollah is as unconvincing as it was for Lee. When examined in the full context of what Israel meant to and failed to achieve, and what Hezbollah was able to achieve, it is clear that while the conduct and the outcome of the war was miscalculated by both sides, Israel clearly emerged from the cease fire having failed strategically. Finally, it must be noted that while Israel met with strategic *failure* in the war, it was not *defeated* in a strategic sense. Nothing that came from the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 threatened the State of Israel, its economy, or way of life in any meaningful way. The strategic designs for which the war of choice had been launched had been stymied, but the overall strategic position of Israel as a state remained strong.

### Existing Explanations

Having established that Israel met with strategic failure in the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, attention will now turn to the existing explanations for Israel's strategic failure. The three existing explanations that will be examined for the purposes of this study include: (1) the adoption of EBO and SOD methodologies within the IDF; (2) an overreliance on air power; (3) the general unpreparedness and poor performance of IDF ground forces. This study makes no claim that these existing explanations did not contribute to Israel's strategic failure, they certainly did. Rather, the study argues that these existing explanations are not exclusive in their explanatory power; there is room for other explanations. Accordingly, each existing explanation will be summarized and accepted in principle. The question then arises whether there is anything inherent in any of the existing explanations, individually or in concert, that would have precluded Israel's

continued pursuit of its strategic objectives during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. This paper argues that there is not, and therefore, while these existing explanations undoubtedly contributed to Israel's strategic failure, their explanatory power is incomplete, requiring the identification of another explanation that can account for why Israel was compelled to end the war without achieving its strategic objectives.

#### The Adoption of EBO and SOD Methodologies within the IDF

Shortly before the outbreak of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, the IDF adopted a new doctrine heavily influenced by Israeli concepts of Systemic Operational Design as developed by Brigadier General (Reserve) Shimon Naveh, which was in turn influenced by concepts of Effects Based Operations which were being debated in the United States at the same time.<sup>52</sup> Effects Based Operations originated in the United States Air Force and were designed to

explicitly and logically [link] the effects of individual tactical actions directly to desired military and political outcomes. By focusing on effects—the full range of outcomes, events, or consequences that result from a specific action—commanders can concentrate on meeting objectives instead of managing target lists.<sup>53</sup>

The intent of EBO was to bypass an enemy's military strength, and directly target the ability of the enemy state and military to function on an institutional and organizational level by employing various capabilities against critical nodes in an enemy's systems and structures, near simultaneously, to achieve a given effect, most commonly operational paralysis or strategic defeat.<sup>54</sup> Systemic Operational Design emerged from the IDF's Operational Theory Research Institute (OTRI) which existed to develop the "knowledge necessary for military commanders to think critically, systemically and methodologically about war fighting" providing "operational commanders with tools to conceptualize both

their enemies and themselves for the purpose of designing suitable campaigns.”<sup>55</sup>

Systemic Operational Design is a

methodology that attempts to rationalize complexity through systemic logic. It represents the application of systems theory and complexity theory to complex security problems. SOD views operational design as a sub component and key enabler of operational art that functions cooperatively with planning and execution through a continuous cycle of design, plan, act and learn. SOD is a commander-led discursive approach to operational design that facilitates operational planning and execution by developing and articulating a hypothetical systems framework and logic within which planning can proceed.<sup>56</sup>

The impetus for the development of SOD was the inadequacy of traditional notions of operational art to generate positive outcomes to the highly complex security challenges faced by the IDF in the years leading up to the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006.<sup>57</sup> The IDF suffered from “an inability to logically and purposefully bridge the gap between strategy and tactics.”<sup>58</sup> The answer of the OTRI was SOD. Despite the crosspollination of ideas, EBO and SOD were not synonymous. While the American EBO concept was more qualitative and effects based, the Israeli SOD concept was more quantitative and target centric.<sup>59</sup> While EBO and SOD have their merits as operational design and targeting methodologies which can help to bridge the gap between strategy and tactics, neither can be construed to be a strategy in their own right.

In addition to complexity theory and systems theory, the intellectual underpinnings of SOD relied on a vast and eclectic assemblage of sources including post-modern French philosophy, literary theory, decision making theory, architecture, psychology, computer science, social sciences, and biological science.<sup>60</sup> As Combat Studies Institute (CSI) historian Matt M. Matthews remarked “Not every officer in the IDF had the time or the inclination to study postmodern French philosophy.”<sup>61</sup> However, this anti-intellectual criticism masks a larger problem. Many in the IDF, not comfortable

with a new way of viewing operational design that was at odds with the dominant organizational culture of the IDF, chose to reflexively criticize the doctrine and its proponents rather than take the time to truly engage with and understand it both intellectually and professionally. A disinclination toward a particular advancement within a field is not an excuse for it to be dismissed or ignored by a true professional.

Portions of the SOD concept and its reliance on precision fires were tested and validated in operations against Palestinian militants in the years leading up to the war with Hezbollah, however these innovations were not universally disseminated to the force until 2006.<sup>62</sup> In April of that year, Lieutenant General Halutz approved the new doctrine; a mere three months before the outbreak of the war.<sup>63</sup> As the entire lexicon of the IDF's professional language changed, one IDF officer noted

Field commanders did not like the new doctrine, principally because they didn't understand it. Of the 170 pages long doctrine document, many experienced officers didn't understand more than half. . . . The terminology used was too complicated, vain, and could not be understood by the thousands of officers that needed to carry it out.<sup>64</sup>

In practice, the SOD doctrine caused confusion on the battlefield during the Israel-Hezbollah War.<sup>65</sup> The complex and unfamiliar language proved problematic when it came to translating operational concepts to definable military tasks, confusing those tasked with its execution.<sup>66</sup> This confusion created unnecessary friction within the IDF and served to cause disjunction between the strategic and the tactical levels of war, creating, in this instance, exactly that condition which SOD (or any operational design methodology for that matter) was designed to alleviate. There is no question, that the adoption of SOD had a negative effect on the ability of the IDF to achieve its objectives in the case of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006.

However, the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 was not the ideal or even a fair test case for SOD given the circumstances. First, it must be noted that a general unwillingness or aversion to engage with or learn the new doctrine among IDF officers is not a valid professional reason for blaming the doctrine itself for any subsequent confusion. However, in this case the real problem with the implementation of SOD was a problem of time. With the doctrine having been approved only three months prior to the war, there had not been the time necessary to learn, train, or practice, let alone institutionalize the new doctrine prior to execution. It was arguably ill-advised, perhaps even foolish, to move forward with combat operations using a doctrine that had not been internalized by the force. The IDF could have executed combat operations during the war using traditional operational methodologies and more readily understood doctrine. Despite the difficulties that IDF units experienced during the war translating commander's intent into action under the SOD construct, the IDF could have reverted back to the use of its previous doctrine, which had been in effect a mere three months earlier, and continued to pursue its strategic objective on firmer operational footing. There was nothing inherent in the use of SOD that prevented the IDF from making an adjustment and continuing to pursue Israel's strategic objectives using the very same forces. Thus, the logical power of this explanation for Israel's strategic failure is not exclusive. The IDF had failed to achieve its strategic objectives, its forces had met with setbacks, and the poor performance of the IDF while utilizing SOD concepts arguably played a negative role in this case, but the forces remained. For the most part, the units and formations still existed, munitions had been expended, but these could be replenished. This argument helps to explain why Israel failed to achieve its strategic objectives, but it does not adequately

address why Israel would not have made operational adjustments and continued the pursuit of those objectives toward a more favorable outcome.

### An Overreliance on Air Power

The elevation of Dan Halutz to lieutenant general and Chief of the General Staff marked the first time that an Israeli Air Force (IAF) officer had occupied the top position in the IDF. General Halutz was a great proponent of air power and precision strike capabilities.<sup>67</sup> In fact, it would not be a stretch to say that as air power enthusiasts go, Dan Halutz was, in a modern sense, an air power extremist. The IDF's overreliance on air power is also related to its adoption of SOD methodologies. The simultaneous rise of the influence of the IAF and ideas of SOD in the IDF created the illusion of a panacea in IDF military thinking. Central to this illusion was the belief that an adversary's will could be defeated or significantly affected through the application of precision fires, mostly delivered from the air.<sup>68</sup> This assertion was also billed as a way to lower casualties among the IDF, decrease collateral damage, and reap significant budgetary savings over the high manpower costs associated with ground forces.<sup>69</sup> Significantly, the Winograd Commission noted that the combined effect was a changed view, within the highest echelons of the IDF, of the role of land power in achieving military objectives.<sup>70</sup> In essence, air power became a supported rather than a supporting element.

When the war broke out, the IDF had a contingency plan available to handle a generic crisis involving Hezbollah which called for a joint air and ground campaign to force Hezbollah forces north of the Litani River. In the initial hours of the war Lieutenant General Halutz chose to execute only the air campaign, failing to account for air power's inability to achieve the effects the ground campaign was designed to achieve, and

eliminating flexibility in the days that followed due to the time necessary to call up reserves and prepare for ground combat operations.<sup>71</sup>

The air campaign was designed to create effects on both Hezbollah and the Lebanese state that would cause the disarmament of Hezbollah and its expulsion from southern Lebanon.<sup>72</sup> To execute a SOD-inspired air campaign as Lieutenant General Halutz intended required campaign planners to have a near perfect understanding of the battlefield, the effects they wished to create, the cascading second and third order effects of IDF action, the actual effect on targets already serviced, the motives, resiliency, and vulnerabilities of Hezbollah as a political-military organization, and the motives, capabilities, and vulnerabilities of the Lebanese state. Acquiring this type of battlefield understanding in real time was quite possibly an impossibility for any political or military actor. Accordingly, the IDF misjudged the effects (and unintended effects) that such a campaign would produce or fail to produce in practice.

Israeli Air Force attacks in the opening hours of the war targeted key infrastructure, Hezbollah's intermediate- and long-range rocket forces, command and control nodes, and Hezbollah's *al-Manar* satellite television station; the first two with great effect.<sup>73</sup> Hezbollah retaliated with short range rocket attacks launched from southern Lebanon into northern Israel. The IAF proved far less effective at targeting these short-range weapons.<sup>74</sup> The United States, with its significant advantages in unmanned sensors, real time intelligence capabilities, and precision guided munitions, is barely effective enough to achieve the type of rapid sensor-shooter loops necessary to carry out this type of campaign, and even then execution is not perfect, mistakes occur, and opportunities are missed. The IAF, with significantly less capability and capacity in terms

of sensors, intelligence, and precision munitions met with significant problems in creating the campaign's intended effects.<sup>75</sup> A lack of human intelligence or the timely and accurate battle damage assessments (BDA) that such campaigns require hampered the ability to monitor and assess the achievement of intended effects.<sup>76</sup> As the initial target lists were exhausted and escalation of the air campaign progressed, the IAF began to shift to targets with less individual effect and higher risks of collateral damage.<sup>77</sup> When air power proved incapable of achieving the desired strategic effects or of halting the continuous Hezbollah rocket assault emanating from southern Lebanon, Lieutenant General Halutz was forced to resort to ground forces.<sup>78</sup>

As the war progressed, the gap between Lieutenant General Halutz's intent and the facts of the ground grew continually wider. As Haninah Levine of the now defunct Center for Defense Information noted,

as the conflict unfolded, Halutz's optimistic assessment of the military's state of readiness merged with his false confidence in the abilities of its advanced weapon systems . . . to create a state in which the chief of staff's concept of what his forces were capable of achieving was completely divorced from reality and from what the information available to him suggested.<sup>79</sup>

The overreliance on air power by the IDF resulted in a failure to integrate the capabilities inherent in the IAF into a workable joint operations concept.<sup>80</sup> As CSIS national security analyst Anthony Cordesman concluded:

Like virtually all air forces and air operations before it, the IAF also seems to have grossly exaggerated its ability to use airpower to coerce and intimidate governments and political behavior. Lebanon did not react to IAF efforts to force it to deploy south and to shut down Hezbollah.

If there is a lesson here, it is that from Giulio Douhet to the present, the advocates of airpower clearly have had no better political understanding of the compellence aspect of airpower than has any man on the street—and probably less. They tend to sharply exaggerate its ability to influence or intimidate leaders and politicians and to act as a weapon of political warfare.<sup>81</sup>

Likewise, the Winograd Commission concluded that:

there were those in the IDF high command, joined by some in the political echelon, who entertained a baseless hope that the capabilities of the air force could prove decisive in the war. In fact, the impressive achievements of the air force were necessarily limited, and were eroded by the weakness in the overall performance of the IDF.<sup>82</sup>

Clearly, the IDF's overreliance on air power contributed to its failure in the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006.

The IDF could have planned and executed a joint operation in which the complementary aspects of both air and ground forces could have been properly integrated to create unity of effort and present Hezbollah with a more challenging problem set. Despite the failure of the initial air campaign to achieve the decisive effects envisioned by Lieutenant General Halutz, the IAF could have reverted back to its traditional focus on close air support to ground forces and, as part of a joint force, continued to pursue Israel's strategic objectives. There was nothing inherent in the failure of the initial air campaign that prevented the IDF from making such an adjustment and continuing the war using the very same forces in a different way. The IAF remained intact, and while munitions had been expended, these could be replaced. Thus, the explanatory power of this explanation for Israel's strategic failure is not exclusive. The failed SOD-based air campaign certainly played a negative role in the outcome of the war, but the IAF had not been defeated, or even significantly damaged, in the attempt. Thus, while mistakes in the overreliance on and employment of air power contributed to strategic failure, Israel could have made operational adjustments and continued the pursuit of its objectives.

## The General Unpreparedness and Poor Performance of the IDF Ground Forces

In the years leading up to the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, the IDF ground forces were faced with a number of conditions that complicated their performance in the war. Since Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, the IDF had been primarily focused on low-intensity conflict challenges posed by Palestinian militants in the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>83</sup> In the meantime, Hezbollah had evolved into a very different enemy, a hybrid threat, capable of leveraging advanced technology and training from external actors with the organizational structure of a non-state actor to create a political-military organization capable of complex military operations against a superior conventional opponent while remaining elusive and resilient enough to resist or avoid the IDF's conventional strength.

The IDF ground forces had been neglected, in terms of budget, doctrine, training, logistics, and leadership, while the ground forces themselves neglected readiness and preparedness for traditional high-intensity conflict tasks. Years of budget cuts to the IDF hit the ground forces especially hard.<sup>84</sup> The general trend in defense cuts being borne disproportionately by the IDF ground forces was reinforced by the advent of a SOD-based doctrine that deemphasized the role of land power, and the elevation of an IAF officer to Chief of the General Staff.<sup>85</sup> As budgets decreased, the IDF was forced to prioritize, and in the security environment that preceded the war with Hezbollah, training on high-intensity conflict tasks, including perishable skills such as tank crew qualification, eroded significantly. Instead, the IDF ground forces focused increasingly on executing the low-intensity conflict tasks associated with combating Palestinian militants.<sup>86</sup> Senior officers within both the active duty and the reserve components were

untrained in their duties and commands at echelons of brigade and above. This was partially attributable to budgetary stress and prioritization, but it also reflected a deliberate policy decision as the IDF ground forces were in the process of eliminating the division and corps level headquarters because SOD did not envision a role for ground force elements above brigade. In theory, brigades were to be task organized toward the accomplishment of a particular effect as part of a larger SOD campaign plan.<sup>87</sup> Also as a result of constrained resources, the IAF and the IDF ground forces had not trained for joint warfare or practiced air-ground integration.<sup>88</sup> As the Brodet Commission, charged with reviewing the defense budget after the war, found “the Israel Defense Forces and the entire defense establishment suffer from a multidimensional crisis: budgetary, management, organizational, cultural, and strategic.”<sup>89</sup>

As the war commenced, the IDF ground forces were initially kept on the sidelines as the IAF pursued its unilateral air campaign. When it became clear that the air campaign alone was not going to achieve the effects envisioned by its planners, IDF ground forces were ordered to begin a series of battalion and brigade level raids into Lebanon, not to pursue a decisive decision or neutralize the threat to Israel posed by Hezbollah’s short-range rocket forces, but to achieve effects to “craft a ‘consciousness of victory’ for Israelis and a ‘cognitive perception of defeat’ for Hezbollah.”<sup>90</sup> The IDF ground forces were met with stiff, determined, and competent resistance by Hezbollah fighters armed with advanced ATGM technology, fighting from prepared defenses, and capable of effective maneuver and inflicting casualties on their conventional foes. In contrast, the IDF ground forces found themselves incapable of operating as an effective combined arms team in a manner consistent with IDF performance in previous wars.<sup>91</sup>

Rather than seeking a way to bypass Hezbollah's strongpoints and exploit Hezbollah weaknesses along their lines of communication or their limited ability to provide mutual support between positions, the IDF persisted in conducting a series of local raids near the border, effectively choosing to repeatedly fight Hezbollah on its terms on ground chosen and prepared by Hezbollah for that purpose.<sup>92</sup>

There is a saying in the IDF that essentially translates as "the active duty IDF exists to fight for the first few days of a war, to provide time for the Jewish Army to mass."<sup>93</sup> What is meant by this expression is that the strength of the IDF lies in its significantly larger, and often more experienced, reserve forces, and that the active duty IDF must be prepared to operate effectively enough to give the reserve forces time to build combat power. However in the case of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, the decision to call up the reserves was delayed as initial hopes for a decisive outcome rested exclusively on the IAF and the air campaign. The initial decision not to call up the reserves decreased flexibility once it became clear that an offensive by ground forces would be required, and delayed and disrupted the arrival of IDF reserve forces on the battlefield.<sup>94</sup> As the reserve forces mustered, they found that they were being issued poor equipment and often faced critical shortages of essential items such as body armor, ammunition, medical supplies, radios, optics, and even food and water.<sup>95</sup> The reserve forces also arrived severely undertrained.<sup>96</sup> Both of these deficiencies were the result of years of neglect and resource constraints. IDF leaders had foreknowledge of the state of training and resources in the reserves, making the delay in mobilization even more egregious as the delay reduced the time available to conduct training and properly organize the formation.<sup>97</sup> Once deployed to the border, reserve units were not initially

given combat tasks, and even when they did deploy into Lebanon in support of IDF ground force raids, they often found themselves out of supply as their logistical elements were not permitted to move forward to conduct sustainment operations due to concerns about their survivability.<sup>98</sup>

As it became apparent that a UN imposed cease fire would likely end the war within days, the Israeli government ordered a final ground offensive designed to alter conditions on the ground in favor of Israel prior to the cease fire, change the perception of the war sufficiently to be able to claim success, and reduce the number of rocket attacks on northern Israel from southern Lebanon.<sup>99</sup> The offensive began on August 11, 2006 and consisted of four divisions attacking north in an attempt to reach the Litani River. The attacks were poorly planned, uncoordinated, made little progress, and resulted in a general state of confusion among the forces involved.<sup>100</sup> The IAF was not integrated into the offensive as part of a joint force, in part because of fears of the risk of fratricide between two forces that were no longer practiced in the tactics of close air support. On August 14, 2006, the cease-fire came into effect and the war was essentially over.

Of the existing explanations for Israel's strategic failure during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, the general unpreparedness and poor performance of the IDF ground forces is the most convincing. It is certainly the case that the IDF ground forces performed to a lesser standard and faced tougher resistance than had been the experience in previous wars. The IDF ground forces had taken casualties, had been bloodied, and had encountered a more capable and determined enemy than it had expected, but they had by no means been defeated, nor had they been forced to culminate in a tactical sense. IDF ground forces still maintained a massive advantage in both soldiers and material over

Hezbollah forces in southern Lebanon. IDF ground forces could potentially have consolidated and reorganized to conduct an integrated joint campaign designed to control Lebanese territory south of the Litani River, cut Hezbollah's lines of communication to its support to the north, isolate Hezbollah strongholds in the south, and slowly neutralize the Hezbollah presence on Israel's border. Here the question becomes whether the IDF ground forces failed because they were incapable of succeeding in the first place due to their lack of readiness, or whether those forces would have proven capable, albeit less spectacular, but failed because of poor leadership, planning, and orders. According to CSIS national security analyst Anthony Cordesman, it is unclear how much the failure of IDF ground forces was the result of a lack of IDF readiness, or

how many of the tactical problems that occurred in ground operations were simply the result of . . . indecisive planning; a lack of any clear commitment to even fully preparing for large-scale war fighting; and a failure to decide on a clear operational concept. . . . Ground forces are designed to attack or defend; they are not designed to "dither".<sup>101</sup>

If one is inclined to believe that the deficiencies in readiness were enough to make strategic failure inevitable and would have resulted in tactical culmination, then one could determine that this explanation is indeed exclusive and sufficiently accounts for the IDF's strategic failure during the war. If this were the case, it is likely that the tactical culmination of IDF ground forces would have coincided with the end of the war. However, if one determines that, despite a poor state of readiness and the inherent difficulties that such a state would present in comparison to previous wars, Israeli advantages in soldiers and material did not preordain strategic failure and that proper adjustments could have been made and the war effort continued toward a more favorable outcome, then room for another explanation remains. If the poor state of readiness did not

preordain strategic failures, then there remains nothing inherent in the unpreparedness of IDF ground forces that would have prevented the IDF from making the necessary adjustments and continuing to pursue Israel's strategic objectives using the same forces. It is important to remember that setbacks in the initial phase of a war do not necessarily preordain the outcome of that conflict. Adjustment is often necessary, setbacks can be reversed, and the war can be won, as illustrated by the Allied experience in the Second World War, or the Israeli experience in the October War of 1973. The IDF failed to achieve its strategic objectives, its forces met with setbacks, and the lack of readiness and poor performance of the IDF ground forces arguably played a negative role in this case, but the forces remained and were not defeated. At the end of the war, three of the four IDF divisions were advancing toward the Litani River, albeit much more slowly than anticipated.<sup>102</sup> Munitions had been expended, and some equipment had been damaged or destroyed,<sup>103</sup> but for the most part, the units and formations were intact and, with the exception of the division of reservists, continued their advance toward the Litani River until ordered to cease operations.<sup>104</sup> This explanation helps to explain why Israel failed to achieve its strategic objectives, but it does not adequately explain why Israel did not make adjustments and continue the pursuit of those objectives toward a more favorable outcome.

### The Combined Effect of Existing Explanations

The three existing explanations discussed above, the adoption of SOD methodologies, an overreliance on air power, and the unpreparedness of IDF ground forces are complementary and their explanatory power increases when they are considered simultaneously. All three existing explanations certainly contributed to

Israel's strategic failure in the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. The adoption of SOD methodologies and the limited time available to learn, train, and internalize the doctrine prior to the war did create considerable confusion. The overreliance on air power did result in the pursuit of a strategy that could never have achieved what its architects envisioned. The unpreparedness of IDF ground forces did result in higher than expected casualties, destroyed vehicles, and significant friction at the tactical level. However, while all of these explanations contribute to an understanding of why Israel failed to achieve its strategic objectives during the war, none adequately explains why Israel was unable to implement a more traditional operational campaign, provide close air support to ground forces as part of a joint force, and fully occupy Lebanese territory south of the Litani River in order to neutralize the Hezbollah threat along Israel's northern border. By failing to explain why Israel was unable to make the necessary adjustments despite retaining its forces largely intact, existing explanations are obviously insufficient. In order to fully explain Israel's strategic failure, one must consider why the adjustments could not be made and the war effort continued toward a more favorable outcome. For this, one must consider why the war ended when it did, and this is a question of operational time that will be addressed in the next chapter. First, however, a short discussion on the role of organizational culture in determining the existing explanations is in order.

## Organizational Culture and the Determination of Lessons Learned

Political scientist Jeffrey W. Legro has written extensively on the role of organizational cultures in military bureaucracies and military decision making. Legro determined that:

Within military bureaucracies, collective philosophies of war fighting—a type of culture—shaped how soldiers thought about themselves, perceived the world, formulated plans, advised leaders, and went into action. Despite international constraints and the desire of top civilian leaders for change, military cultures often endured. Culture decisively defined organizational preferences. . . . And these preferences, with surprising frequency, guided nations’ preferences on the use of force.<sup>105</sup>

Legro also identified three ways which organizational culture perpetuates itself in an organization and may ultimately become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Cultures, once established, tend to persist. Those individual members of a culture who adhere to its creed tend to advance in an organization and become the dominant culture’s new protectors. . . .

Cultures also tend to live on because they act as templates for organizational development, much the same way a theoretical paradigm can shape intellectual thought. Cultures necessarily influence the perceptions of their members. . . .

In a material sense, cultures shape organizations through resource allocation in capabilities. Collective beliefs dictate which enterprises are inherently better and should get support. Organizations will channel resources to methods suited to culture, which subsequently appear more feasible than those that have been deprived of funding and attention because they are incompatible. Thus culture is a determinant of resource decisions that in later periods tend to reinforce the viability of cultural assumptions regardless of their fit with situational “strategic” circumstances.<sup>106</sup>

In the case of the Israel-Lebanon War of 2006, the lessons learned by the IDF reflected organizational culture preferences and debates that predated the war. While the lessons learned and adopted as existing explanations may all be valid lessons, one should always be cautious when lessons from, or explanations for, a past event conveniently

align to positions from arguments or debates that predated the event, especially when those arguments or debates persist after the event. When this occurs, one must be careful to ensure that the lesson is being learned correctly, rather than serving to advance a particular agenda within the organization or being readily accepted because it conforms to preconceived aspects of organizational culture. However, just because a lesson or explanation conforms to organizational culture does not mean that it is not valid as organizational culture is often, in part, the product of previous experience and best practices. One must merely be cognizant of the link between the argument and organizational culture and its potential to influence perceptions of the lesson. One must also be careful to ensure that additional lessons that may not conform to, or be addressed by, existent organizational culture preferences or debates are adequately sought and explored.

Of the three existing explanations, the adoption of SOD methodologies is the most problematic in this regard. The adoption of SOD methodologies ran counter to much in the IDF's organizational culture, and was accordingly controversial at the time that it was written into doctrine. As a military force, the IDF has an incredible hyper-focus on the tactical level of war. This aspect of the IDF's organizational culture has a number of sources. First, the IDF was born out of the armed struggle for independence which culminated in the First Arab-Israeli War in 1948. The IDF was formed out of the necessity of the foundation of the State of Israel and the immediate advent of war between the nascent state and its Arab neighbors. The original IDF was comprised of fighters from the *Haganah* and other Jewish militias that had existed in British Palestine, as well as an eclectic group of immigrants, many with combat experience in the Second

World War. The new organization was forged in the fire of existential threat, and the intent of the Arab allies to destroy the State of Israel made it essential that the IDF win the war. The small size of the Israeli state and the speed of modern mechanized warfare made it essential that Israel not lose a single war; arguably, losing even a single battle could be disastrous, lessons reinforced by the Six-Day War in 1967 and the October War in 1973. If a military organization cannot lose a single battle, it necessarily becomes focused on developing and maintaining tactical expertise. Past experience in existential conflict at the time of its founding, and intermittently in the decades following, profoundly influenced the organizational culture of the IDF in the tactical realm.<sup>107</sup>

Additionally, the tactical focus of the IDF is continually reinforced by the way it selects and promotes officers. In the IDF, non-commissioned officers (NCOs) are chosen from among the best of the enlisted soldiers. The best NCOs are in turn selected to attend officer candidate school and become junior officers. The best platoon leaders are selected to become company commanders, and so on up the chain of command. This method of selecting and promoting officers ensures that the best soldiers become the best NCOs, and the most technically and tactically proficient of these become officers. However, this method also overlooks the fact that technical and tactical acumen does not necessarily translate into operational or strategic abilities. Thus the tactical focus inherent in the IDF's organizational culture is reinforced, while those who are promoted may not be inclined toward operational or strategic thought and many who might be are never given the opportunity.<sup>108</sup>

Systemic Operational Design was a highly intellectual exercise in high level operational and strategic thought that diverged markedly from the established tactical

doctrine of the IDF. Accordingly, SOD caused significant organizational resistance, a heated debate that was just beginning when the war began. The strategic failure of the IDF and the clear difficulties imposed by SOD became fodder for this doctrinal fight. The conclusion that SOD was to blame for the IDF's failures in the war fit nicely with the dominant strain of organizational culture within the IDF. This conclusion spelled the end for SOD in Israeli doctrine. It is easier for an explanation to gain traction when a partisan constituency already exists in the organization and the explanation can further their arguments in an organizational debate. However, willingness to readily accept this explanation masked the other reasons why SOD may have failed, to include the limited time to learn, train, and internalize the doctrine, and the general aversion of many in the IDF to even make the attempt.

The influence of organizational culture on lessons learned was also evident as the lesson was translated to the United States Army. At the time of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, the United States Army was involved in a debate about the related concept of EBO, a concept that originated in the United States Air Force. In this regard, CSI historian Matt Matthews' monograph *We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War* repeated the perceived lesson learned by the IDF concerning SOD while emphasizing the similarities between SOD and EBO. While acknowledging the reluctance of many in the IDF to engage with the new doctrinal concept, the author blamed the intellectual nature of the concept itself rather than a lack of professional curiosity among some in the IDF for this reluctance. Matthews also made the assumption that SOD doctrine itself, and by extension and association EBO, was flawed and mismatched to the type of warfare that Israel encountered rather than seriously exploring

whether the short time available to learn, train, and implement the doctrine, poor execution of the doctrine, or a general misunderstanding of the doctrine were to blame. Matthews' arguments against EBO methodologies found an enthusiastic audience among partisans within the United States Army who sought to discredit EBO in favor of more traditional concepts of operational art. This is not to say that arguments against SOD and EBO based on the experience of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 may not have been valid, but merely illustrates how positing and advancing certain arguments that mirror prewar debates or advance a particular agenda within the military bureaucracy can be more readily accepted at the expense of other arguments that may not have a readymade constituency within the organization. In essence, in this case, both the IDF and the United States Army learned a lesson they wanted to learn from the war based a prewar debate and the dominant strain of organizational culture in each organization.

The argument that Israel demonstrated an overreliance on airpower also has roots in a prewar debate and a clash of organizational cultures within the IDF. The appointment of IAF officer Dan Halutz as Chief of the General Staff was in itself a controversial decision. The position of Chief of the General Staff had always been filled by an officer from the IDF ground forces. As the first Chief of the General Staff to come out of the IAF, Lieutenant General Halutz used his position to further air power theory within the IDF, a change that prompted significant backlash from land power enthusiasts in the IDF ground forces. The deemphasis of IDF ground forces, both doctrinally and in the defense budget, went against the dominant strain of organizational culture within the IDF and proved how resistant an organization can be to top down change that cuts across existing organizational norms and beliefs. When the air campaign failed to achieve its objectives,

the argument that Israel's strategic failure was in part the result of an overreliance on air power had a readymade constituency prepared to use the experience of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 to advance their case against the rise of air power theory within the IDF. This lesson was easily accepted by the IDF because it advanced the dominant organizational culture and mirrored prewar debate within the organization. The IDF had learned another lesson that it wanted to learn.

The argument that unpreparedness and general poor performance among the IDF ground forces contributed to Israel's strategic failure is in some ways the reciprocal of the preceding argument, and also has its roots in prewar debates and the organizational culture of the IDF. If the IAF had been the doctrinal and budgetary winner in the years leading up to the war, the IDF ground forces had been the loser. Debates about the readiness, resources, and training of the IDF ground forces, as well as reservations about the new SOD-based doctrine and its potential misuse of land power solidified a constituency within the IDF to protect the traditional role and influence of the IDF ground forces within the organization. When the IDF ground forces did in fact display a lack of readiness and poor performance relative to previous wars, this constituency was quick to point to the result to further their position from the prewar debate and reinforce the dominant strain of organizational culture within the IDF. Once again, the IDF learned the lesson that it wanted to learn and the Halutz reforms were largely reversed.

The point of this discussion is not to say that Israel learned the wrong lessons from the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. The existing explanations discussed above are in fact valid explanations. Rather, the point of this discussion is to highlight the fact that the three explanations all originated in prewar debates and found ready acceptance among

constituencies in the IDF that were interested in preserving and promoting the dominant strain of organizational culture within the IDF. However, when explanations are so readily apparent and accepted, one must question whether there may be further explanations and lessons to be learned that may have been missed because they did not mirror prewar debates or conform to a dominant vision of organizational culture. If all lessons learned mirror prewar debates then it must be assumed that those prewar debates accurately captured the issues that would be at play in the next war. In practice, war often unfolds in unexpected ways, and a search for other lessons that may not conform to prewar debates or organizational culture preferences is required to ensure that the war is fully understood and its lessons processed to ensure that the same mistakes are not made again.

This chapter argued that Israel met with strategic failure in the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. Existing explanations for Israel's strategic failure were examined and determined to be both valid and nonexclusive in their explanatory power. The existing explanations explain why Israel did not achieve its strategic objectives during the war, but do not explain why Israel was compelled to cease combat operations before making the necessary adjustments and continuing the war effort toward a more favorable outcome. While certainly contributing factors, the existing explanations leave room for additional complementary explanatory factors. These existing explanations were linked to organizational culture preferences and debates that existed in the IDF prior to the war, suggesting that other potential lessons that did not correspond to these preexisting positions may have been overlooked. The next chapter will explore a complementary explanation of Israel's strategic failure in the war, arguing that events in the information

environment forced a premature end to the war, thereby ending operational time for the IDF.

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<sup>1</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 9-18.

<sup>2</sup>Qassem, 39-41.

<sup>3</sup>Norton, 149-151.

<sup>4</sup>Qassem, 40-41.

<sup>5</sup>Johnson, 64.

<sup>6</sup>Harel and Issacharoff, 250-251.

<sup>7</sup>Johnson, 78.

<sup>8</sup>Arkin, 46.

<sup>9</sup>Dominic Evans, "Hezbollah will stay in Syria as long as needed: Nasrallah," *Reuters*, November 14, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/14/us-syria-crisis-hezbollah-idUSBRE9AD0D820131114> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>10</sup>Josef Federman, "Israel takes risk with airstrike on Hezbollah," *Associated Press*, February 26, 2013, [http://news.yahoo.com/israel-takes-risk-airstrike-hezbollah-203100120.html;\\_ylt=A0LEV03sZ0BT7SMA\\_TNx.9w4;ylu=X3oDMTE0Y3NodDd0BHNIYwNzcgRwb3MDMgRjb2xvA2JmMQR2dGlkA01PVVMxNThfMQ--](http://news.yahoo.com/israel-takes-risk-airstrike-hezbollah-203100120.html;_ylt=A0LEV03sZ0BT7SMA_TNx.9w4;ylu=X3oDMTE0Y3NodDd0BHNIYwNzcgRwb3MDMgRjb2xvA2JmMQR2dGlkA01PVVMxNThfMQ--) (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>11</sup>United Nations Security Council, *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006)* (New York, NY: United Nations Security Council), [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1701\(2006\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1701(2006)) (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>12</sup>Harel and Issacharoff, 251.

<sup>13</sup>United Nations Security Council, *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006)*.

<sup>14</sup>This observation was offered to the author during a conversation with two IDF Ground Forces Lieutenant Colonels while observing the border between Israel and Lebanon in June 2012.

<sup>15</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 6.

<sup>16</sup>Johnson, 78.

<sup>17</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 19.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>19</sup>Norton, 115.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 117-118.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 132-133.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 28-29.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>30</sup>Duraïd Al Baik, "Nisr's release raises hopes of freedom for more prisoners," *Gulf News*, June 1, 2008, <http://gulfnews.com/news/region/palestinian-territories/nisr-s-release-raises-hopes-of-freedom-for-more-prisoners-1.109962> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>31</sup>Ayat Basma and Avida Landau, "Hezbollah delivers remains of two Israeli soldiers," *Reuters*, July 16, 2008, <http://mobile.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSL141960220080716> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>32</sup>Al Baik. See also, Basma and Landau.

<sup>33</sup>Norton, 116.

<sup>34</sup>CNN, "Nasrallah: Soldiers' abductions a mistake."

<sup>35</sup>Harel and Issacharoff, 1-15.

<sup>36</sup>Norton, 136. See also, Johnson, 66.

<sup>37</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 109-110.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 103.

- <sup>39</sup>Norton, 147-151.
- <sup>40</sup>Friedman.
- <sup>41</sup>Norton, 152-153.
- <sup>42</sup>Martin van Creveld, "Israel's War With Hezbollah Was Not a Failure," *The Jewish Daily Forward*, January 30, 2008, <http://forward.com/articles/12579/israel-s-war-with-hezbollah-was-not-a-failure/> (accessed May 7, 2014).
- <sup>43</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>44</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>45</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>46</sup>Edwin B. Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), vii.
- <sup>47</sup>Ibid., 517.
- <sup>48</sup>Henry Heth, "Letter from Major-General Henry Heth, of A. P. Hill's Corps, A.N.V.," in *Southern Historical Society Papers, Volume IV, July to December*, ed. Rev. J. Wm. Jones, D.D. (New York, NY: Krause Reprint Co., 1977), 153. Original letter dated 1877.
- <sup>49</sup>Ibid., 153-155.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid., 155.
- <sup>51</sup>Evans.
- <sup>52</sup>Johnson, 27-35.
- <sup>53</sup>Department of the Air Force, Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office. November 17, 2003), 18, [http://www.everyspec.com/USAF/USAF-General/download.php?spec=AFDD\\_1\\_2003.035392.pdf](http://www.everyspec.com/USAF/USAF-General/download.php?spec=AFDD_1_2003.035392.pdf) (accessed May 7, 2014).
- <sup>54</sup>Matthews, 62.
- <sup>55</sup>Caroline Glick, "Column One: Halutz's Stalinist moment," *Jerusalem Post*, June 8, 2006, <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Column-One-Halutzs-Stalinist-moment> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>56</sup>L. Craig Dalton, “Systemic Operational Design: Epistemological Bumpf or the Way Ahead for Operational Design?” (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2006), 26.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>59</sup>Johnson, 33.

<sup>60</sup>Matthews, 25. See also, Johnson, 29-30.

<sup>61</sup>Matthews, 25.

<sup>62</sup>Johnson, 37.

<sup>63</sup>Matthews, 26.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Matthews, 63. See also Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 66.

<sup>66</sup>Johnson, 30-31, 88-89.

<sup>67</sup>Matthews, 62.

<sup>68</sup>Johnson, 32.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 35-36.

<sup>71</sup>Matthews, 36-37.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 37.

<sup>73</sup>Matthews, 37. See also Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 54.

<sup>74</sup>Matthews, 38, 61.

<sup>75</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 41.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 50, 125-126.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 55.

<sup>78</sup>Matthews, 38-39.

<sup>79</sup>Matthews, 62-63. This quote is quoted in Matthews and originates from “The Revolution In Military Affairs’ Shocks But Does Not Awe Israeli Commission,” CDI Center For Defense Information, Straus Military Reform Project, June 11, 2007. The original report is no longer available.

<sup>80</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 121.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>82</sup>Eliyahu Winograd, *English Summary of the Winograd Commission Report* (Tel, Aviv, IS: The Winograd Commission, January 30, 2008), [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/30/world/middleeast/31winograd-web.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/30/world/middleeast/31winograd-web.html?_r=0) (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>83</sup>Matthews, 22.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, 24, 27.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, 27-28.

<sup>88</sup>Johnson, 43.

<sup>89</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 49. See also Meirav Arlosoroff, “Brodet Commission: Deep cuts in military training were a major mistake,” *Haaretz*, May 30, 2007, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/business/brodet-commission-deep-cuts-in-military-training-were-a-major-mistake-1.221777> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>90</sup>Matthews, 43.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>92</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 84.

<sup>93</sup>Conversation between the author and an IDF ground forces lieutenant colonel in July 2012 at an observation post overlooking the approaches into Lebanon.

<sup>94</sup>Matthews, 44-45.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, 27, 49-50.

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>97</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 58.

<sup>98</sup>Matthews, 44-45, 50.

<sup>99</sup>Johnson, 71-72.

<sup>100</sup>Matthews, 51-52.

<sup>101</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 59.

<sup>102</sup>Johnson, 74.

<sup>103</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 110.

<sup>104</sup>Johnson, 73-77.

<sup>105</sup>Legro, 2-3.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 22-23.

<sup>107</sup>Based on a series of regular interactions with IDF officers in my role as the primary liason between the Israel Defense Force Tactical Command College and the United States Military Academy while I was serving as the Deputy Director of the Defense and Strategic Studies Program at West Point. This assignment led to mutual exchanges, both in personal and over email, over the course of years. This was a narrative often repeated in conversation with or presentations given by IDF officers.

<sup>108</sup>Based on briefings and subsequent question and answer sessions given by IDF officers at the Israel Defense Force Tactical Command College, and the Israel Defense Force Ground Force Officer Candidate School during a July 2012 visit by myself and cadets from the United States Military Academy.

CHAPTER 5  
THE DECISIVE NATURE OF OPERATIONAL TIME AND  
THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

The primary purpose of this chapter is to offer an alternative and complementary explanation to more completely explain Israel's strategic failure in the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. This asserts that Hezbollah's exploitation of Israel in the information environment, and the subsequent limitation on operational time imposed by such exploitation, in concert with existing explanations, offers a better and more complete explanation for Israel's strategic failure. The majority of Arab states initially, if tacitly, supported Israel due to a collective fear of regional Shia ascendancy. However, this support evaporated as a direct result of Israel's disproportionate response, the high number of resultant civilian casualties in Lebanon, and Hezbollah exploitation of these casualties in the information environment. As the casualties mounted, regional media outlets broadcast continuous images of the carnage. As public opinion on the "Arab street" began to turn vehemently against Israel and IDF operations in Lebanon, increasingly large demonstrations were held in a number of Arab capitals. As these demonstrations progressed, Israel's Sunni Arab supporters were forced to withdraw their support and demand a ceasefire before Israel could accomplish its strategic objectives. From a theoretical perspective, the experience of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 will be examined within the construct of operational time. The logic of the fourth generation modern war model will be applied to the narrative to show that Hezbollah's exploitation of Israel in IE was likely Hezbollah's main effort, an effort that Israel was unable to counter and even unwittingly assisted toward its ends. This chapter presents an argument

that Hezbollah has inverted the traditional model where information objectives support military objectives, which in turn accomplish political objectives, replacing it with a model where military objectives support the achievement of information objectives, which in turn attain political objectives. This logic will further argue that the hallmark of a true hybrid threat is not simply the mixing of conventional and irregular formations, tactics, and military systems, but the ability to expand the battlespace into nontraditional domains with strategic effect, consistent with the ideas of fourth generation modern war. This explanation will also be examined from a center of gravity (COG) analysis perspective. The chapter will conclude by arguing that the exploitation of IDF attacks and civilian casualties in the IE, and the subsequent loss of regional public opinion and political support, thereby shortening the operational time available to achieve its military objectives, was sufficient to cause Israel's strategic failure, but that this factor is even more convincing when considered in concert with current explanations.

In the first few days of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, something remarkable occurred in terms of the international response within the region. Previously, when violence had broken out between Israel and some Arab enemy the Arab world was quick to condemn Israel. Strikingly, following Hezbollah's brazen abduction of two IDF soldiers, the Arab world initially reacted by remaining uncharacteristically silent. Some Arab states even went so far as to openly criticize Hezbollah for the conflagration. During an emergency meeting of the Arab League, the Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Saud bin Faisal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud (commonly known as Saud al-Faisal) described Hezbollah's initiation of the conflict as "unexpected, inappropriate and irresponsible acts" that would "pull the region back to years ago, and we cannot simply

accept them.”<sup>1</sup> The Saudi foreign minister’s comments were supported by Jordan, Egypt, Kuwait, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and the Palestinian Authority.<sup>2</sup> The Saudi Press Agency, the official government news agency of Saudi Arabia, even went so far as to blame Hezbollah in a sharply worded statement that, while not naming Hezbollah by name, read in part:

The Kingdom stood firmly with the resistance in Lebanon until Israel’s occupation of Lebanon ended. . . . A difference should be drawn between legitimate resistance and rash adventures carried out by elements inside the state and those behind them without consultation or coordination with Arab countries. . . . The Kingdom views that it is time that these elements alone bear the full responsibility of these irresponsible acts and should alone shoulder the burden of ending the crisis they have created.<sup>3</sup>

The statement continued, “They [the elements] are exposing Arab nations and their gains to grave dangers without these nations having a say in the matter.”<sup>4</sup> President Muhammad Hosni el-Sayed Mubarak of Egypt and King Abdullah II of Jordan, while also alluding to Hezbollah, warned of “the region being dragged into ‘adventurism’ that does not serve Arab interests.”<sup>5</sup>

The Arab press was also initially critical of Hezbollah. Ahmed al-Jarallah, the editor-in-chief of the Kuwaiti newspaper *Al-Seyassah* or “The Politics” penned an editorial criticizing Hezbollah’s justifications for the war and stating in part

Unfortunately, we must admit that in such a war the only way to get rid of ‘these irregular phenomena’ is what Israel is doing. The operations of Israel in . . . Lebanon are in the interest of people of Arab countries and in the international community.<sup>6</sup>

In another editorial he directly attacked Hezbollah’s Iranian connection, writing

Nasrallah has done some grave miscalculations under instructions from the outside. Nasrallah has dragged Lebanon and its people into misfortune . . . Nasrallah has hijacked the authority of the Lebanese government to have control over the people of Lebanon. . . . The fate of the Lebanese is in the hands of a handful of reckless adventurers, who have prevented Arabs from making well-

judged decisions . . . Iran and Syria are fighting the international community . . . in Lebanon and Palestine. Nobody is benefiting from this conflict, except Tehran and Damascus.<sup>7</sup>

Even within Lebanon, there was criticism of Hezbollah. A Druze member of the Parliament of Lebanon, Walid Jumblatt stated in an interview on July 13, 2006 that

Hezbollah played a very dangerous game by kidnapping these two soldiers . . . Israel has withdrawn from Lebanon. These kidnappings took place outside our country's borders. Hezbollah is raising the stakes, with the support of Iran and Syria . . . Hezbollah will have to explain itself to the Lebanese . . . [We need to decide] who makes the decisions regarding war and peace in this country.<sup>8</sup>

This last statement would seem to be exactly the type of effect Israel hoped to create within the Lebanese government, however in the coming days and weeks all such sentiment would disappear from the public debate as it became clear that the biggest loser of this conflict would be the Lebanese state and the Lebanese people.

Many of the Arab governments of the Middle East, and especially those ruled by Sunni regimes, had a perceived security interest in criticizing Hezbollah and initially, if tacitly, supporting Israel's action against Hezbollah. The Sunni Arab governments and Israel shared a collective fear of regional Shia ascendancy seen in the region at the time through a belligerent Iran pursuing nuclear weapons, an Iraq under a weak Shia-dominated government being plunged into chaos by sectarian violence and Shia militias, a heavily armed Syria with a history of meddling in Lebanon, and Hezbollah functioning as a state within a state in southern Lebanon. The initial support given to Israel through open Arab criticism of Hezbollah provided Tel Aviv with the political space necessary to conduct a major strategic operation against Hezbollah rather than a more limited series of retaliatory strikes. The reality of any war involving Israel is that it must be able to continue to exist and function as normally as possible in the region after the war. While

Israel does not have warm relations with its neighbors, the regional response to the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah was the most supportive to date. The lack of significant early criticism of Israel's actions allowed Israel to attempt a major strategic operation without fear of a major deterioration of relations between Israel and its neighbors. As Israeli military historian and theorist Martin van Creveld stated in a 2008 opinion piece "the international community, instead of reining in Israel as it had done so often in the past, gave Olmert almost all the leeway he needed."<sup>9</sup> In effect, through the tacit support of Israel's Arab neighbors, the operational time necessary for the IDF to pursue a major strategic operation against Hezbollah had been initially afforded to Israel, an expansion of operational time that Israel was unaccustomed to receiving from other states in the region.

This initial support soon began to dissipate as a direct result of the disproportionate nature of Israel's response, the high number of resultant civilian casualties in Lebanon, and Hezbollah's exploitation of these casualties in the information environment. Ultimately, blame for collateral damage must be shared between Israel and Hezbollah. Israel's decision to engage in a disproportionate response to Hezbollah's cross-border raid places a measure of culpability on the Israeli government. In fact, what little early criticism Israel did receive in the region centered on the disproportionate nature of the Israeli response and the targeting of the Lebanese state.<sup>10</sup> By attacking Lebanese infrastructure in an indirect attempt to compel the Lebanese state to confront and disarm Hezbollah, Israel made a strategic and operational decision that resulted in numerous tactical targeting decisions that invariably put a considerable number of Lebanese civilians at risk. Collateral damage due to an attack on civilian infrastructure

can occur as a direct or indirect result of the attack, and the primarily civilian function of many infrastructure targets and their negligible military value when fighting an enemy such as Hezbollah brings into question the legitimacy of these targets, and by extension the justifiability of resultant collateral damage. Additionally, once the initial target sets of the air campaign were exhausted, the IAF shifted to more difficult targets of direct military or logistical value to Hezbollah which, due to difficulties in their positive identification and their proximity to civilian populations, presented a greater risk of collateral damage.<sup>11</sup>

Hezbollah also bears a significant share of the responsibility for the collateral damage sustained in Israeli attacks through its deliberate decision to fight among populations. In the months leading up to the war Nasrallah publicly acknowledged this fact, highlighting how difficult Hezbollah is to target in a traditional sense due to this decision to fight among the population, stating that Hezbollah fighters “live in their houses, in their schools, in their churches, in their fields, in their farms and in their factories . . . you can’t destroy them in the same way you would destroy an army.”<sup>12</sup> As national security analyst Anthony Cordesman observed “Israel’s problems in fighting the political and perceptual battle were compounded by the fact that Hezbollah used Lebanon’s people and civilian areas as both defensive and offensive weapons.”<sup>13</sup> Hezbollah manipulated Lebanese civilians in a defensive sense both to camouflage their positions and infrastructure, as well as to deter attack. By using civilian structures and populated areas as depots, barracks, and fighting positions, Hezbollah complicated the ability of such facilities to be identified as such because they either resembled civilian structures or served a dual civilian-military purpose. In a general sense, by fighting in and

around populated areas, and by using civilian infrastructure for military purposes, Hezbollah could potentially deter attacks as the IDF had to make both a cost/benefit analysis as well as a *jus in bello* analysis which could have resulted in the IDF choosing to forgo an attack on an otherwise legitimate military target due to a concern for civilian casualties. When collateral damage did occur, Hezbollah employed the Lebanese population in an offensive capacity by capitalizing on civilian deaths to create effects in the information environment. Hezbollah did not go so far as to directly use civilians as human shields, but by co-mingling military positions and equipment with civilian infrastructure, and adopting patterns of movement that mirrored civilian activity, Hezbollah created a similar effect in terms of civilian casualties simply due to their proximity.<sup>14</sup> Hezbollah fighters captured by the IDF during the war reported moving missiles in civilian vehicles and under the cover of white flags, using the porches of residences to fire rockets, and moving in civilian clothes while transporting personal arms in a tote bag.<sup>15</sup> While Hezbollah made regular use of residences as military positions for direct fire positions or to conceal rocket launchers, it must be noted that in the case of the immediate battle zone along the border many of the populated areas Hezbollah used to anchor its defense had been evacuated.<sup>16</sup> However, this was not uniformly the case. From a strategic perspective, what mattered more than who was actually responsible for civilian casualties was the fact that they were occurring, popular perceptions of culpability throughout the region, the passions that those perceptions enflamed, and the actions that regional governments took in response to growing discontent among their populations. Israel's disproportionate response and mounting civilian casualties were a

tinderbox waiting for a catalyst to spark a reaction that would explode the fragile regional sympathies that had afforded Israel the free hand it had enjoyed up until this point.

The catalyst occurred on July 30, 2006, near Qana, a predominantly Shia village about eight miles north of the Israeli border. In the days leading up to the IAF attack on Qana, the area had been the point of origin for numerous rocket attacks into northern Israel.<sup>17</sup> Having concluded that an apartment building was being used to store rockets in support of Hezbollah's rocket campaign, the IAF attacked the structure with two bombs at 00:25 in the morning local time.<sup>18</sup> This conclusion was reached using a new IAF procedure whereby houses in the vicinity of previous rocket launches were targeted due to a "circumstantial connection" to the previous rocket attack. This policy was born out of frustration within the IDF and the difficulties of planners in identifying targets that would have an effect on Hezbollah's short-range rockets.<sup>19</sup> Residents of the village had been repeatedly warned to leave the area by the IDF through radio and pamphlets, and IDF planners were working on the assumption that there were no civilians present in the building.<sup>20</sup> In fact there were two extended families sheltering in the basement of the apartment building at the time of the attack.<sup>21</sup> Despite the warnings of the IDF, the roads leading out of Qana were subject to aerial interdiction by the IAF. This interdiction had recently claimed the lives of dozens of other internally displaced persons and had even resulted in attacks on emergency vehicles.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, the families sheltering in the apartment building had numerous vulnerable members for whom travel would be difficult, including the elderly and children, and were not in a position financially to evacuate.<sup>23</sup> A survivor of the attack would later cite the danger of IAF interdiction as a reason that the families did not evacuate.<sup>24</sup> The two Israeli bombs collapsed the building,

burying many of the family members under a mountain of rubble.<sup>25</sup> Although there were competing figures of how many people had actually been killed in the attack, it was clear that dozens of innocent civilians, many of them children, had perished.<sup>26</sup>

This was not the first time that Qana had been the site of a large loss of life at the hands of the IDF. In 1996, during the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, the IDF undertook an operation in an attempt to decrease popular support for Hezbollah. On April 18, 1996, hundreds of Lebanese civilians fled to the UNIFIL base in Qana seeking protection from IDF attacks. The IDF engaged the UNIFIL base with indirect fires killing 106 civilians. Although Israel claimed that the attack was unintentional, a UN report found otherwise. International media reported on the incident and Cable News Network (CNN) coverage featured images of the aftermath.<sup>27</sup> The resultant international outrage forced a ceasefire and the operation ended without achieving its objectives.<sup>28</sup> Thus, even in this earlier iteration, the pattern of civilian casualties, amplified by the media, followed by the collapse of international support, and the curtailment of IDF operational time can be seen. The incident became a focal point for resentment against Israel and the occupation. A cemetery containing the victims' bodies became a place of national pilgrimage adorned by signs designed to enflame the passions of those who visited.<sup>29</sup> Thus the imagery of Qana was a ready-made narrative, linked to the horrors of past wars, another massacre of Lebanese civilians at the hands of the Israeli enemy, and ripe for exploitation. So well-known and potent was the narrative of Qana that when word of the incident first reached Israeli policymakers, the initial reaction was that it must be a mistaken reference to the 1996 incident.<sup>30</sup> In the immediate aftermath of the bombing, Prime Minister Olmert reassured his cabinet that "We will not blink in front of Hezbollah

and we will not stop the offensive despite the difficult circumstances . . . Israel is in no rush to reach a cease-fire before we get to that point where we could say that we reached the main objectives we had set forth.”<sup>31</sup>

Media reaction to the attack and its aftermath was immediate, intense, and continuous. Heart wrenching images of first responders digging through the rubble, emerging cradling the shattered remains of small children, were broadcast and rebroadcast in the 24/7 media environment of regional cable news networks. Continuous and graphic coverage including interviews with sobbing first responders and distraught family members, and the culturally shocking imagery of crying Arab men was being transmitted from the remote battlefield into living rooms and sidewalk cafes throughout the Arab world.<sup>32</sup> The British Broadcasting Corporation’s (BBC) Arab affairs analyst asserted that “images from Qana will resonate throughout a region boiling with rage.”<sup>33</sup> The intensity and nature of the coverage was sure to have an effect on regional public opinion.

The unprecedented media coverage of Qana and its aftermath began to move the “Arab Street” in a way that had not yet been seen during the conflict, and would in turn change the dynamics of regional support for Israel’s operations against Hezbollah. In the days following the bombing, anti-Israeli protests began to materialize across the Middle East. Protesters in Beirut attacked a UN building, called for Syria to intervene in the conflict, and included signs reading “Arabs, you chickens” and shouts of “Destroy Tel Aviv!”<sup>34</sup> Demonstrators also chanted “We are the people of Lebanon, not of Syria or Iran.”<sup>35</sup> In Egypt, dozens of protests broke out in various cities throughout the country. These protests were largely in support of Lebanon, but also at times in support of

Hezbollah; a significant development to see overt support for a Shia political-military organization in one of the Sunni Arab world's cornerstone countries. When statements of solidarity began to flow from the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt to Hezbollah, President Mubarak and other Sunni leaders in the region started to become unsettled.<sup>36</sup> In the Sadr City neighborhood of Baghdad, thousands protested the Qana bombing by spouting militant anti-Israeli and anti-American rhetoric. Protests also erupted in Gaza, Jordan, Kuwait, Iran, and Syria.<sup>37</sup> These demonstrations not only targeted Israel, the United States, and the UN, but soon began to criticize moderate Arab regimes as well.<sup>38</sup> A crowd in Beirut chanted "Zionist, oh Zionist, Hosni Mubarak is a Zionist."<sup>39</sup>

As public pressure mounted in Arab capitals, international and regional support for continued IDF operations against Hezbollah collapsed.<sup>40</sup> As a result of the attack on Qana and the protests that occurred in its wake, the tone and substance of Arab leaders' statements changed. Egyptian President Mubarak softened his earlier criticisms of the resistance in Lebanon and amplified his criticism of Israel for its disproportionate response, sending a large delegation, including his son, to Lebanon. Saudi Arabian officials reluctantly started to make statements in support of Hezbollah in conjunction with support that had previously been limited to the people of Lebanon. Jordan also began to downplay previous statements critical of Hezbollah.<sup>41</sup> As media coverage of Qana and other cases of civilian casualties continued at a sustained level of intensity and protests built throughout the region pressure for a cease-fire began to mount both regionally from Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, but also internationally from France, Germany, Russia, and the European Union.<sup>42</sup> On August 4, 2006, France and the United States presented a draft resolution calling for a cease-fire to the United Nations Security

Council. The Arab League, meeting in emergency session in Beirut on August 7, 2006, offered modifications to the proposed resolution in order to protect Lebanese interests.<sup>43</sup> On August 9, a delegation of Arab League foreign ministers traveled to the UN to press their case for modifications to the draft resolution.<sup>44</sup> On August 11, the United Nations Security Council adopted UNSCR 1701 which imposed a cease-fire and ended the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. The resultant UNSCR was a balance between Israeli concerns and those raised by the Arab League.<sup>45</sup>

The bombing of an apartment building in Qana had become a turning point in the war.<sup>46</sup> The horrific images that emerged from that attack and proliferated through the media into the information environment enflamed passions throughout the region. As tensions and protests rose in Arab capitals, the tacit support that had enabled the scope and intensity of IDF operations melted away under the pressure of collective outrage on the “Arab street”. In turn, the loss of regional and international support forced the United Nations Security Council to impose a cease-fire before Israel was able to achieve its objectives, effectively ending operational time for the IDF. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Hezbollah set out to frame the narrative of its “Divine Victory.”<sup>47</sup>

What role Hezbollah played in the exploitation of this incident is difficult to surmise. However, one can examine how Hezbollah has organized and operated in the information environment to attain some understanding for how the group may have responded to exploit an event as potentially significant as the bombing of innocent civilians at Qana. Hezbollah has placed great emphasis on developing an extremely advanced and effective information operations capability. Six years earlier, following Israel’s withdrawal from southern Lebanon, a Hezbollah commander described in an

interview with the *New York Times* how, for Hezbollah, “The use of media as a weapon had an effect parallel to a battle.”<sup>48</sup> Hezbollah would videotape attacks and then provide the footage to Lebanese and Western media outlets, with much of the footage finding its way onto Israeli television stations. The Hezbollah commander asserted that “By the use of these films, we were able to control from a long distance the morale of a lot of Israelis.”<sup>49</sup> An UN peacekeeper stationed in the area confirmed that “Seventy-five percent of Hezbollah’s war was the videotapes.”<sup>50</sup> A year later that same Hezbollah commander would be quoted at a graduation from a Hezbollah training program for 180 reporters that the graduates were “an example to the Arab world on how to fight the enemy psychologically . . . this graduation adds to our preparations for the final battle with the Israelis.”<sup>51</sup>

Hezbollah runs its own media outlets, including *al-Manar* television and *al-Nour* radio, which are used as a mouthpiece for propaganda. In a 2002 interview the news director for *al-Manar* stated “Neutrality like that of Al Jazeera is out of the question for us. . . . We cover only the victim, not the aggressor. CNN is the Zionist news network, Al Jazeera is neutral, and Al Manar takes the side of the Palestinians.”<sup>52</sup> In answer to a question about whether *al-Manar* would provide an Israeli perspective as well, the news director answered, in part, “We’re not looking to interview Sharon. . . . We want to get close to him in order to kill him.”<sup>53</sup> The stations are regularly used to encourage fundraising and recruitment activities for Hezbollah, and *al-Manar* media affiliation has been used in the past as a cover for reconnaissance activities in support of Hezbollah operations.<sup>54</sup> Programming is designed to elicit anti-Israeli and pro-Hezbollah sympathies and reinforce narratives in line with Hezbollah’s objectives.<sup>55</sup> While working on a music

video incorporating footage of combat, casualties, and funerals in both Israel and Palestine, a Hezbollah video editor explained:

What I'm doing is synchronizing the gunshots to form the downbeat of the song. . . . I'm going to call it 'Death to Israel.' . . . What I do is, first, I try to feel the music. Then I find the pictures to go along with it. . . . The idea is that even if the Jews are killing us we can still kill them. That we derive our power from blood. It's saying, 'Get ready to blow yourselves up, because this is the only way to liberate Palestine.'<sup>56</sup>

During the war, Hezbollah used *al-Manar* as a medium to publish images deemed too graphic by other media outlets.<sup>57</sup> Both *al-Manar* and *al-Nour* have been designated as terrorist entities by the United States government.<sup>58</sup>

Hezbollah also makes a concerted and coordinated effort to actively influence international media and the stories they produce. Reporting from Hezbollah controlled areas often requires permission from Hezbollah and an escort who ensures that certain rules are obeyed while helpfully pointing out details that support Hezbollah's preferred narratives. During the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, while reporting from Beirut during a Hezbollah sponsored tour of a recently bombed area, CNN senior international correspondent Nic Robertson reported that "Israel says it targets Hezbollah's leadership and military structure. Hezbollah wanted to show us civilians are being hit...As we run past the rubble, we see much that points to civilian life, no evidence apparent of military equipment."<sup>59</sup> However five days later, free from the direct oversight of his Hezbollah guide, when asked about the veracity of Hezbollah claims Robertson replied:

Hezbollah has a very, very sophisticated and slick media operations. . . . They deny journalists access into [Hezbollah-controlled] areas. They can turn on and off access to hospitals in those areas. They have a lot of power and influence. You don't get in there without their permission. . . . And when I went we were given about 10 or 15 minutes, quite literally running through a number of neighborhoods that they directed and they took us ...They had control of the situation. They designated the places that we went to, and we certainly didn't

have time to go into the houses or lift up the rubble to see what was underneath. . . . Hezbollah is now running a number of [press tours] every day, taking journalists into this area. They realize that this is a good way for them to get their message out, taking journalists on a regular basis.<sup>60</sup>

This type of overt media manipulation was also reported by CNN's Anderson Cooper. In describing a similar Hezbollah designed battlefield tour Cooper stated that:

After letting us take pictures of a few damaged buildings, they take us to another location, where there are ambulances waiting. This is a heavily orchestrated Hezbollah media event. When we got here, all the ambulances were lined up. We were allowed a few minutes to talk to the ambulance drivers. Then one by one, they've been told to turn on their sirens and zoom off so that all the photographers here can get shots of ambulances rushing off to treat civilians. That's the story—that's the story that Hezbollah wants people to know about. These ambulances aren't responding to any new bombings. The sirens are strictly for effect.<sup>61</sup>

Providing more detail about Anderson Cooper's tour with Hezbollah, CNN Senior Producer Charlie Moore in a blog posting titled "Our very strange day with Hezbollah" wrote:

We're standing on what used to be a residential street. . . . Bombs have smashed nearly a quarter mile of this area and there's virtually nothing left. There's a twisted tire from a children's bike here, some compact disks from someone's collection there . . . the Hezbollah representative leading the tour is telling us it's time to move on. We tell him we want to talk to some people who lived here, who witnessed what happened. "Not here," he says. "Maybe at our next stop."

Our car is being led through back streets to a broken-down building with five ambulances parked in front. 'These are the emergency workers who respond to casualty calls when Israel drops their bombs. . . . Take your pictures and talk to some of them if you'd like.' We're growing tired of what is now obviously a dog-and-pony show, but we decide to play along, and approach one driver with a few questions. Anderson asks him what kind of casualties he's seeing, but before he can answer, the ambulance beside us turns on his siren and screeches out, followed by the next ambulance, then the next. It's a well coordinated and not-so-subtle piece of propaganda that might as well come with a soundtrack titled 'Hezbollah Cares.'

We again ask the Hezbollah guy (he won't give us his name) when we can talk to some residents, but he brushes us off and tells us maybe at our next stop. He's

now on his cell phone and it's not hard to imagine he's making sure all the props are in place before we move on. I wish I spoke Arabic.

We're now driving through a neighborhood that hasn't seen any bombing, but it's here we're told we can talk to some residents. Hezbollah guy takes us down to what amounts to a crude bomb shelter and tells us the people here live on this street but are afraid to sleep in their apartment. The concrete room is dimly lit and dank. Two people on plastic chairs are watching an Arabic news channel. One sits in the corner yelling angry epithets about Israel for the reporters. We wait for the media gaggle to leave, then introduce ourselves. They tell us they're a mother, her son and his wife. There's no way to know if it's true. The conversation follows a familiar pattern.

We're back on the street and on cue, a Hezbollah resistance song is now blaring from an apartment. A young man on the porch dressed in black is giving us the victory sign. I look behind me and there's our Hezbollah guide encouraging the young man to lift his hands higher so our camera can see.

Our story that's quickly become less about Hezbollah and more about their crude propaganda machine when the 'family' emerges from the bunker behind us and joins their friends in the street. They're laughing, talking loudly, and gesturing with their hands, mocking anger.

We pile into our van and are now driving out of the Hezbollah-controlled neighborhood. It feels like we've just left a haunted house: Slightly frightening at first, but ridiculous by the end.<sup>62</sup>

Other journalists reported being hassled, yelled at, or threatened by Hezbollah media minders.<sup>63</sup> That many other journalists participated in these Hezbollah controlled media events and did not report the nature of the control as context to their reporting is concerning given the clear strategic implications of such reports in the information environment. It is likely that overt attempts by Hezbollah to influence media reporting by controlling access to areas and persons occurred in countless other engagements throughout the country during the war. Some reporters adhered to Hezbollah's ground rules to maintain future access to Hezbollah.<sup>64</sup> Even when they set out on their own without Hezbollah media minders, journalists were warned against photographing Hezbollah fighters.<sup>65</sup> Despite the restrictions, some journalists were nevertheless able to

take incriminating photographs showing Hezbollah fighters firing rockets or anti-aircraft weapons from high density population areas.<sup>66</sup>

Additionally there is evidence that Hezbollah staged and manipulated scenes to promote media stories that supported their narratives. In some cases items of everyday life, such as family photos, children's toys, and furniture were conveniently strewn about the rubble of destroyed buildings, suspiciously unaffected by the violence that had devastated their surroundings.<sup>67</sup> In one particular incident, the Lebanese Red Cross accused Israel of having attacked a pair of ambulances during an ambulance exchange. However, on closer examination of the evidence the claims became questionable as the hole in the top of the ambulance, in the center of the painted red cross, appeared to have machined edges, like a prefabricated hole designed to house the emergency lights, rather than the penetrating damage that would have been caused by a missile. Damage and rust patterns on the exterior of the vehicle seemed to suggest that the damage to the vehicle was not recent, and the damage to the inside of the vehicle was inconsistent with a missile.<sup>68</sup> If these were in fact attempts to manipulate the scene of attacks to amplify effects in the IE or to contrive the "facts on the ground" to promote a chosen narrative, it is likely that those that were detected are merely representative of a deliberate endeavor to use the media to achieve strategic effects.

In the specific case of the attack on Qana there is some evidence of the role that Hezbollah information operations may have played in the framing and exploitation of a singularly tragic event. For instance, the attack that became a turning point in the war did not actually occur in Qana. It occurred in a small village named Khuraybah about a mile outside of Qana.<sup>69</sup> However, an attack on the small village of Khuraybah would not have

the same resonance in the IE as an attack on Qana, the sight of another horrific massacre at the hands of the IDF in 1996. By initially framing the attack as an attack on Qana resulting in a large number of civilian casualties, initial reports would understandably draw comparisons to past Israeli transgressions and enflame long cultivated emotions. However, to be fair, it must be noted that the first reports to Israeli policymakers about the incident also reference the location as Qana.<sup>70</sup> Another possible effect of potential action by Hezbollah's information operatives is the confusion surrounding the number of casualties. Initial reports of the number of casualties were wildly inflated, some by more than double.<sup>71</sup> The creation of ambiguity as to the number of civilian casualties, especially ambiguity that increased the perception of the scale of the devastation would have certainly been in Hezbollah's interests. Even if inflated casualty counts were eventually corrected, which they were, the perceptions created by the initially reported inflated numbers would continue to color the perceptions of those who would not see a later report with the corrected numbers, and on a subconscious level, those who would see the later correction, but for whom the perception of the event had already been formed. Hezbollah clearly had the intent to influence events in the IE through the media to further their strategic objectives. Hezbollah also had the demonstrated capability to manipulate and amplify events to these ends. Having both the intent and the capability to influence events in the IE, combined with known attempts to do so in other cases during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, it is only reasonable to assume that Hezbollah would have attempted to intervene in the IE and shape perceptions of the IAF attack on Qana as one of the most significant (and fortuitous from the perspective of Hezbollah) events of the war. One particularly suspicious episode that may indicate the involvement of

Hezbollah in amplifying and shaping the aftermath of Qana in the IE is the case of “The Green Helmet.” “Green Helmet” became a common nickname, based on his distinctive green helmet, for Salam Daher, a Lebanese civil defense worker who was featured in many of the most heart-wrenching images to emerge from the rubble of Qana.<sup>72</sup> German media documented him moving and repositioning deceased children, and removing and reloading a body into an ambulance so that media photographers could get the most effective images.<sup>73</sup> In an emotional interview a few weeks later, Daher stated:

I did hold the baby up, but I was saying ‘look at who the Israelis are killing. They are children. . . . These are not fighters. They have no guns. They are children, civilians they are killing’ . . . I wanted people to see who was dying. They said they were killing fighters. They killed children. . . . When I am rescuing people or taking dead bodies out I try not to think with my heart because then it is very hard for me. But sometimes it is too much, when I see many people or many children. I tell you there are many faces that will always be in my mind.<sup>74</sup>

Daher’s response could equally have been the honest recollections of a first responder who experienced a wide range of emotions in a time of crisis, or the perfect sound bite of a Hezbollah information operative seeking to amplify a horrific event in the information environment. Interestingly, Daher had also been photographed holding up a deceased child for the cameras in the aftermath of the 1996 attack on the UN compound in Qana.<sup>75</sup> Some of the photographs taken of the aftermath of the 2006 attack on Qana were taken by a local freelance photographer who was later fired by *Reuters* for digitally altering photographs.<sup>76</sup> The manipulation of the media by Hezbollah prompted one German newspaper to term the coverage “Hizbollywood” in a reference to the movie magic of Hollywood and the Indian “Bollywood”.<sup>77</sup> Undoubtedly, Hezbollah had an interest in manipulating and broadcasting an image of Qana in line with their narratives and objectives, and it had the information operatives and the platform through *al-Manar* and

its relationships to other media outlets to make it happen. Through such an effort, Hezbollah succeeded in amplifying the legitimately horrific and tragic events at Qana into strategic effects in the information environment.

### The Alternative Explanation and Operational Time

This study has articulated the concept of “operational time” to describe the time available for the pursuit of military objectives before some factor will cause an operation, campaign, or war to reach a culminating point. Operational time is both fluid and limited, can be increased or decreased by specific changing circumstances, and can be influenced by both internal and external forces. The concept of operational time is applicable to all levels of war: the tactical, operational, and strategic, as it can have an impact on battles, campaigns, or the entire war, respectively. By acknowledging the fluidity of the time element, military professionals can come to better understand the potential for internal actions or external influences to positively or negatively influence operational time.

In the case of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, Israel’s strategic failure can be explained by the cessation of operational time when international support collapsed following the exploitation of civilian casualties in the information environment. Israel initially enjoyed significant, if tacit, international and regional support for their operations against Hezbollah, a condition that afforded the IDF considerable operational time. However, after the IDF attack on Qana and the civilian casualties that resulted, the situation began to change. There is evidence that Hezbollah had both the intent and capability to influence information and create effects in the IE. Additionally, there were some potential indicators, and it would be reasonable to assume that Hezbollah would attempt to amplify the effects of the Qana attack in the IE toward their own ends. As

reports and images of the Qana attack appeared, merged with previous narratives of the legacy of past attacks on Qana and the disproportionate nature of the ongoing Israeli response, and played continuously in the regional IE, discontent arose on the “Arab street”. As protests around the region grew and began to denounce the moderate Arab governments for what they viewed as complicity in Israel’s attacks, regional governments that had earlier criticized Hezbollah were compelled to curtail their support for Israel’s actions and, along with European powers, began to pressure the United Nations Security Council to impose a cease-fire. The United States and the United Kingdom, who were both involved in a difficult phase of the war in Iraq, needed to maintain Arab support and cooperation in the region. While the United States and the United Kingdom had previously resisted imposing a cease-fire in order to allow Israel more time to achieve their objectives, the reversal of international and regional public opinion caused the United Nations Security Council to act to end the war before Israel could achieve its objectives.

In a theoretical sense, consider the following conceptual graphs.

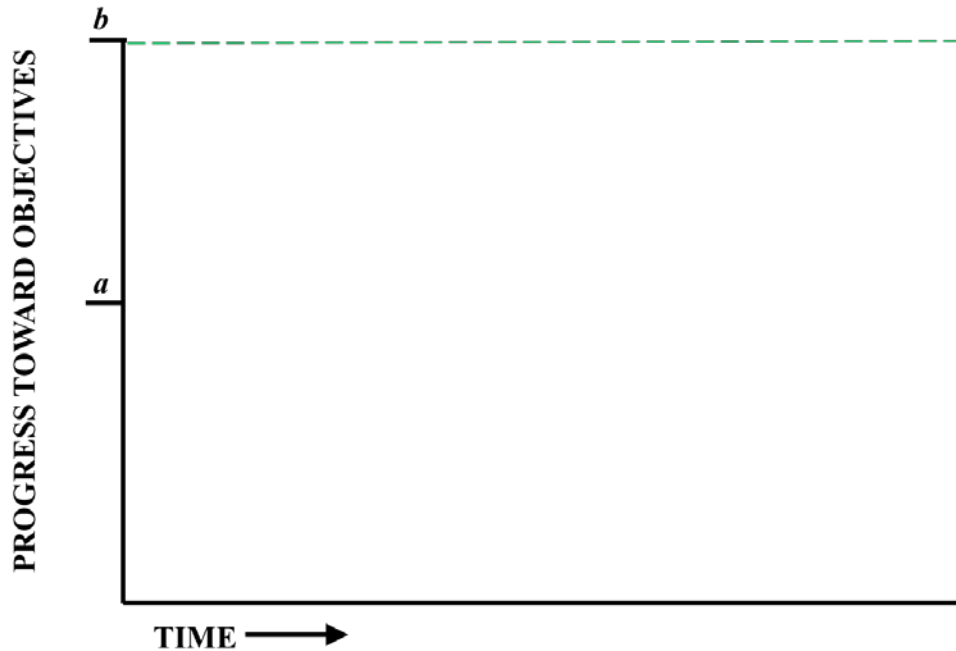


Figure 2. Operational Time Conceptual Graph

*Source:* Created by author.

In this graph, movement along the  $x$ -axis, or the horizontal axis, represents the passage of time. Movement along the  $y$ -axis, or the vertical axis, represents progress toward achieving a military force's objectives. The combination of both the time factor and progress toward the accomplishment of a military force's objectives on one graph allows for a graphical representation of the potential effect of operational time. Point  $a$  represents the point at which the military force in question begins the war, relative to both their progress toward their objectives and the point where "time" equals "0". Point  $b$  is the point on the  $y$ -axis where a military force's objectives would be accomplished, hence as time moves forward, if a graphical representation of a military force's progress toward achieving its objectives were to cross above the plain of the dotted line extending

horizontally from point *b*, a military force can be understood to have achieved its objectives at that time. However, if a graphical representation of a military force's progress toward achieving its objectives were to cross below the *x*-axis, this could be understood as defeat. If the war were to end while military progress were anywhere between the *x*-axis or the dotted line extending horizontally from point *b*, it could be understood that the military force failed to meet its objectives, but also was not defeated, resulting in a state of strategic failure. The result of such failure is relative and can create an outcome in which the military force may have advanced or detracted from its position prior to the war depending on whether the its gains or losses end above or below the starting point of point *a*.

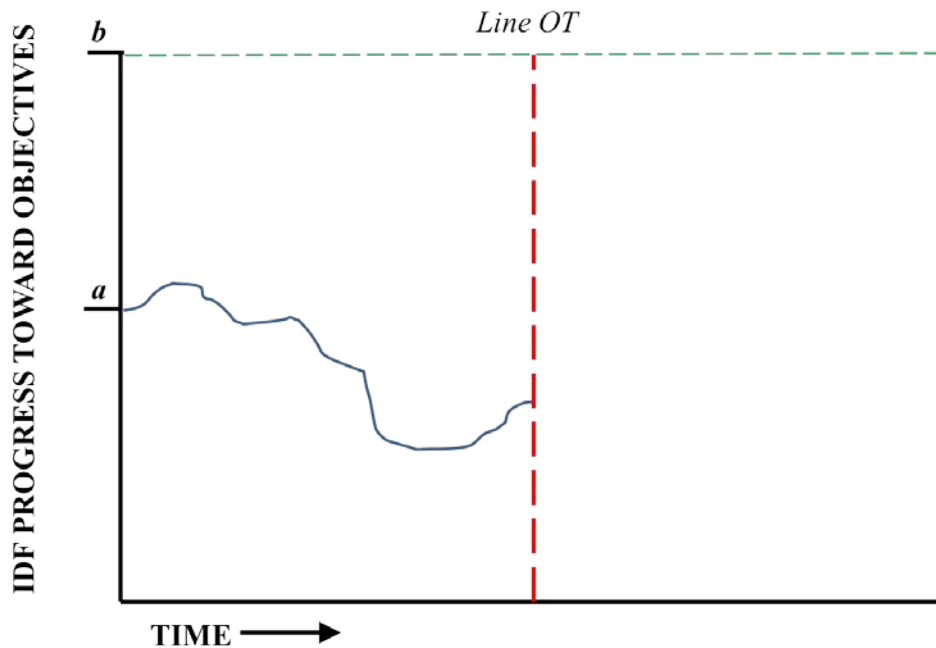


Figure 3. Operational Time During the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006

Source: Created by author.

The next graph conceptually depicts the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 from the perspective of the IDF in terms of operational time. Beginning the war at point *a*, the IDF experienced some initial success with early targeting and destruction of Hezbollah medium- and long-range rocket capabilities. This initial success was followed by a marked decline in the IDF's distance from achieving its objectives as the SOD-based air campaign proved unable to achieve its desired effects and IDF ground force incursions proved indecisive. Progress takes a precipitous decline in the immediate aftermath of the attack on Qana then experiences a slight increase due to the final IDF ground offensive toward the Litani River. At that point, due to the collapse of international and regional support, operational time for the IDF was curtailed, the IDF reached a culminating point, and the war ended in strategic failure for the IDF with Israel arguably in a lesser position and further from achieving its strategic goals *vis-à-vis* Hezbollah than it had been at the start of the war, as represented by the end of IDF operations at *Line OT*. The final graph depicts what could have theoretically transpired had civilian casualties been kept to an absolute minimum, the attack on Qana never occurred, and operational time had been extended as a function of maintaining international and regional support for the operation.

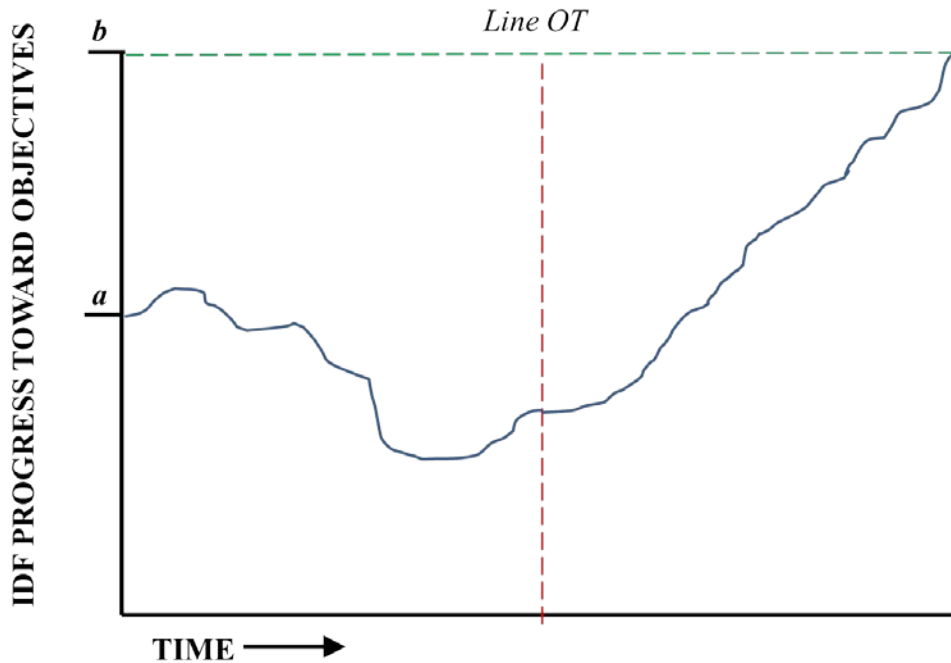


Figure 4. Alternative Operational Time Scenario to the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006

Source: Created by author.

In this graph the old *Line OT* has been left merely as a point of reference as operational time would not have been curtailed and the IDF progress line continues on past this point. In this scenario where operational time is maintained beyond the premature curtailment depicted in the previous graph, the IDF is able to continue operations as it retains the operational time necessary to act. Had the IDF been able to take the time to adopt a more traditional operational methodology, reassign the IAF to more traditional close air support tasks in support of a joint operation, and leverage the quantitative and qualitative advantages of the IDF ground forces (albeit relatively decreased from previous conflicts), it may have been able to make the adjustments and adaptations necessary to continue the war effort toward a successful conclusion. The

point at which the progression of IDF operations crosses the dotted line extending horizontally from point *b* represents the future point in time in which the IDF might have achieved its objectives and won the war had operational time been sufficiently maintained or extended. After all, many wars have begun with embarrassing early defeats and setbacks, only to spur humbled military forces to make the adjustments, adaptations, and innovations necessary to turn the tide of the war and achieve an eventual victory. Yet in each of these cases, whether the military force in question has the potential to attempt such a reversal of fortunes is, at least in part, a function of operational time.

As previously discussed, existing explanations for Israel's strategic failure in the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, including the adoption of SOD methodologies, an overreliance on airpower, and the unpreparedness and poor performance of IDF ground forces, all help to explain why the IDF was unable to achieve its military objectives during the period of time in which the war actually occurred. This is important, but it only addresses part of the problem as it does not address why the IDF could not have taken the time to make the adjustments, adaptations, and innovations necessary to continue the war effort toward a more favorable conclusion as militaries have done so many other times in the past. An understanding of the dynamic of operational time, specifically in the context of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 provides an answer to this question. In effect, the IDF committed an act that caused external reactions that in turn resulted in the curtailment of operational time.

In fact, the explanation presented here and associated with the concept of operational time could very well have resulted in strategic failure for Israel independent of the preexisting explanations. Consider a scenario in which the operational approach

selected did not have a negative effect on operations, where the IAF was used in support of a joint operation, where the IDF ground forces performed well, and where the IDF was making steady progress toward the achievement of its military objectives. Now consider that at some point, while making progress toward, but still short of achieving their military objectives, Qana or some similar event transpired. Despite the progress being made toward the achievement of its military objectives, a Qana-like event that turned regional public opinion so dramatically, and caused the withdrawal of international and regional support would still have resulted in the curtailment of operational time for the IDF. Such an event would have precluded the continuation of the war effort. In this scenario, despite the absence of the preexisting explanations, Israel would still have met with strategic failure as the result of the premature curtailment of operational time, forcing culmination before the IDF could achieve its objectives. Thus, the alternative explanation offered here and the concept of operational time could explain Israel's strategic failure on its own merits, increasing its explanatory power. However, as the preexisting explanations are also clearly contributing factors, all explanations are most fully understood and hold the most explanatory power when they are considered in concert.

#### The Alternative Explanation, the IE, and the Nature of Hybrid Threats

In a 1989 article for the *Marine Corps Gazette*, American military affairs commentator William S. Lind posited the concept of the four generations of modern war.<sup>78</sup> The first generation of modern war (1GW) is characterized by the maneuver of mass armies, the *levée en masse*, and the mobilization of the nation state for war, and is

most clearly represented by the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>79</sup> The second generation of modern war (2GW) is characterized by the advent of the Industrial Revolution and its attendant revolutions in military technology, mass production, and firepower, and is most clearly represented by the industrialized trench warfare of the First World War.<sup>80</sup> The third generation of modern war (3GW) is characterized by the rise of mechanized warfare, the independent air force, and the combined arms integration of fires, maneuver, and protection, and is most clearly illustrated by the example of the Second World War or Operation Desert Storm.<sup>81</sup> The fourth generation of modern war (4GW) is defined best by retired United States Marine Corps Colonel Thomas X. Hammes in his book *The Sling and The Stone: On War in the 21st Century* as one that

uses all available networks—political, economic, social, and military—to convince the enemy’s political decision makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit . . . rooted in the fundamental precept that superior political will, when properly employed, can defeat greater economic and military power, 4GW makes use of society’s networks to carry on its fight. Unlike previous generations, it does not attempt to win by defeating the enemy’s military forces. Instead, via the networks, it directly attacks the minds of enemy decision makers to destroy the enemy’s political will.<sup>82</sup>

Hezbollah engages in a variation of fourth generation modern war in which it chooses to operate in the information domain, its main effort, supporting such operations through those networks that allow it to further its objectives in the information environment. Hezbollah endured the attacks of the IAF, and engaged the IDF ground forces militarily on its terms where and when it found such engagements advantageous. Meanwhile Hezbollah exploited the IDF in the IE, consistent with its conception of its own main effort.

According to doctrine, information operations is an integral part of operations and should be integrated at all phases of planning and execution.<sup>83</sup> However, in practice

information operations are too often an afterthought or a supporting element to military operations leading to a traditional model employed by most Western militaries where informational objectives support military objectives that come together to accomplish the political objective for which the war is fought. Hezbollah inverts the traditional model of the relationship between informational objectives, military objectives, and political objectives. In the inverted model, military objectives support informational objectives that come together to accomplish the political objectives for which the war is fought. Thus, for Hezbollah, action in the information environment was the main effort.

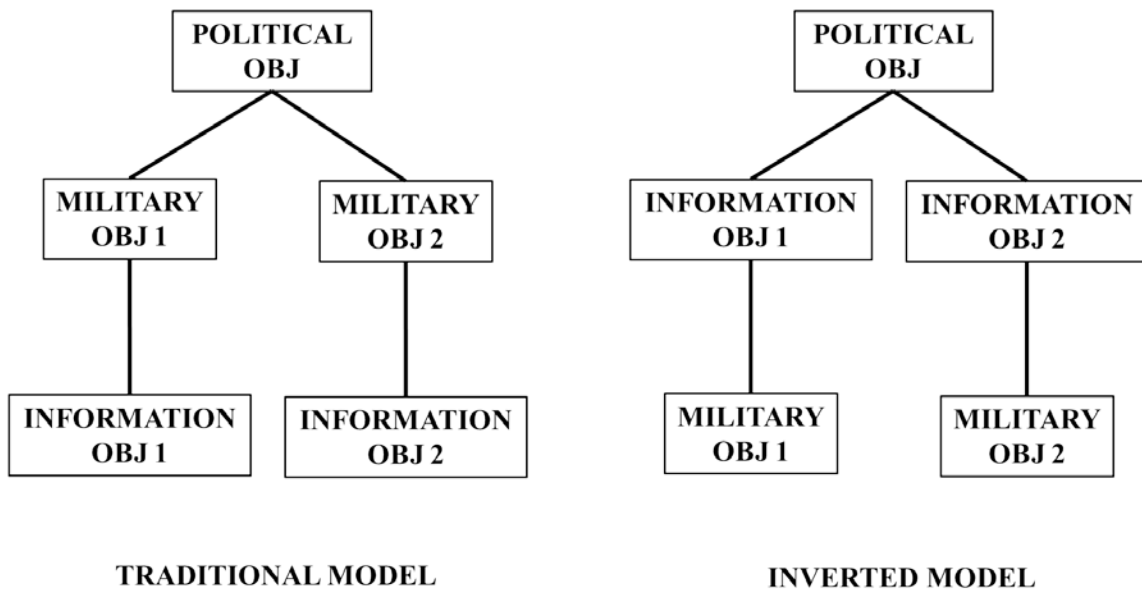


Figure 5. Traditional and Inverted Models of Objective Relationships

Source: Created by author.

One striking example of this dynamic occurred early in the war. As described by Boston University professor and retired United States Army colonel Augustus Richard Norton

Hezbollah released a recorded statement from Nasrallah that was far from conciliatory: ‘You wanted an open war, and we are heading for an open war. We are ready for it.’ (Nasrallah invited listeners to look to the sea, and with perfect theatrical timing an explosion on the horizon rocked the *INS Hanit*, an Israeli naval vessel that was hit by an Iranian-produced C-802 Noor guided missile. The ship was disabled and four of its sailors killed.<sup>84</sup>

In this case it is clear to see how in this one discrete operation, Hezbollah conducted a military operation, timed to amplify an assertion made in the information environment, and designed to support an informational objective to both a domestic Lebanese audience and external audiences about the military capabilities of Hezbollah.

Much has been written in the past few years about hybrid threats. Much of what has been written focuses on how hybrid threats mix the conventional and the unconventional at the tactical level to form new and innovative tactical combinations to leverage the strengths of the conventional and the unconventional while mitigating the weaknesses of each.<sup>85</sup> However, a hybrid threat is more than just a mixture of conventional and unconventional formations, tactics, and military systems; this alone would not be sufficient to defeat a larger, better equipped, and more advanced force. The hallmark of an effective hybrid force is how it can leverage other domains to create the strategic effects necessary to overcome their inherent disadvantages at all levels of war, not just the tactical. Thus, the true danger of a hybrid threat is one that can both fight competently on the battlefield while also expanding the battlespace into nontraditional domains, like the information environment, with strategic effect, consistent with the concept of fourth generation modern war.

During the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, Hezbollah was operating on a fourth generation modern war model in which its main effort was played out in the information environment. Unable to defeat the IDF in conventional battle, Hezbollah engaged the IDF militarily on its own terms, and often in ways that would directly support the achievement of its information objectives. In this regard, Hezbollah inverts the traditional relationship between military objectives and information objectives, with primacy going to information objectives as the main effort. Hezbollah illustrates how a dynamic understanding of emergent hybrid threats requires one to move beyond considerations of tactical innovation to understanding how truly hybrid organizations can fully leverage nontraditional domains to create strategic effects.

#### The Alternative Explanation and Center of Gravity Analysis

Prussian military philosopher Carl von Clausewitz defined the center of gravity (COG) as “the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends. This is the point against which all of our energies should be directed.”<sup>86</sup> Dr. Joe Strange of the Marine Corps University defined centers of gravity as the “Primary sources of moral or physical strength, power and resistance.”<sup>87</sup> The COG then does something in order to manifest that strength, power, or resistance when necessary. Critical Capabilities (CC) are defined as “Primary abilities which merits a Center of Gravity to be identified as such in the context of a given scenario, situation or mission.”<sup>88</sup> In other words, a CC is that which the COG does, it is that task which the COG can potentially accomplish. Critical Requirements (CR) are defined as “Essential conditions, resources and means for a Critical Capability to be fully operative.”<sup>89</sup> In other words, a CR is that which the COG requires in order to fulfil its purpose. Critical Vulnerabilities (CV) are defined as “Critical

Requirements or COMPONENTS THEREOF which are deficient, or vulnerable to neutralization, interdiction or attack (moral/physical harm) in a manner achieving decisive results—the smaller the resources and effort applied and the smaller the risk and cost, the better.”<sup>90</sup> In other words, a CV is a CR that is targetable, and by virtue of being a CR has the potential to cause great effects if acted upon.

The COG of the State of Israel is the IDF. As the COG, the IDF’s CCs include the ability to defend the state, deter attack, attack the state’s enemies, and occupy territory. The IDF has hundreds, if not thousands, of CRs that could be identified; these CRs enable the conduct of the CCs. One of these CRs is international and regional support for (or at least tolerance of) IDF operations. One of the IDF’s most vulnerable CRs is international and especially regional support due to the dynamics of the region and the nature and history of the Arab-Israel conflict. Therefore, international and regional support is also a CV, and a particularly vulnerable one at that with the potential to greatly affect the ability of the IDF to perform the attack or occupy CCs. It is this CV that Hezbollah chose to target through the information environment. Consider the following conceptual table.

Table 1. COG-CC-CR-CV Analysis

<b>COG:</b>	<b>IDF</b>				
<b>CCs:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DEFEND</b></li> <li>• <b>DETER</b></li> <li>• <b>ATTACK</b></li> <li>• <b>OCCUPY</b></li> </ul>				
<b>CRs:</b>	<b>CR1</b>	<b>CR2</b>	<b>CR3</b>	<b>CR4-Int'l &amp; regional spt</b>	<b>CR5...etc.</b>
<b>CVs:</b>	<b>CV1</b>		<b>CV3</b>	<b>CV4-Int'l &amp; regional spt</b>	<b>CV5...etc.</b>

Source: Created by author.

In the table, the IDF is identified as the COG and its CCs include the ability to defend, attack, and occupy. CRs are listed numerically, with “CR4” identified as international and regional support. Many of the CRs are targetable, and hence correspond to a CV, however, “CR2” is not targetable, and therefore does not translate into a CV. Hezbollah chose to target the CV of international and regional support as it was relatively vulnerable compared to the COG and other CVs, and it was a CR that was required if the IDF were to continue to exercise the CCs of “attack” or “occupy”. International and regional support is arguably a lesser CR to exercise the CC of “defend”. Once this CV had been exploited in the IE through direct targeting by Hezbollah, the IDF attack on Hezbollah and Lebanon halted just as surely as if Hezbollah had destroyed every Merkava tank in the IDF (a direct attack on the COG for which Hezbollah lacked the capability). Hezbollah conducted an indirect approach to attack the Israeli COG that

avoided its strengths and attacked its weaknesses. While the IDF was focused on attacking Hezbollah and destroying its military capabilities, Hezbollah succeeded by waging a different type of war than that which Israel had been fighting, a truly hybrid war at all levels of war.

This chapter has offered an alternative and complementary explanation of why Israel experienced strategic failure during the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. According to this explanation, Hezbollah deliberately exploited events in the information environment in an effort to influence international and regional audiences. The resultant effect on public opinion within the region caused the collapse of regional support, which in turn brought about a premature conclusion to the war. In effect, Hezbollah succeeded in curtailing the operational time available to the IDF to achieve its objectives by employing a 4GW construct and targeting a particularly vulnerable CV of the IDF, international and regional support. This explanation, while theoretically capable of explaining Israel's strategic failure on its own merits, is understood best in context along with the three previously discussed existing explanations. The next chapter will draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the findings of this study.

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<sup>1</sup>Hassan M. Fattah, "Arab League criticizes Hezbollah for attacks," *The New York Times*, July 17, 2006, [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/17/world/africa/17iht-arabs.2224812.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/17/world/africa/17iht-arabs.2224812.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1) and (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>2</sup>Associated Press, "Arab League declares support for Lebanon, calls on UN to step in: Arab League head: Peace process has failed; Saudis, Syrians clash over Hezbollah's legitimacy," *Associated Press*, July 15, 2006, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/arab-league-declares-support-for-lebanon-calls-on-un-to-step-in-1.193111> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>3</sup>Steven Stalinsky, "Arab World Divided Over Hezbollah," *The New York Sun*, July 19, 2006, <http://www.nysun.com/foreign/arab-world-divided-over-hezbollah/36281/> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>4</sup>Al-Jazeera English, “Saudi sideswipe at Hezbollah,” *al-Jazeera English*, July 14, 2006, <http://www.aussiemuslims.com/forums/showthread.php?12992-Saudi-sideswipe-at-Hezbollah&ands=8335f74b3aa3b322e9acc3af2912283f> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>5</sup>Stalinsky.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Creveld.

<sup>10</sup>Associated Press, “Arab League declares support for Lebanon, calls on UN to step in: Arab League head: Peace process has failed; Saudis, Syrians clash over Hezbollah’s legitimacy.”

<sup>11</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 55.

<sup>12</sup>Wall Street Journal, “Whose War Crimes?,” *The Wall Street Journal*, December 11, 2006, <http://www.usmessageboard.com/israel-and-palestine/46061-whose-war-crimes.html> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>13</sup>Cordesman, Sullivan, and Sullivan, 41.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 43.

<sup>15</sup>Wall Street Journal, “Whose War Crimes?”

<sup>16</sup>Biddle and Friedman, 43-44.

<sup>17</sup>Efrat Weiss, “IDF: We assumed building in Qana to be empty,” *Ynetnews*, August 3, 2006, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3285572,00.html> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Harel and Issacharoff, 161-162.

<sup>20</sup>Weiss.

<sup>21</sup>Sabrina I. Tavernise, “A Night of Death and Terror for Lebanese Villagers,” *The New York Times*, July 31, 2006, [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/31/world/middleeast/31scene.html?ex=1311998400&anden=21c5a19c3088aba2&andei=5088&andpartner=rssnyt&andemc=rss&and\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/31/world/middleeast/31scene.html?ex=1311998400&anden=21c5a19c3088aba2&andei=5088&andpartner=rssnyt&andemc=rss&and_r=0) (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ilene R. Prusher, "New urgency for Lebanon cease-fire: An Israeli bomb kills at least 54 civilians in Lebanon, adding pressure on US diplomacy," *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 31, 2006, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0731/p01s04-wome.html> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>25</sup>Tavernise.

<sup>26</sup>Tavernise. See also Prusher.

<sup>27</sup>Norton, 84-85.

<sup>28</sup>Prusher, See also Norton, 84-85.

<sup>29</sup>Norton, 84-85.

<sup>30</sup>Harel and Issacharoff, 159-162.

<sup>31</sup>Steven Erlanger and Hassan M. Fattah, "Israel Halts Bombing After Deadly Strike," *The New York Times*, July 30, 2006, [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/30/world/middleeast/30cnd-mideast.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/30/world/middleeast/30cnd-mideast.html?_r=0) (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>32</sup>At the time of this event, the author was the Multi-National Division-Baghdad, Information Operations, Chief of Operations in Baghdad, Iraq. The Information Operations staff section, among other tasks, operated a Media Operations Center in which dozens of regional and local television stations were continuously monitored by interpreters in order to provide a better understanding of the information environment. The change in media coverage at the time of the attack on Qana and its aftermath was marked and significant. The tone of coverage changed and the content became much more graphic. Expressions of anger and sorrow were more readily expressed. Monitoring of the regional information environment was relevant to the mission in Baghdad as there started to be spillover effects of the Israel-Hezbollah War in the Baghdad OE. For example, Muqdata al-Sadr called on Iraqis to kill an American soldier as the next best thing to killing an IDF soldier. Also, after the war, once Hezbollah forces had proven successful in the use of ATGMs against IDF tanks, propaganda began to appear with Nasrallah making a giving gesture toward Muqtada al-Sadr who was making a receiving gesture with ATGMs and a destroyed IDF tank juxtaposed inbetween.

<sup>33</sup>BBC News, "Muslims protest over Qana deaths," *British Broadcasting Corporation*, August 1, 2006, <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/35765/muslims-protest-over-qana-deaths.html> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>34</sup>Associated Press, “Israeli Attack on Lebanese Village Kills Dozens, Sparks Angry Protests,” *Associated Press*, July 30, 2006, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2006/07/30/israeli-attack-on-lebanese-village-kills-dozens-sparks-angry-protests/> (accessed May 7, 2014). See also Erlanger and Fattah.

<sup>35</sup>Erlanger and Fattah.

<sup>36</sup>Norton, 140, 147-149.

<sup>37</sup>BBC News, “Muslims protest over Qana deaths.” See also Norton, 147. See also Erlanger and Fattah.

<sup>38</sup>Erlanger and Fattah.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>Harel and Issacharoff, 159-162, 167. See also Norton, 140, 147-149. See also Johnson, 70.

<sup>41</sup>Norton, 149.

<sup>42</sup>Erlanger and Fattah. See also Harel and Issacharoff, 203. See also Marvin Kalb and Carol Saivetz, “The Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict,” *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 12, no. 3 (June 2007): 48.

<sup>43</sup>CNN, “Arab League seeks changes in draft resolution,” *Cable News Network*, August 8, 2006, <http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/08/08/siniora.plan/index.html> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>44</sup>Harel and Issacharoff, 203.

<sup>45</sup>United Nations Security Council, *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006)*.

<sup>46</sup>Norton, 140. See also Johnson, 70.

<sup>47</sup>Friedman.

<sup>48</sup>John Kifner, “In Long Fight With Israel, Hezbollah Tactics Evolved,” *The New York Times*, July 19, 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/07/19/world/in-long-fight-with-israel-hezbollah-tactics-evolved.html> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>Hollander. Originally quoted in an article of the *Daily Star* of Lebanon on July 27, 2001.

<sup>52</sup>Jeffrey Goldberg, "A Reporter At Large: In the Party of God (Part I)," *The New Yorker*, October 14, 2002, [http://www.jeffreygoldberg.net/articles/tny/a\\_reporter\\_at\\_large\\_in\\_the\\_par.php](http://www.jeffreygoldberg.net/articles/tny/a_reporter_at_large_in_the_par.php) (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup>United States Department of the Treasury, *U.S. Designates Al-Manar as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Entity Television Station is Arm of Hizballah Terrorist Network* (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Treasury, March 23, 2006), <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/js4134.aspx> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>55</sup>Goldberg. See also Hollander, *Backgrounder: Hezbollah's Media Weapon*.

<sup>56</sup>Goldberg.

<sup>57</sup>Kalb and Saivetz, 57.

<sup>58</sup>United States Department of the Treasury, *U.S. Designates Al-Manar as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Entity Television Station is Arm of Hizballah Terrorist Network*.

<sup>59</sup>Hollander, *Backgrounder: Hezbollah's Media Weapon*. The report originally aired on CNN on July 18, 2006.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.* The report originally aired on CNN's program *Reliable Sources* on July 23, 2006.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.* The report originally aired on CNN's program *Anderson Cooper 360°* on July 24, 2006.

<sup>62</sup>Charlie Moore, "Our very strange day with Hezbollah," *Cable News Network*, July 23, 2006, <http://www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/anderson.cooper.360/blog/2006/07/our-very-strange-day-with-hezbollah.html> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>63</sup>Hollander, *Backgrounder: Hezbollah's Media Weapon*.

<sup>64</sup>Kalb and Saivetz, 53.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, 53-54.

<sup>66</sup>Chris Link, “Photos that damn Hezbollah,” *Australian Herald Sun*, July 30, 2006, <http://www.news.com.au/national/photos-that-damn-hezbollah/story-e6frfkp9-1111112144002> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>67</sup>Hollander, *Backgrounder: Hezbollah’s Media Weapon*. See also Moore. See also Ricki Hollander, *Updated: A Reprise: Media Photo Manipulation*, CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America), August 9, 2006, [http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x\\_context=2&x\\_outlet=2&x\\_article=1175](http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=2&x_outlet=2&x_article=1175) (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>68</sup>Hollander, *Backgrounder: Hezbollah’s Media Weapon*.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup>Harel and Issacharoff, 159-162.

<sup>71</sup>Hollander, *Backgrounder: Hezbollah’s Media Weapon*.

<sup>72</sup>Kalb and Saivetz, 58. See also Hollander, *Backgrounder: Hezbollah’s Media Weapon*. The photos including “Green Helmet” were so distinctive and impactful that nearly eight years later when I first came across the reference to “Green Helmet” in relation to photos of the aftermath of the Qana attack, I immediately recalled an image of a very distinctive bespectacled man in a green military style helmet raising the broken body of a child out of the rubble. This recollection was from the time I was serving as the Multi-National Division-Baghdad Information Operations Chief of Operations and monitoring hundreds of images entering the IE as a result of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. When I conducted an image search for “Green Helmet Qana” I was immediately presented with dozens of images of the man, including the very image that had entered my mind when I first came across the reference. I also recalled the stomach turning sorrow and anger that image had conjured when I first viewed it eight years ago.

<sup>73</sup>Kalb and Saivetz, 58.

<sup>74</sup>Kathy Gannon, “Lebanese Rescuer ‘Green Helmet’ Injured,” *Associated Press*, August 15, 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/15/AR2006081500886.html> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup>Hollander, *Updated: A Reprise: Media Photo Manipulation*.

<sup>77</sup>Caroline von Fetscher, “Im Zweifel für den Zweifel,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, August 9, 2006, <http://m.tagesspiegel.de/medien/im-zweifel-fuer-den-zweifel/738370.html> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>78</sup>William S. Lind et al., “The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation,” *Marine Corps Gazette* (October 1989): 22-26, <http://globalguerrillas.typepad.com/lind/the-changing-face-of-war-into-the-fourth-generation.html> (accessed May 7, 2014).

<sup>79</sup>Hammes, 16-18.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 18-22.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, 23-31.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>83</sup>Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-13, *Information Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, August 27, 2012), IV-1, [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new\\_pubs/jp3\\_13.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_13.pdf) (accessed May 14, 2014).

<sup>84</sup>Norton, 136.

<sup>85</sup>U.S., Department of the Army, Training Circular (TC) 7-100, *Hybrid Threat* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, November 2010).

<sup>86</sup>Clausewitz, Book VIII, Chapter IV, 595-596.

<sup>87</sup>Joe Strange, *Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities: Building on the Clausewitzian Foundation So That We Can All Speak the Same Language*, Perspectives on Warfighting, No. 4, 2nd ed. (Quantico, VA: Defense Automated Printing Service Center, 1996), 43.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has sought to explore why the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 resulted in strategic failure for Israel. An argument was made that Israel did indeed meet with strategic failure during the war, and arguments to the contrary were addressed and countered. Existing explanations for Israel's strategic failure were considered to include the adoption of SOD methodologies, an overreliance on airpower, and the unpreparedness and relatively poor performance of IDF ground forces. These preexisting explanations were found to be contributing factors to Israel's strategic failure and sources of operational friction, but their explanatory power was not exclusive, either individually or in concert, leaving room for additional explanation. While the preexisting explanations helped to explain why Israel experienced operational difficulties in attempting to achieve its strategic objectives, they failed to explain how and why the time available to achieve those objectives was unexpectedly curtailed.

An alternative hypothesis was offered whereby Hezbollah was able to force the culmination of the IDF offensive before Israel's strategic objectives could be met. Hezbollah apparently accomplished this by using the media to exploit Israeli tactics and resultant civilian casualties in the Information Environment, leading to a collapse of regional political support and a premature cease-fire. Israel had initially enjoyed a rare level of regional support at the outset of the war. Israeli tactics and targeting decisions resulted, at time, in disproportionate civilian casualties. Hezbollah, operating on a fourth generation modern war model in which its main effort was centered in the information environment, exploited these events to influence regional public opinion. Public opinion

turned sharply against Israel as emotive images of dead children being pulled from the rubble of Israeli attacks saturated the regional media. As regional public opinion soured, Israel's initial support evaporated and regional states called for an immediate cease-fire. The imposition of a premature cease fire curtailed the IDF's operational time, ensuring that Israel would not achieve its objectives and that the war would end in strategic failure. This alternative explanation is best understood in conjunction with the three preexisting explanations, which certainly contributed to the end result.

This study also employed the concept of operational time, defined as the time available for the pursuit of military objectives before some factor will cause an operation, campaign, or war to reach a culminating point. Operational time is both fluid and limited, can be increased or decreased by specific changing circumstances, and can be influenced by both internal and external forces. The concept of operational time is applicable to all levels of war. The concept of operational time acknowledges the fluidity of the time element. The potential for internal actions or external influences to positively or negatively influence operational time is an effect of which military professionals must be aware. The task then, for military professionals, is to begin to think of time in a way in which operations in all domains constantly seek to preserve and expand operational time while curtailing that of the enemy.

The remainder of this section will be dedicated to articulating particular lessons that should be learned by the IDF, as well as broader theoretical lessons with more general applicability to military professionals. Finally, this section will address areas for future research. Based on this study, the IDF should consider the following in addition to

lessons already learned from the war, such as the dangers of an overreliance on air power or the neglect of ground force readiness.

1. Israel must come to appreciate fully the strategic risk posed by civilian casualties. As the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 clearly illustrated, such casualties can be exploited by Israel's enemies to create real and significant strategic effects. The IDF must elevate its military thought from its default focus on the tactical level to fully understand the potential strategic effects of tactical actions.
2. Israel must come to grips with the nature of the threat posed by Hezbollah. Hezbollah is a hybrid organization that employs a fourth generation modern war methodology to operate across multiple domains in all the levels of war. Hezbollah has located its main effort in the information environment, and it is in this domain that Israel must first learn to defend effectively against Hezbollah exploitation, and then learn to defeat Hezbollah's designs.
3. Israel must learn how to maintain regional support. At the beginning of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, Israel enjoyed a level of regional support that it had not experienced in previous wars. This support provided Israel with considerable operational flexibility early in the war, however it soon became clear that Israel was unaccustomed to such support and did not know how to adjust operations to ensure its continuation. In the future Israel must ensure that it operates in such a way as to maintain regional support when it is given so that the advantages of operational time and flexibility it bestows will not be a fleeting as they were in 2006.

4. The Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 was not a sufficient test case for the concepts inherent in SOD methodologies. Due to the short period that the new doctrine had been in place and willful internal resistance to the doctrine, the doctrine could not have reasonably been expected to perform as if it had been thoroughly trained on and internalized prior to the war. In this case, organizational culture and interests that predated the war and opposed SOD may have succeeded in concluding a prewar debate in their favor without considering whether SOD had been sufficiently in place to truly examine its strengths and weaknesses.

Based on this study, the following lessons should be considered by military professionals and theorists more broadly.

1. Operational time allows the military professional to understand the time element of war in a more dynamic sense. By acknowledging the fluid nature of operational time, and that a military force can affect the time available to accomplish its objectives, for better or worse, the military professional can tailor operations in such a way as to preserve or extend his or her own operational time while seeking to curtail that of the enemy. Additionally, as operational time is not entirely under the control of a military force, military professionals must develop and maintain contingency plans for when some internal or external factor unexpectedly curtails operational time; such contingency plans may allow a hastened operation to attempt to achieve the military force's objectives on an accelerated timetable before the expiration of operational time.

2. Hybrid threats must be understood in their full complexity. Thus far much of the attention paid to hybrid threats has focused on tactical combinations of conventional and unconventional formations, tactics, and military systems. However, as hybrid forces are inherently inferior to conventional forces in a tactical sense, the hybrid often follows a fourth generation modern war logic that allows it to engage in multiple domains throughout the levels of war. This means that hybrid forces likely locate their main effort in some domain other than the military domain and that military operations are most often undertaken to support effects in another domain. In order to persevere and win against this type of enemy, its nature, aims, strategies, operations, tactics, organization, and military systems must be understood in its full interconnected complexity.
3. When drawing conclusions and lessons from previous events or experiences, whether war or some other endeavor, it is important to consider and understand the role and influence of organizational culture in identifying, framing, evaluating, judging, and ultimately developing and implementing solutions to problems. Organizational cultures are self-replicating, self-reinforcing, and highly resistant to change, composed of an organization's history, collective beliefs, and institutional interests. In the aftermath of any event, an organization will tend to view events, problems, and solutions in ways consistent with its organizational culture. When this occurs, a rush to find answers or to protect institutional interests may result in learning the wrong lessons, or learning only those lessons consistent with an organization's culture

while missing other potential lessons that exist outside of the mainstream thinking of the organization.

4. The Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 also serves as one in a long line of examples that illustrate the dangers of overestimating what can be achieved unilaterally by air power. Additionally, ground forces must be kept in a state of readiness if the strengths of both air and ground forces are to be fully realized when employed together as part of a joint force.

This study raises a number of possible areas for future research. The concept of operational time can be further developed to create a more complete understanding of the dynamic nature of time in military operations and the implications of a military concept of time in which time is a fluid rather than a fixed quantity. An additional area for future research is the nature of hybrid threats extended to all domains and at all the levels of war. Greater understanding of hybrid threats in all their complexity of operation could provide new insights into how to combat hybrid threats, as well as how to engage and win in all domains and at all levels of war. Another area for future research is how to ensure that organizations can do a better job of learning all the lessons, and the right lessons from previous experience. This research would undoubtedly require a greater engagement with theories of organizational culture in military organizations.

Ultimately, this study will have proven successful in the short-term if it has contributed in some small way to the professional body of knowledge and caused others to think more deeply on the history of the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006, on the concept of operational time, on how hybrid threats operate across multiple domains, on how the information domain can be leveraged for strategic effects, and how organizations can

better learn from past experience. In the long-term this study will prove successful if it can contribute to the understanding and thinking of future decision makers in a way that allows them to avoid some of the pitfalls encountered by the IDF, or better yet to devise methods of leveraging operational time and engaging in the information environment to decisive strategic effect.

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