

# **The Military Campaign in Lebanon**

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## **Introduction**

The war in Lebanon exposed significant deficiencies in the IDF's level of preparedness for a wide scale military confrontation. These were particularly noticeable in view of the IDF's ongoing impressive ability to confront Palestinian terror. The discrepancy in the IDF's performance regarding these two different operational challenges – combating Palestinian terror and fighting the Hizbollah organization in Lebanon – raises numerous questions with regard to the way the forces are operated and justifies an examination of all the components that comprise the IDF system. Note should also be taken of the impact of processes launched in the IDF at the start of Dan Halutz's term as chief of staff, with regard to all aspects of the IDF's command and control concepts and organization of the IDF's headquarters.

This essay examines the IDF's performance in the war on two levels: force operation and the functioning concept of the General Staff. This involves scrutinizing the basic components at each level and understanding their impact on the IDF's performance in the war. Focusing on this specific dimension of the war, the essay does not look at naval, intelligence, home front operations, or logistics at the general staff level. Nor it does not address the planning and objectives of the operations. These have been analyzed separately in other essays in this collection.

## **Hizbollah's Force Operation**

The following analysis of Hizbollah's force operation in the war against the IDF is based on the organization's actual performance on the battlefield. This analysis draws only slightly from intelligence material or prior analysis of the organization's principles of force operation. Hizbollah's use of force incorporated a number of elements:

- *Standoff firepower* was the organization's principal means, whereby rockets with different ranges were deployed in a number of areas. The position of the launchers varied according to the rocket ranges. Short range rockets were launched primarily from the area south of the Litani River. Medium range rockets were

launched from the Tyre area and from north of the Litani, and some attempts were made to launch rockets from an area even further north. Hizbollah likewise tried to operate a number of armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), without success. The organization's other standoff fire effort included firing surface-to-sea missiles on Israeli navy vessels. The main objective of Hizbollah's rocket force was to strike at civilian targets in Israel, in order to cause as many casualties as possible and disrupt civilian life. In general, the launches were executed in an organized manner, based on preplanned operational plans and apparently on good centralized control. This mode of operation continued throughout the war, thus reflecting Hizbollah's ability to maintain high level command and control during the fighting.

- *Wearing down the IDF forces:* the aim of Hizbollah's close battle efforts was to cause as many IDF casualties as possible. Hizbollah made an extensive use of anti-tank missiles and mortar fire, along with prepared obstacles, booby traps, and mines. There was almost no use of maneuver-based fighting other than localized reinforcement of forces in a handful of battles. The driving idea was to disrupt the operations of IDF forces and wear them down. In practice, the organization did not fight to keep territory, and in this context it operated like a typical guerilla force. It deployed in previously prepared fighting posts. The anti-tank and mortar fire was used based on prior analysis of the terrain, and it was directed towards anticipated routes of approach of the IDF troops. The system of obstacles, which included landmines and booby traps, was also prepared based on this analysis of the terrain and of the IDF's expected approach routes. In most cases "counter attacks"<sup>1</sup> were not launched against the IDF forces. An extension of this effort was a Hizbollah effort to engage the IDF aircraft; however the flight profile of the Israeli Air Force's fixed wing aircraft rendered the standoff fire against the aircraft ineffective. This was not the case with regard to engagement of helicopters and in fact, one heavy combat transport helicopter was shot down.

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<sup>1</sup> According to military doctrine, a counter attack is an offensive response of the defending force that carries out an attacking maneuver outside its fixed positions. The use of standoff fire is not considered a counter attack.

One can summarize by saying that Hizbollah's force operation was based on two principal efforts. These efforts took place in the area of the frontline and in the secondary line area that spread northward up to the Litani River, and in deeper areas where the organization's logistics, training, and command infrastructure was deployed. The IDF's operations against Hizbollah developed gradually. Only towards the end of the fighting was the IDF called on to provide a comprehensive response to the full range of Hizbollah threats and in particular to stop rocket launches against Israel.

### **IDF Force operation**

A range of IDF operational abilities was utilized during the fighting in Lebanon. This included the use of air assets, land firepower and maneuvers, naval forces, and special forces, as well as use of psychological warfare; Home Front Command rescue forces; and finally, other support capabilities, such as intelligence and logistics. This essay examines the use of air assets, land forces, and special forces.

### ***Use of the airpower***

The air force operated in two different theaters: first, the air force was given command authority over the area stretching from the Litani River northward (the deep theater of operations). In the second theater, south of the Litani, the air force was tasked to support the Northern Command's operations and was controlled by the Command's command post. That included independent air missions serving the Northern Command's operations, as well as close support for the ground forces.

The deep theater of operations: the missions and objectives that were to be achieved north of the Litani River included:

- *Striking the rocket launch capability.* Air force attacks were aimed at damaging Hizbollah's launching capabilities. Naturally mostly medium and longer range rocket were deployed in this arena and the attacks on them were very successful. The short range rockets deployed in the closer areas, however, posed a different challenge because of their low signature and great number, and the achievements in the attacks against them were insignificant. Some medium range rockets were launched from the area of Tyre that falls under the Northern Command's

responsibility. Nevertheless, the air force was given the authority to operate independently against them and did so successfully.

- *Destroying Hizbollah's organizational and operational infrastructures.* From the first day of the fighting the air force tried to impair Hizbollah's organizational and operational infrastructures deep in this arena. Control centers, communications systems, and the Dahiya quarter that hosted the Hizballah HQ indeed were hit and suffered significant damage; apparently the greatest damages were inflicted on Hizbollah's organizational infrastructures and in the Dahiya quarter.
- *Isolating the war arena.* The air force operated to isolate the fighting arena by hitting the Lebanese transportation infrastructure, which likely contributed to the overall pressure on the Lebanese government.
- *Damaging national Lebanese infrastructures.* The air force was limited in damaging Lebanon's national infrastructures due to a government constraint imposed from the outset of the fighting.

### ***Command of the deep theater of operations***

This is probably the first time the air force was given overall authority for a geographical theater. In order to apply this authority the air force had to implement a full command and control cycle. This included all the relevant processes involved, from receipt of the orders from the chief of staff, through operational planning, issuing commands orders and sub-missions, controlling the implementation by the forces, and finally, reviewing achievement of the objectives and the missions. As part of this process, the theater command had to optimize force operation by identifying the best composition of the force for achieving the missions. This is the essence of integrated force operation. During the war the air force appears to have struggled to fully implement this authority, and thus in effect operated more as a firepower and targets contractor. This may be the result of the operational culture of the air force and the manner in which historically it perceives its role in warfare. Developing the air force's capability to serve as an effective central command in a geographical operational combat theater requires internalizing the different needs and processes implementing it through all the components of force buildup: training officers, developing doctrine, exercises, organization, and development of

weapon systems. Given the challenges of future wars, whereby the air force will be called on to carry out similar missions, including command responsibility for other far theaters of war, it will be required to generate such a process as quickly as possible in order to enhance the effectiveness of its theater command.

### ***Air Force Support to the Northern Command Operations***

The air force deployed a control facility at the Northern Command HQ to control airpower operations in the command's theater according to its tasking and priorities. In practice the link between this control facility and the Northern Command HQ failed to operate effectively. In addition, the air strikes against the short range rocket system were unsuccessful, mainly due to the fact that the rocket launches did not have an adequate signature that enabled the air force to complete attack cycles.<sup>2</sup>

The close air support proved inadequate. It was designed to enable commanders in the battlefield to direct attack helicopters and attack aircraft against specific targets, according to the battle needs and in real time. The use of air assets in the Northern Command theater failed to achieve its goals. It seems that the ability to use close air support has declined in recent years, largely due to the degeneration of the liaison system that was established in the past between the air force and the ground forces. The air support system has for all intents and purposes been terminated.

### ***Ground Forces operation***

Four divisions operated in the Northern Command during the war. They were assembled incrementally during the course of the fighting, and were used in a major scale operation only in the last days of the war. The Northern Command operated these divisions for two main efforts:

- Frontline effort – at the beginning of the fighting the division that was already deployed along the borderline was given responsibility for all operations along the borderline. As the fighting developed the borderline was divided between two

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<sup>2</sup> An attack cycle is defined as a process of identifying the target, attacking the target, and examining the results of the attack.

divisions and eventually a third division was deployed along the most eastern part of the border.

- Deep maneuvering effort – this was exercised only during the last days of the war and by one reserve division. This deep effort was designed to deal more effectively with Hizbollah's short range rocketry.

Various insights can be derived from the ground operations:

- Lack of professionalism – During the fighting with Hizbollah, inadequate professionalism of the forces and commanders in some of the combat units was observed. This was the case for regular as well as reserve units. Prior to the war most of the regular forces were engaged in combating Palestinian terror. When they were transferred to Lebanon, they were unfit to conduct combined forces battles integrating infantry, armored, engineering, artillery forces, and other support forces. In some instances, the units lacked both the skills and the necessary organic weapon systems required for this type of fighting. Under these circumstances units found themselves trying to adjust rapidly – often successfully – while engaged in fighting. The professionalism of the reserve troops was not better but for different reasons. It resulted from a many years process during which the army reserves were neglected. The education and training of the officers were shown to be ineffective. The lack of practical training during reserve duty was evident, as was the lack of cohesion of the units, which had a detrimental effect on their operational capability.
- Combined forces warfare – This is a fundamental element of ground based fighting. Its nature stems from the combat force's ability to utilize the full range of combat capabilities: armor, infantry, reconnaissance, intelligence, engineering, artillery, standoff fire, electronic warfare, attack helicopters, and fighter bombers, as well as use of combat transport helicopter for deep operations in the enemy's rear and along the flanks. All these are supported by appropriate command and control abilities. The IDF's combat approach requires an integration of all abilities in order to create the best mix for engaging in combat within various arenas, to allow the achievement of the force's military objectives. Neglecting the use of some of these basic elements results in dysfunction of the combined force and impacts on the

force's ability to complete its missions. In the war in Lebanon two main phenomena emerged:

- Command – command of the battles in Lebanon was implemented by division commanders who had forces of various sizes under their command. Most of the commanders did not have the skills and training needed to operate a combined force professionally. A lack of knowledge in operating tank and infantry units was evident, and in some cases engineering forces were not directed according to the IDF's doctrine. The artillery forces fired mostly on pre-planned targets and provided only inadequate close support for the ground forces. The available logistical systems were used only partially by the commanders, and this created supply problems and sometimes required some units to exit the battlefield to obtain supplies. The lack of professionalism of some of the commanders in conducting combined forces battles ultimately led to situations in which units did not carry out their missions. This is a critical lapse that the IDF must correct quickly.
- Dysfunction of basic elements in the combined force battle – the field commanders were not solely responsible for the inadequacy in operating the full combined force. For example: one of the most important tools of the fighting force is the capability to use close aerial support. The essence of such support is the ability of the commander to enlist aerial fire against targets that were not pre-planned, in response to a changing operational situation. In practice, the air force approached this subject completely differently and interpreted the concept of close air support as another version of attacks on given ground targets. Another example of the failure to use combined assets was the lack of use of combat transport helicopters for transport of ground forces other than special operations. This means that an important maneuvering component was not used. In practice, the entire transport helicopter unit was set aside to serve the needs of special operations deep inside Lebanon, and did not at all support the division's maneuvering needs.

- Simplicity of the operational plans – The ability to formulate an operational plan that is clear and simple is a basic component of military art. Simplicity is a valuable element in a unit's ability to understand and ultimately carry out its mission effectively. In many cases and particularly among the regular force units, unclear orders were issued that were not based on formal IDF doctrine and were worded in unclear terminology. The origin of this lapse lies in thinking that became common in the IDF that there is a “magical operational solution,” which once found and realized is bound to lead to victory. The main idea was to target the enemy's consciousness in ways that will make it possible to avoid direct engagement of the enemy in difficult battles. Military history, however, has repeatedly shown that battles are actual physical occurrences, and ultimately do not take place in the enemy's consciousness. In this Lebanese war theater and against this enemy, one has to achieve real results such as occupying territory, killing enemy fighters, blocking axes of movement, and so on.
- Frequent changes in the operational plans – This phenomenon occurred too frequently among the ground forces. Changes are part of the art of battle, yet their frequency often affects the capability of carrying out a mission. In the war in Lebanon numerous changes were made, both in the definition of missions and in the composition of the forces. These changes generated continual confusion at subordinate levels, which had a detrimental effect on the units' abilities to conduct battles effectively and ultimately impacted negatively on their ability to fulfill the missions. One can assume that this phenomenon was a direct result of the lack of professionalism of some of the officers who while trying to achieve the “optimum” operational plan were not aware of the confusion caused by frequent changes that impairs execution of the mission.
- Continuity of fighting – An important principle of war, it entails maintaining ongoing contact with and engagement of the enemy to prevent the latter from recovering, regrouping, and improving its situation. During



the fighting in Lebanon this principle was noticeably absent from the thinking of commanders, resulting in intervals in the fighting, boosting the ability of the Hizbollah fighters to regroup and act against the IDF forces. The common explanation that this phenomenon is an offshoot of years of combating Palestinian terror in which the principle of avoidance of losses was a major priority provides only a partial answer, as some of the reserve units did not put this principle of war into practice despite not being involved in fighting Palestinian terror in recent years. One has to assume that this phenomenon was part of the broader lack of professionalism and training.

These insights relate mainly to the different higher echelons of command. In most cases in the lower regimental and company levels a good level of combat performance was demonstrated. The conclusion is that the IDF should principally focus on brigade and division command levels in order to trace the sources of these negative phenomena and to formulate a plan for improving command proficiency. In addition, the reserve forces require upgrading. These forces are highly motivated. Their motivation must be maintained but they should be also allowed to have sufficient training, taking into account the special needs of these civilian/soldiers.

### ***Special Forces Operations***

Special operations are a significant tool available to military command, i.e., using a small force in order to strike the enemy deep in its rear. This is sometimes a clandestine operation, aimed at achieving an intelligence gathering objective, and sometimes it is a noisy raid. Using special forces deep in enemy territory is required on various levels in accordance with operational needs. It requires adequate professional skills, both of the operational force and of the commanding HQ.

The use of IDF special forces in Lebanon occurred mainly in the strategic depth of the enemy territory, and less in the areas closer to the battlefield. After the war broke out a post of coordinator for special operations was created in the Operations Branch of the General Staff for this purpose. The special operations activity in the northern command theater sector was scarce and this was apparently a result of the lack of

proficiency of the territorial command in carrying out special operations while simultaneously managing fighting in the front. The strategic special operations cannot replace the ones that the command has to implement to support its operational needs.

Special operations deep in enemy territory are highly effective in operational terms. Realizing their potential requires enhancement of the command capability. In this context the IDF has to examine two main aspects:

- *The need to establish an **operational command** for special operations, under the authority of the chief of staff* – this command will operate in addition to the existing eight operation commands of the IDF. It will be able to enhance the chief of staff control of these operations as well as the flexibility of use of the special forces. The command has to be responsible for buildup of special forces capabilities as well as commanding them in war time.
- *Enhancing the capability of the regional command to carry out special operations* – this requires development of doctrine, organization and training.

### **The IDF Functional Structure Concept**

Prior to the war a new approach to the way the IDF operates was formulated. It determined the division of authority in the General Staff as well as the system of command and control by the chief of staff over the eight different commands (regional and functional). It also stipulated the responsibility for force operation and force buildup of the different organizations.

The war in Lebanon brought several issues to light that should be examined. The first addresses the division of the theater of war into several operational theaters (regional and functional). In the years prior to the development of this new concept, there was a tendency to adhere to an approach based on the idea of the operational theater as the central element in the management of war. The underlying idea refers to two basic elements: the first is that the operational theater incorporates *all* the fighting components of one's forces against *all* the fighting components of the enemy in the same theater. Thus, this approach holds that there is an “ideal” division into operational theaters that satisfies the above requirements. The second relates to the *command* of the theater – this approach determines that command of the operational theater has to be given to "an

operator" who is the only party capable of coordinating all military activity in the theater, and he alone has the capability to formulate a systemic approach to conducting the campaign (in the IDF, this approach is called "the systemic idea"). The basic assumption of this approach is that because of this only the chief of staff is able to exercise actual command of the full operational theater, as only he perceives the full systemic picture and thus he is capable of commanding all the IDF's operational theaters.

The new concept of command and control determined that the chief of staff is defined as the commander of the war theater delegating operational authority to the different operational theater commanders thus dividing the theater of war into several operational theaters. Defining these areas of authority requires the chief of staff to determine the following components for each operational theater:

- *Authority* – the chief of staff determines the identity of the commander who is to be given the authority for undertaking the missions of a particular operational theater.
- *Mission* – the chief of staff assigns missions to each commander
- *Resources* – the chief of staff allocates resources to each operational theater based on his constraints and on the operational requirements for realizing the missions
- *Planning and execution constraints and guidelines* – the chief of staff determines the planning and execution constraints for each commander as he sees fit.

### ***Realization of the Concept in the War in Lebanon***

The areas of authority in the Lebanese war were determined in accordance with this theoretical approach, starting with the *war theater*. The chief of staff, as the war theater commander, considered himself the commander of all the IDF's fighting arenas (north, center, south, air, sea, intelligence, home front, and logistics) and as the function required to see the full picture of the war and to varying degrees the picture unfolding in each arena.

As to the operational theaters, the chief of staff ordered a division into a number of operational theaters, as follows: the southern operational theaters – of the Southern Command, conducting the fighting with the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and safeguarding the borders Egypt and Jordan; the central operational theater – conducting

the Central Command's battle against Palestinian terror in the West Bank. The northern operational theater was split between the Northern Command, which was given responsibility over the area south of the Litani River; the air force, which was given responsibility over the area north of the Litani; and the Navy, which was given the responsibility to conduct naval warfare, impose a naval blockade, and execute other missions in the naval arena opposite the Lebanon shoreline.

The extent to which the basic principles of this approach were implemented may be analyzed as follows:

- *Missions* – the orders issued by the General Staff had to define clearly the missions to be achieved in each operational theater. Generally missions were well defined.
- *Resources* – the examination of the suitability of the allocation of resources to the missions and constrains leads to the conclusion that there was no lack of resources. In order to examine the suitability of the resources to the missions one can conduct a mental exercise comparing the missions and the resources available to the IDF Commands in the 2006 Lebanon war versus the missions and resources available to these Commands in previous wars, for example in the Yom Kippur War. Without engaging in complex bookkeeping exercises one can determine that the extent of the resources available to the Commands was adequate.
- *Authority* – The question here is whether the chief of staff defined the areas of authority among the various headquarters clearly and did not leave some undefined areas. The delegation of authority in the northern front by dividing the area into two operational theaters – controlled by the air force and the Northern Command – can be considered satisfactory.<sup>3</sup>
- *Planning and execution constraints and guidelines* – to a large extent these reflect the chief of staff's perception of the specific operational effort. The degree to which these guidelines were issued clearly and in accordance with the Command hierarchy should be examined. In many cases during the war in Lebanon orders

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<sup>3</sup> Appointing the deputy chief of staff as the chief of staff's representative at Northern Command, even though this appointment is not defined in the command and control concept, did not have any effect on the authority of the head of the Command over utilization of the forces in the northern campaign arena. It seems that the difficulty with this appointment derives from a sense of lack of faith conveyed by chief of staff to the Command leader, and this filtered down through the ranks.

included great detail on planning, implementation, guidelines, and constraints. The chief of staff has complete freedom and in many cases he has even an obligation to define planning implementation and guidelines constraints. These definitions, as detailed as they may be, are only a basis for operational planning and should not be used as an excuse for faulty operational planning.

The extent to which the IDF's operational effectiveness increased as a result of these new concepts should be evaluated. It seems that transferring responsibility for operating forces deep in enemy territory to the air force ensured the required focus on this type of mission. On the other hand, it is questionable whether the air force succeeded in effectively realizing its authority over this operational theater. The air force operated over the years as a targets contractor or as the executer of an aerial campaign (such as destroying the airports in the Six Day War, or destroying the missile batteries in Lebanon during the first Lebanon War). Prior to the 2006 war in Lebanon the air force had never undertaken an operational theater command. Initial examination indicates that the air force has yet to realize this kind of command responsibility effectively. As to the performance of the Northern Command headquarters, which had to exercise its authority and operate land, air, and sea efforts, as well as special operations, examinations indicate that the Command had trouble with encompassing all the efforts and synchronizing them into a tangible and complete effort. Realization of the new approach required organization and training. These were lacking, mainly because the adoption of the new concept took place a short time before the war and the change process was supposed to take several years.

## **Conclusion**

In order to allow improvement of the IDF's preparedness for future confrontations, it seems that more focus should be given to the area of ground warfare, which has a critical impact on the operational effectiveness of the IDF as a whole. In addition to the conclusions drawn above, other basic understandings can be derived, including:

- *Hizbollah's performance.* Hizbollah's operations against the IDF, focused on trying to inflict as many casualties as possible, were based on using pre-prepared fixed posts. This is probably one of the first times that such a scattered defensive

tactic was used in a decentralized methodical manner. In most cases the organization's fighting force did not carry out operational maneuvers and in most cases, when IDF troops came into direct contact with Hizbollah fighters, the IDF gained the upper hand. The effectiveness of the use of anti-tank weapons by Hizbollah was not unusual compared to what could have been expected. The IDF's armored forces can contend with such weapons successfully, by implementing their current weapon systems and doctrine. In addition, the underground fortifications and bunkers systems are mostly effective against approaching forces maneuvering in killing zones. Swift penetration into these Hizbollah posts and direct close range engagement of the enemy exposes the weakness of these deployments. Efforts should be made to develop tactics that utilize this weakness.

- *Coordinating force buildup by the General Staff.* The IDF's long term force buildup processes had enormous impact on the preparedness of the fighting forces. Such processes do not only relate to the IDF's weapon systems procurement, though this generally grabs most of the public's attention due to its budgetary implications. Force buildup, however, includes additional components of no less importance, such as: commanders selection procedures, training, and the development of proper doctrines. The military's branches and headquarters with authority for force buildup have to examine the lessons of the fighting in Lebanon and implement them through an integrated and comprehensive process. For example, the findings about the inadequate coordination between the air force and ground forces in the combined forces battle and in close air support demands thorough intervention by the General Staff in order to rectify it by making the necessary integration among the different services and branches. It must reconstruct the interface lines among the different headquarters responsible for buildup processes to enable each to take into account the needs of the others.
- *Force buildup of the army (ground forces).* The negative phenomena observed in the army during the war resulted from processes that took place over many years, for example, the lack of professionalism of some of the forces in conducting combined force battles. Thus, the IDF in general and the army headquarters in

particular must examine thoroughly the history of these processes and the reasons why they took place, and then try to offer ways to solve the root problems. Another key area that requires attention relates to the processes of selection, training, education, and instruction of the commanders.

- *The effectiveness of the independent ground forces headquarters.* This should be examined in view of the fact that the number of the army divisions has significantly decreased over the last decade, while the resources for the ground forces headquarters has increased. The interface between the regional commands that actually command these fighting forces and the ground forces' headquarters that are responsible for the buildup of the force should be improved in order to better prepare the divisions' readiness for combat. The results of the different battles in this war showed that there is no correlation between the size of the ground forces' headquarters and the operational effectiveness of the fighting combat units.
- *Special forces.* The use of special forces in the war in Lebanon was not comprehensive enough. Their use in the deep fighting theater north of the Litani River as well as in Hizbollah's strategic rear were highly effective. However, the use of special operations by the Northern Command and even by the divisional level was inadequate. The IDF must try to improve its preparedness for the use of these forces at all levels, both through the establishment of a dedicated headquarters for the special forces and through improvement of regional and division commands capabilities to implement special operations.
- *The time dimension.* In this war the time dimension comprised an important parameter. The messages conveyed by the political leadership to the IDF indicated that Israel enjoyed legitimacy for its military operation, and therefore the IDF had no political time limit for realizing the operational objectives. This message penetrated through IDF command echelons and harmed the forces' ability to execute their missions effectively and vigorously based on the notion that one should not put the forces at risk to attain an objective that might be achieved later with fewer casualties. It should be remembered that shortening the duration of the fighting is an operational need of the fighting force. The erosion of

the time constraints led eventually to a decline in the operational effectiveness of the forces. Despite the fact that the political leadership allowed the IDF a generous time frame, the IDF's forces had to understand that that it was incumbent on them to operate vigorously, aim to achieve their missions as quickly as possible, and shorten the duration of the war.

Observers of the war may have a sense of frustration emanating from the tension between the general positive political and strategic results of the war and the poor performance of some of the IDF's forces. In the interests of maintaining a sense of proportion it should be remembered that the IDF operated several parallel efforts: aerial operations, naval activity, special operations, psychological warfare, and army operations. The first four were highly effective in carrying out their missions. Most of lessons of war analyzed above relate to the ground forces operations, and in fact much improvement is required in this area. Alongside the problems and failures described in this essay one can determine that the war achieved a considerable number of strategic and political objectives, and that is in fact the supreme test of a military force in a war. The coming years will be able to demonstrate whether these achievements are robust enough by providing an answer to the main questions: Were the political objectives determined by the government eventually achieved? And, was Israel's strategic position ultimately improved?