

The Israeli actions during the Second Lebanon War: a case study into strategic culture

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Introduction

In July and August 2006 the Second Lebanon War raged between Israel and Hezbollah. After an action by Hezbollah on 12 July, during which two Israeli servicemen were abducted, Israel responded with air raids against the Shiite organisation in Lebanon. The conflict escalated when Hezbollah began firing missiles on the north of Israel. In an attempt to end these missile launches, Israel intensified the air raids, but failed to prevent them. Almost a month into this vicious circle Israel eventually decided to carry out a land operation against the Hezbollah fighters in order to stop the missile fire before a cease-fire would come into effect. The land operation, however, was conducted unsatisfactorily and brought to light quite a number of defects in the Israeli security political structures and armed forces. Eventually, the war came to an end through international efforts. An extended UNIFIL, in cooperation with 15,000 Lebanese government troops, was to see to the stability in southern Lebanon.

Disappointment and frustration in Israel were great and the government and military leadership were targeted. The Israeli actions met with widespread criticism, nationally as well as internationally. How could this “poor performance” be explained?² Surely, it could not be true that one of the world’s most impressive and experienced armed forces had failed to protect their citizens against missiles fired by a guerrilla movement? This contribution investigates how the Israeli actions in the summer of 2006 can be placed in the context of Israel’s political-military strategic development, the history of Israel and the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). This essay can be interpreted as a case study into strategic culture. It poses the question on the extent to which the Israeli actions in the Second Lebanon War can be explained from the Israeli strategic cultural development. Strategic culture is seen here as, “the persisting (though not eternal) socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind, and preferred methods of operation that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security community that has had a necessarily unique historical experience”.³

Strategic culture is a “contested concept”;⁴ defining it is subject of discussion, and opinions on the explanatory force of the concept differ. Nevertheless, it is widely accepted that in the explanation of strategic behaviour of an actor, his strategic culture plays a major role.⁵ Research into strategic culture contributes to finding answers to questions on “whether, why and how, people, politics and would-be politics, fight”.⁶

In the first section a number of explanations for the poor Israeli performance are presented, followed by a survey of the development of the Israeli strategic culture. The third section, subsequently, positions the Israeli actions in the summer of 2006 in the context of this development. The essay is rounded off with a conclusion.

Explanations offered for the disappointing Israeli performance in 2006

In response to the question on the poor performance, several factors are given in explanation. This contribution assesses a number of them by means of the analysis of Avi Kober⁷ and the report of the inquiry commission that the Israeli government installed under pressure of broadly shared criticism.

Kober states that the IDF failed to reach a “battlefield decision”, meaning that the IDF did not succeed in preventing the enemy from continuing the battle.⁸ In Kober’s analysis Israel allowed a reprisal action to go beyond its culmination point, after which the required response was not undertaken, resulting in an unsatisfactory conclusion. The *Katyusha* attacks on northern Israel could only be stopped by occupying the areas from which the missiles were launched. This had to be done by means of a land operation, which in the end was not carried out in the surprising, fast and decisive manner befitting the “sophisticated tradition” of the IDF.⁹

The first reason for the mediocre performance of the IDF, according to Kober, is a belated realisation that this was a war.¹⁰ The Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Dan Halutz, initially considered the operation to be a reprisal attack. He decided that the General Staff was not to refer to it as ‘war’. Vice-Prime Minister Shimon Peres stood alone in the cabinet with his urge for clarity on whether this was a war. The matter hampered the preparations for any possible follow-up operations, causing delays in the mobilisation of reserve units. Moreover, it affected the command and control of the ongoing operation and it limited the staging of prepared operations. Finally, it restricted the dissemination of intelligence, which had an adverse effect on the decision making.¹¹

The second reason Kober sees in Israel's clinging to what Luttwak has called "post-heroic warfare,"¹² the desire to avoid casualties, on one's own side, but also among the civilian population of the opponent. This mentality is a reflection of the "casualty aversion" of the Israeli society.¹³ On 31 July, day 20 of the war, Minister Mofaz, former Chief of Staff (1998-2002) and Minister of Defence (2002-May 2006) announced, "we have achieved much, and we do not wish to put that at risk by exposing 40,000 troops to the 'reality of southern Lebanon". As, however, the missile attacks continued, they saw no other option than to launch a ground operation. Nevertheless, the debates on alternatives went on until at least 9 August.

The third explanation for the indifferent performance of the IDF Kober sees in the impact of the two Intifadas, with which Israel is still struggling. In line with what Van Creveld already found in 1998,¹⁴ he points at the eroding effect of the operations in the occupied territories on the armed forces. Moreover, the last war had been fought over 25 years ago, which meant that there was hardly any war experience left in the organisation. In the occupied territories the opposition is weak and small-scale, the environment is familiar and the supply of intelligence and support are of high quality. In the operation against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon in 2006 it was just the other way round. Commanders had no experience in manoeuvring with large (mechanised) units, which had not been trained for such operations (sometimes not trained at all, due to their deployment in the occupied territories),¹⁵ while the logistic support was "rather ineffective".¹⁶ Furthermore, being deployed in the occupied territories had its repercussions on the mindset with which the IDF entered the 2006 war. It caused restraint.

A fourth explanation Kober seeks in the application of RMA-inspired concepts. Under the influence of, and impressed by, technological developments and the ensuing American ideology of the revolution in military affairs school, Israel adopted a number of "false assumptions and beliefs".¹⁷ Among them Kober identifies "the cult of technology", the reliance on airpower and small high-value units, and the notion of "controlling", instead of occupying ground. The reliance on technology at the expense of traditional military capability and skills goes hand in hand with the post-heroic warfare concept.

Kober finds a fifth cause for the performance below par in "poor" professionalism in the officer corps. He states that the IDF has deviated from the core of military thinking. He sees a "superficial intellectualisation" and an uncritical pursuance of a fashionable American post-modernist ideology, such as the effects based operations (EBO) concept.¹⁸ The ensuing obscurantist rhetoric overshadows the professional know-how and notions that should be central. Kober reproaches the IDF for a "weakened commitment" with

regard to the crucial concept of “battlefield decision”, in particular, in low-intensity conflicts.

The sixth cause of the disappointing performance of the IDF Kobar attributes to the wavering and inexperienced political leadership. In combination with the dominant position of the military in the decision making process this turned out for the worse in this case.¹⁹ It is a well-known fact that the political and military leadership in Israel are intertwined, and this is not surprising in view of the importance of the armed forces in a country that has fought real existential wars and is still facing threats to its very existence. In Kobar’s view, however, it is regrettable that in 2006 the political leadership, embodied in Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Minister of Defence Amir Peretz did not have any military experience, and, unlike their predecessors Levi Eshkol, Golda Meir or Menachim Begin, could not rely on an experienced Chief of Staff. General Halutz was the first commander of the Israeli air force to become Chief of Staff. He had little experience in managing joint operations, according to Kobar, who sees the general as an exponent of the post-heroic, air power-heavy, technocentric, post-modernist thinking on warfare, in short, someone the situation certainly did not require.²⁰ Olmert’s and Peretz’ inexperience gave room for Halutz’ approach, who received ‘the strongest backing and greatest freedom of action possible’ during the war.²¹

The Winograd Commission, which investigated the conduct of the war for the Israeli government, concluded the government had started the war without having contemplated what exactly should be done: a punitive action, or a course of action in which the situation on the ground in southern Lebanon would be controlled by Israel. The war started without a choice for either one of the options, and without an exit strategy.²² The indecision in this respect, which continued right to the end of the operation “did hurt Israel”.²³ The result was that preparations for a ground operation were begun late in the conflict; so late even that the political and diplomatic circumstances made a completion impossible.²⁴

Winograd concluded that Prime Minister Olmert had decided hastily, without any existing detailed plan, something he did not ask for, either. The complexity of the situation had been fathomed insufficiently. No systematic inquiry had been carried out in the broader sense, or outside of the armed forces. More reserved opinions were not related to the own views and considered. The objectives were not identified clearly and their relation to the military means was not specified adequately. The commission lays personal blame on the Prime Minister for objectives which were over-ambitious and unattainable.²⁵ It saw “serious failure in exercising judgment, responsibility and prudence”.²⁶ Minister Peretz was inexperienced and relied too much on the military top, not having

any knowledge of the basic principles of the use of military means in order to attain strategic objectives. Nevertheless, he did “not systematically” consult experts; objections were not given enough weight.²⁷ The most important player in all this, the Chief of Staff, was aware that he had to deal with this inexperience, which increased his responsibility. Winograd is of the opinion that he did not live up to this. He gave the wrong impression that the IDF was sufficiently prepared and that the plans were applicable to the situation. He should have made clear that the chance of missile attacks by Hezbollah was great after Israeli air raids and that they could only be prevented with large-scale ground operations.²⁸ Halutz, according to the commission “failed in his duties as commander in chief of the army and as a critical part of the political-military leadership”.²⁹

Winograd adds a number of comments. After 25 years without war, there came another one, of a “different kind”, and the IDF was not ready for it. Many an Israeli thought that Israel was “beyond the era of wars”. In this view the most important concern for the land forces is low-intensity conflict,³⁰ and the security policy does not provide an adequate response anymore to all challenges. In these “few final comments” lies the crux of Winograd’s take of the matter. The way in which Israel was exposed during the Second Lebanon War (a title which the government only attributed to the conflict in March 2007, Winograd reminds us) prompted a number of “critical questions”. Does Israel still have its strategic priorities in the right order? After all, this is about “questions that stand at the centre of our existence here as a Jewish and democratic state”.³¹

A survey of the development of the Israeli strategic culture

In order to be able to answer the question about the extent to which the Israeli action during the Second Lebanon War can be explained from the development of the Israeli strategic culture, a survey of that development will be given below.

The geostrategic circumstances

Due to geostrategic circumstances Israel was forced to develop a security policy which would enable it to hold its own in a hostile environment. Geographically and numerically at a disadvantage, Israel is focused on the defence of its existence and freedom. So, primarily, the country has a defensive strategy, with a reactive objective, directed at undoing/negating the objectives of its opponents.³²

Israel’s geographical position in a hostile environment is precarious. Apart from that, in the course of the various wars, beginning with the war of independence in 1948 and 1949, many Palestinians have fled outside the borders of Israel. A considerable number

of them came back under Israeli control with the occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in 1967. Both the inhabitants of these occupied territories and those in the neighbouring Arab countries form a reservoir for organisations that are prepared to fight Israel. Thus, Israel is facing up to a broad range of threats, coming from several directions and of varying nature, from ballistic missiles from Iran to suicide terrorists from the areas under its own control. The range of tasks of the IDF to deal with this has grown in complexity accordingly.³³ On top of that, Israel is smaller from a demographic and economic perspective than the neighbouring countries combined. Israel knows it cannot solve the conflict with military means.³⁴

The Israeli territory has no strategic depth, with the whole country lying within range of present ground-to-ground missiles, the most vital parts coming within artillery range, and its air space lying within reach of ground based air defence assets. Although the greatest vulnerability was alleviated somewhat by the capturing of the Sinai desert, the West Bank and the Golan Heights in 1967, the tendency of “not yielding an inch” which has set in the mean time, is a strong determining factor of Israeli strategy.³⁵ This strategy, furthermore, is determined by offensiveness on the tactical and operational level. If deterrence could not prevent an attack on the country, or if the threat became too big, the IDF would have to act.³⁶ The quality of the Israeli intelligence gathering cannot offer a guarantee, so the motto becomes: “pre-empt when in doubt”.³⁷ In case of war, the overriding principle is to move the fighting to the territory of the opponent as quickly as possible. Although ‘undeep’ from a strategic perspective, Israel’s central position has one advantage: it offers the possibility of using so-called interior lines. It can move troops from one front to the other, as the situation requires. From a geographical point of view the situation at the moment is more favourable than ever before. The buffer of the Sinai has been replaced by a peace treaty with Egypt, with ensuing guarantees, such as, in particular, American presence in the desert, while at the same time the disadvantages of a surplus of territory have disappeared. In short, Israel can concentrate on the remaining borders, in particular those with Syria and Lebanon.

Psychological factors

Besides geo-political ones, Handel points at psychological factors playing a major role in the Israeli strategic situation. The history of the Jewish people increases the feeling of insecurity and in a sense Zionism can be considered as a quest for security.³⁸ Two millennia of living in Diaspora, with the genocide on the Jewish people in WWII as its nadir, has made dispersion and destruction of state and people realistic threats. Having to fend for itself in more or less hostile environments has created a “distrustful self-reliance” inside the Jewish psyche, which has its effects on the state of Israel. Handel states that this is one of the reasons why Israel often exhibits a kind of ghetto mental-

ity in international politics, not conducive to the political and diplomatic aspects of the strategic process.³⁹ The Arab stance towards Israel confirmed the fears of the Israelis. Even several generations on, in a strong state of Israel, the “psychology of insecurity” persists. Handel argues that in general Israelis prefer security over taking risks for peace. In the absence of a buffer like the Sinai, reaching an understanding with Syria, Jordan and the Palestinian authorities is difficult. On top of that, the group of Israeli colonists in the occupied territories, which has been growing since 1967, constitutes a powerful political movement.

Quality versus quantity

Demographically, Israel is clearly smaller than its opponents and the relative negative trend is continuing.⁴⁰ Since the occupation of the territories captured in 1967 Israel has even had to deal with a growing group of potential opponents within its own borders. The size of the population determines the size of the IDF. In spite of a high degree of military participation, this means clear limitations for the armed forces. The size of the Israeli Air Force (IAF), for instance, is not determined by the number of aircraft, but by the number of people that can be trained to fly them. The degree of military participation has a great influence on the Israeli strategy. Thus, large-scale mobilisation has immediate economic consequences and cannot be sustained for long. Numerical considerations have been instrumental in the Israeli choice for assault power rather than staying power. Wars must be decided quickly and wars of attrition must be avoided.⁴¹

In order to compensate for the quantitative disadvantage Israel has always emphasised qualitative aspects of its armed forces. Prior to 1967 the quality was founded in particular on the personal characteristics of its soldiers. Since that time, Israel has come to rely more and more on technological superiority, which according to many, came at the expense of the quality of the Israeli soldier, and consequently, the IDF.⁴² Israel conducts “capital-intensive warfare”, with major roles for information technology, technological surprise, heavy and precise fire power, such as area munitions and stand-off weapons. The ambition to compensate for the quantitative disadvantage in this manner, goes hand in hand with the necessity to take into account the decreasing preparedness to accept casualties and great material losses, in particular in wars of choice.⁴³

Shaping strategy

With respect to shaping and executing strategy, Israel has a unique history. Considerations of secrecy limit the number of executive functionaries next to the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister and the Chief of Staff to a handful of people. Israel does not have a formalised structure for national security issues.⁴⁴ In the absence of other institutions in this area, the influence of the military on the political-military strategic

process is disproportionately great in Israel. The successes in the confrontation with the neighbouring countries, culminating in the Six-Day War of 1967, always pushed the weaknesses of this system to the background. Also the near-catastrophe of 1973 and the far-from-satisfactory conclusion of the 1982 war in Lebanon and the dragging on of the Intifada, have so far not led to any significant change in this. Handel gives the example of the Six-Day War. The astounding success of the IDF on the operational level concealed the confused ad hoc decision making and the lack of strategic planning prior to the war. Only at the very last moment did Defence Minister Dayan decide on an all-out pre-emptive strike. The decisions on the operations against Jordan and Syria, in that order, were only taken during the course of the war. On top of that, Dayan had given instructions not to actually advance as far as the eastern bank of the Suez Canal. It was to lead to the War of Attrition (1969-1970), the outcome of which was disadvantageous for Israel. It had made Egypt stronger and brought modern air defence systems of Soviet stock on the west bank of the Suez Canal.⁴⁵ Handel points out not only the military leadership are to be blamed for this. The Golda Meir government allowed things to happen and de facto delegated the responsibility to Dayan and the IDF.⁴⁶

The clearest example of the negative consequences of the concentration of political-military issues in a small circle, according to Handel, is Israel's involvement in Lebanon. After having been driven out of Jordan in 1970, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) established itself in Lebanon. When the civil war in Lebanon broke out in 1975 Israel began to support Christian factions in an attempt to shift the balance of power to its advantage. Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, subsequently, wanted to solve the problem of the PLO once and for all by means of a military operation. The Israeli government, with Sharon in front, believed that "military power and swift action could solve any problem; they were confident of Israel's military superiority, and not in the habit of making rational, long-range calculations".⁴⁷ Sharon and Chief of staff Eitan asked the government for permission for an invasion, 40 kilometres in depth, into Lebanon in order to create a safety zone, while they had plans for an invasion of their northern neighbour of a much larger scale. In these plans the advance would go as far as the capital Beirut, its objectives being to neutralise the PLO as a player in Lebanon, and attack the position of Syria in the country, which had been militarily active in Lebanon since the summer of 1967, initially on the invitation of the then Lebanese government. Although Israel had not objected to this in the first instance, provided Syria remained at sufficient distance, the Syrian presence was a thorn in the side of many, and particularly Sharon, as the build-up of ground-based air defence systems in the Bekaa valley limited Israel's freedom of movement in the air.

An operation in Lebanon could kill two birds with one stone: remove the PLO and neutralise the Syrian threat. In the process a Christian government, with which Israel could come to an understanding, would be given a leg up. Sharon talked to Christian leaders in Lebanon and tried to get the support of the American government for a possible intervention.⁴⁸ During the operation Sharon planned to present the government with accomplished facts in order to get permission in phases for the entire set-up. And so it happened. Sharon's military leaders knew of his intentions and had made plans for them, and so did the Maronite Christian leadership in Lebanon, while his Cabinet colleagues were unaware of them. The war began with the government thinking it had given permission for a limited operation that would last 24 to 48 hours, and in which Syria would not be involved.⁴⁹ It was the first time Israel had begun an exclusively offensive war, and its strategic objectives were unattainable. In the end, it became an expensive failure in all respects, while before the war the PLO had only been a "minor irritant".⁵⁰

The decision-making process leading up to war was not evaluated and the government continued working in the same manner. Handel attributes this to the fragmented, unstable political reality in Israel, where small groups have a disproportionately great influence. They have nothing to gain from an adequately functioning security council (already advised on by the Agranat commission in 1974 in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War), which might make painful (politically unacceptable) recommendations, such as negotiating with the Palestinians or giving up the occupied territories. This political landscape ensures the political-military strategic practice which has established itself over the years, will remain ad hoc, unbalanced and rather unstructured, and seldom reaching beyond short-term thinking. In the absence of a long-term strategy of one's own, the initiative will automatically come to lie with one's opponent.⁵¹

The 'seventh war': Israel and 'low-intensity conflict'

Also in the 'seventh war' Israel is facing this problem. The 'seventh war' is Handel's term for the low-intensity conflicts and counter-terrorism operations in which Israel has been involved since 1948. The picture this series of operations presents is consistent with the usual approach in wars against conventional opponents: a strong offensive orientation and military on all strategic levels.⁵² From 1948 until around 1970 the main threat consisted of infiltrations by Palestinians, whether or not driven from their country during the war of independence, from the territories of neighbouring countries. (Apart from that, between 1956 and 1967 differences of opinion about water and the exact border evolved into armed clashes with Syria.) Israel responded to these attacks with reprisals, by way of incursions into the neighbouring countries. Initially, these raids were directed against civilians, resulting in mounting numbers of casualties. After the raid on Kibiya

in Jordan in 1953, during which 69 civilians were killed, Israel shifted its attention to military and infrastructural objectives of the neighbouring country involved.⁵³ The operations steadily increased, growing out of proportion with the actions to which they were a response. The risk of escalation rose accordingly, and so did the losses. The perpetrators of the anti-Israeli actions often proved to be elusive, which caused the operations to be directed against the environment of the opponents. The inhabitants of the villages from which it was thought the actions had been undertaken, were in fact on the receiving end of the reprisal actions. Pressure on the environment would eventually, via the government of the countries involved, or via sponsoring countries of the guerrilla movement involved, bring pressure on the opponents. This was later called “circular pressure”, and it is still a principle with which Israel tries to gain control over opponents, like Hezbollah today. Usually, however, it is questionable whether the environment is in a position to do anything against the fighters. Often, circular pressure operations have an adverse effect, when Israeli fire power prompts firing on Israeli citizens. Besides, “returning fire to the source of fire” often causes innocent victims in view of the way in which the opponent often operates, which then fuels the hostility. So, circular pressure has not brought a solution, and an alternative does not seem to present itself for the time being.⁵⁴

Such operations were deemed to be useful in training and stimulating the morale of the IDF.⁵⁵ They have played a large role in the formation of the IDF culture. It finds its origins in those days of guerrilla-like execution of reprisal raids, characterised by a swift action, initiative, and the will to maximise the number of casualties (in the absence of any other measure of success). It was attempted to achieve this by escalation within the action. The raid was seen as the ultimate goal, whereby the IDF is attributed with a certain degree of ‘myopia’ with regard to the higher strategic levels.⁵⁶ An additional phenomenon was the stretching of orders in order to be able to increase the effect of an action. Restrictions were reluctantly accepted, and it was tried to confront the politicians with accomplished facts afterwards. Vardi finds in the 1950s a “spread of ‘self-authorisation’ as a *deliberate* army policy”,⁵⁷ resulting in ‘military activism not subject to effective political control’.⁵⁸ Although Kober points out that instances of military disobedience are rare, and that ultimately the IDF always made its missions and objectives subordinate to the objectives determined by politics,⁵⁹ Van Creveld states that in the years leading up to the war of 1956 the IDF was “not a tame instrument in the government’s hands”.⁶⁰ Instructions were systematically violated, and the damage inflicted was always higher than the Defence Minister deemed acceptable, and what he had been told in advance.

Since the Yom Kippur War in 1973 Egypt, Jordan and Syria no longer had anything to gain by allowing actions against Israel to take place from their territories. Israel was being confronted with actions from Lebanon, a politically fragmented state whose gov-

ernment was unable to prevent them. In the years Israel occupied parts of Lebanon, after the *Peace for Galilee* operation in 1982, up to 2000, there were continuous mutual actions, twice on a larger scale: Operations *Accountability* in 1993 and *Grapes of Wrath* in 1996. Military actions in an attempt to exert pressure on Hezbollah and Amal, directly or indirectly via the population of the Lebanese government, could not subdue the organisations.⁶¹ In spite of its impressive show of military-technological might, *Grapes of Wrath* could not prevent Israel from being hit by *Kayushas*.⁶² In the long run, the occupation cost Israel more than it benefited from it. Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 has been qualified as "a clear admission of defeat".⁶³ Within its own border the first Intifada from 1987 until 1993 brought Israel new challenges that were even surpassed during the second or Al Aqsa Intifada from 2000 onwards. Israel responded with a diversity of counter-actions, among which were assassinations and a range of collective punishments, such as deportation, demolition of houses and curfews. Also in the occupied territories, Israel's counter-measures were increasingly characterised by the use of technology in order to limit own losses as much as possible.

The results of the "doctrine of retaliatory action" in low-intensity conflicts are generally qualified as negative. States opposing Israel acknowledge its military superiority. Deterrence (not least because of its possession of nuclear arms) works in the sphere of international relation, and the neighbouring countries (for the time being, in any case) have resigned themselves to the existence of the state of Israel. On its non-state opponents, however, Israel has no grip with comparable means and concepts.⁶⁴

Re-orientation required

Cohen sees the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 as a watershed in the history of the IDF. The period preceding that event can be considered as an era of certainties. Since the mid-1980s, however, an increasing confusion has become manifest.⁶⁵ The certainties were directly bound up with the clear existential threat emanating from the neighbouring countries with their conventional armed forces, and the military efforts this demanded of Israel. The period of confusion began with the bogging down of the operation in Lebanon; deeper causes were shifts in the international context, amongst which the emergence of the Iranian and the disappearance of the Egyptian threat, but also the transition towards a multi-polar world as a result of the end of the Cold War.

Apart from the conventional threat, Israel also has to deal with increasing sub-conventional and supra-conventional threats, according to the Meridor report, which appeared in 2006 by order of the Israeli government. From a geographical perspective the outlook had to be changed to erstwhile over-the-horizon threats (Iran with its ballistic missiles and nuclear arms ambition), on the one hand, and to the threat from within its own

borders, on the other. Basic security tasks, fending off conventional threats, had to yield terrain to current security work: guarding the stability in the occupied territories with accompanying counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism tasks.

Cohen points at the difficulties Israel is experiencing in the process of re-orientation in the complex, shifting strategic reality.⁶⁶ Thus, Israel's offensive manner of operating, which had always stood the country in good stead in its confrontations with its neighbouring countries, bogged down in the Lebanese morass. From 1987 onwards, the IDF had to deal with the first Intifada, which also could not be solved with brief use of overwhelming force. When the second Intifida erupted, politicians and the military alike warned the population that it would not be solved quickly. "Victory will be won on points and not by a knock out blow", Chief of Staff Yaalon announced in 2002.⁶⁷ It took a long time before all this was processed conceptually and doctrinally by the IDF after 1982. Low-intensity conflict continued to be considered as a deviation from the armed forces' true profession. In view of what Israel might have to deal with in the future with regard to security problems, the operations in Lebanon offered the IDF little to learn. Yitzak Rabin, in his capacity as Minister of Defence, told the parliament in 1986.⁶⁸ It was to last up to the late 1990s before the current security operations received more (intellectual) attention, in line with daily practice.⁶⁹ Subsequently, the pendulum swung on, resulting in large sections of the armed forces insufficiently mastering the military craft. The concentration on current security unsettled the balance in training.⁷⁰ At the same time, combat experience was seeping away, with fewer and fewer officers having any experience in fighting in larger units.⁷¹

Cohen sees a divide in the IDF, which has emerged in the past few years. There are elite units, specialist and technology-heavy, such as the defence against ballistic missiles with its signals intelligence, parts of the Navy, the Air Force (nowadays 'air and space force') and the various special forces units, "justifiably famous" of old. Then, there is the rest: the overwhelming majority of the land forces, which find themselves in a demoralising vicious circle of too little to do and too little training.⁷² Cohen observes in the abduction of the two servicemen on 12 July 2006 the symptoms of the state in which the IDF finds itself. So far, it has still been unable to find its position in the fluid security situation which demands answers to a multitude of questions. The war that followed showed the development on a larger scale.⁷³

Cohen states that it is not self-evident that the necessary changes are actually going to take place. In his view the most important reason for this is the Israeli political-military culture. This container concept remains intangible, but the mindset that comes with it has a strong influence on the peculiarities of Israel's strategic decision making process,

which is characterised by what has been called “Israel’s decision making ‘pathologies’”: short-term thinking, extremely politicised, chronically unstructured and dominated by the defence establishment.⁷⁴ He defines three areas in which Israel will have to develop itself: government, doctrine and the structure of the armed forces. As for the government, Cohen finds that today there is a “broad degree of consensus” on what constitutes the problem: “trivialisation” of the strategic process by ad hoc improvised action, exclusively on the basis of military advice, in a fragmented political landscape. The solution would have to come from a permanent advisory body, a primarily civilian national security council.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, he foresees a protracted process of change (if it is going to happen at all). The same holds for the doctrinal area, although by now there is a “broad measure of agreement” that a new era has come. In the area of the armed forces structure a debate has been going on for years now. On rational grounds it could be said that an adjustment of the IDF in the direction of professional armed forces is necessary. Precisely this problem, however, is in essence a matter of culture.⁷⁶

The Second Lebanon War in Israel’s strategic culture

This contribution investigates to what extent the Israeli actions in the Second Lebanon War can be explained from the development of Israeli strategic culture. In doing so, it follows once more Kober’s analysis and places the actions in the perspective of this development. Besides, several observations are made on the account of the war as it has come down to us.

‘Deterrence mindset’

According to Kober, a first explanation for the meagre Israeli achievement in 2006 is a belated realisation that this was a war. How can this be explained? Winograd states that prior to the war, no choice was made for either a retaliatory strike or a large-scale operation against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. The Israeli course of action, however, most definitely does show a choice: the Israeli air force carried out a reprisal raid. Kober very aptly typifies the war: it was a “reprisal raid turned war”.⁷⁷ Chief of Staff Halutz, for instance, told Winograd’s commission of inquiry that he had not thought it would last so long.⁷⁸ Since the beginnings of the state of Israel raids like these have been considered by the IDF (and its precursors) as a tested means. The pre-planned, well-prepared action, however, provoked Hezbollah’s reaction. Up to 2006 the organisation had honoured an understanding with Israel, reached in 1996, that in mutual conflicts only military targets would be attacked. After the severe blow from Israel in response to the abduction of the two servicemen, Hezbollah abandoned this restriction. Now, Israel had to deal with the problem of the missile barrages. In short, the “built-in escalatory spiral” of the reprisal

had taken on once again.⁷⁹ The objective of a retaliatory attack is the restoration of deterrence. When the escalation throws doubts on the deterrence, one has to go on. As Vardi states in relation to a research into Israeli retaliatory actions in the 1950s and 1960s, the restoration of deterrence is an “elusive aim”.⁸⁰ Winograd reproaches the government and the military leadership for not having foreseen Hezbollah’s reaction.⁸¹ The war of 2006 underlines the problems with regard to the doctrine of retaliation. The self-imposed objectives were not attained and there were many casualties and damage, grist to the mill for the opponent: “the war, which according to our leaders was supposed to restore Israel’s deterrence posture, has within once month succeeded in destroying it”.⁸²

As for the coercion and deterrence, despite Israeli frustrations about the course of the war, some comments are in order on the predominant impression of failure. Nasrallah may have cried victory, but there is no doubt that the war caused Hezbollah damage. The restoration of deterrence has been partially achieved, as is borne out by Nasrallah’s remark that Hezbollah would not have carried out the abduction if it had known that this would bring about such serious Israeli reactions. Furthermore, Achcar and Warschawski, who describe the war from a non-Israeli or western perspective, state that,

*(i)n order to facilitate an agreement leading to a cease fire that became more and more urgent for humanitarian reasons, Hezbollah softened its position, accepting deployment of 15,000 Lebanese troops south of the Litani river and the despatch of more international troops to the same area in the framework of UNIFIL.*⁸³

Judging from this, the conclusion must be that Hezbollah did move under the pressure, amongst others, coming from the military operation. Somewhat further in their book, the authors state, “Hezbollah in fact had to make concessions under duress to facilitate the ending of the war”.⁸⁴ “(I)ntransigence” would have had quite a few consequences for the organisation. They mention “terrible humanitarian consequences”, on top of the already inflicted damage, stemming from Israel’s taking Lebanon hostage. The damage, however, would not only be limited to the humanitarian aspect; the war also had political and military consequences for Hezbollah in Lebanon. Achcar and Warschawski point out that in his announcement about the acceptance of the conditions Nasrallah does not brag about a victory, and that, in view of the circumstances, he chose for the proposals in UNSCR 1701. Hezbollah knows that in practice such a UN operation is slow in getting into its stride and hard to keep up, all of which is far to be preferred over continued military action by Israel. Hezbollah can do its arithmetic and seems to have made a better assessment with regard to the attainability of strategic objectives.⁸⁵

“Nasrallah wins the war”, was the headline in *The Economist*.⁸⁶ But hurt it did. Nasrallah “leads a broken and battered force”.⁸⁷

Deterrence remains a corner stone in Israel’s strategy. Winograd concluded that Israel cannot exist without credible deterrence on the basis of good leadership, military might and “social robustness”. Continued seeking for peace and the ensuing necessary compromises must take place from a “position of social, political and military strength”.⁸⁸

‘Post heroic casualty aversion’

The second explanation for the disappointing achievement of the IDF Kober sees in the adherence to post-heroic warfare under circumstances, which, in his view, required a different approach. Although Kober states that Luttwak “has never concealed his hostility to this form of conducting war”, the latter was not negative about it in the article in which he launched the term.⁸⁹ In fact, he stands up for this form of warfare, which, in his view, may offer a badly needed answer to the diffuse threats of the post-Cold War period. By holding on to Clausewitzian-Napoleonic thinking about war, in which one can only go to war for big issues, with massive armies, and broad support of the home front, too many situations are left unattended which call for taking responsibility. If armed forces were geared somewhat more to aversion of casualties instead of gaining quick and decisive victories in battles with like opponents, they would become useful in situations which, in view of the political and demographic reality of the western societies, remain unanswered. Present times require “unheroic realism”, Luttwak argues.⁹⁰

Western casualty aversion is sometimes seen as a self-imposed restriction in the execution of military operations, needlessly standing in the way of military achievement. According to Kober, this was the case in 2006. Casualty aversion, however, is not a new phenomenon. In Israel it is a theme with a history. The Israeli population is relatively small and sensitive to the killing of its soldiers. In the context of the general balance of power, it is one of the reasons for the emphasis on assault power – combat strength directed at forcing a quick victory, rather than staying power - military capability directed at lengthy confrontations. Yigal Allon described the task of the IDF as making the enemy refrain from starting a war by deterrence, and in case a war should break out “to ensure a victory for Israel with the utmost speed and efficiency and a minimum of casualties”.⁹¹ Targeting this sensitivity formed one of the elements in the Egyptian plan of action for the War of Attrition (1969-1970).⁹² It is, however, possible to distinguish a gradual development with regard to casualty aversion. Expanding technological possibilities allow the reduction of casualties. In the western political and societal context the availability of technological possibilities to reduce casualties demands the casualty rate actually declines.

The reluctance to expose people to the reality of the situation on the ground in Lebanon is inspired by experiences from the past. The willingness to accept casualties is there, when the threat demands it.⁹³ Kober tries to get Luttwark on board his view, whereas the latter states that in view of the small number of Israeli casualties, it was politically unfeasible to suffer too many losses in the fight against Hezbollah, which ultimately cannot be neutralised as a political movement by military means.⁹⁴ After the war Winograd arrived at the conclusion that it should have been clear in advance to the government and the military leadership that for this reason no broad support was to be expected for a ground operation in Lebanon.⁹⁵ This underlines the suggestion that the consequences of carrying out a reprisal attack had not been foreseen. It also explains the long hesitation before launching a ground attack after all. The disappointing outcome in the end proves the correctness of the proposition that Hezbollah cannot be defeated by military means (alone), in spite of frustration-based counterfactual alternatives that some would have liked to see otherwise.

'Fighting standards'

Kober's third point of criticism concerns the erosion of the IDF's "fighting standards" as a consequence of the operations in the occupied territories since 1987. On this point Kober's analysis convinces most. Many point out the eroding effect the exertions in the occupied territories have. Van Creveld has considered this for quite some time as a dangerously slippery slope for the IDF.⁹⁶ Somewhat more detached, Cohen, too, shows that this aspect of the "changing operational landscape" has a great impact on the IDF. It is an area which of necessity demands much attention, while at the same time it encompasses only a small part of the entire threat spectrum. During the past few years the IDF has found itself 'doing the splits' trying to live up to all its obligations.⁹⁷ Cohen places the resulting problems in a broader context of an ongoing process of re-orientation. One of the ways of dealing with these diversified challenges is sought, in line with IDF tradition, in the application of technological developments.

Trying to utilise the technological possibilities to a maximum finds its origin in the balance of power in the Middle-East, or in the Israeli perception thereof. The answer for a quantitative disadvantage in regard to its environment has always been sought in quality. Science and technology in this context are seen as areas which have to give Israel an edge.⁹⁸ There are, however, problems attached to this striving for qualitative superiority, such as a tendency to become over-reliant on technology, also in situations that do not lend themselves to it. Cohen points at the divide within the IDF between the technology-heavy units of the armed forces and the rest. The Israeli Air Force – of old Israel's first line of defence – performed on an undiminished high level in 2006,⁹⁹ whereas the land forces were experiencing quite some difficulties. This is evidence of an unbalance,

which formed a stumbling block for Israel when it was faced by the challenges of the Second Lebanon War.

'RMA beliefs, 'poor' professionalism'

Kober's next point is connected with this. He sees the use of incorrect, Revolution in military affairs (RMA)-school inspired concepts ("false assumptions and beliefs") as a reason for the "poor performance" of 2006. Kober's next point, "poor professionalism" in the officer corps is in line with this. The Second Lebanon War unearthed a debate with regard to the direction in which solutions must be sought in the process of re-orientation Cohen points at. Within the framework of this process diagnoses have been made in many fields, but the necessary changes are still in progress, or, as a result of their being embedded in Israeli cultural and societal circumstances, hard to initiate. The changes that had been decided upon under pressure of the changing operational environment, proved to have a complicating effect in 2006.

In an attempt to make the IDF more efficient and to ensure its link with the operational circumstances, the organisation has been in a state of flux since 1990. As yet, however, the organisational changes have only resulted in the leadership of the IDF becoming top-heavy, and processes taking prevalence over content.¹⁰⁰ The military craft, such as command and control and logistics, have been pushed aside. Critics, Kober among them, mention day dreaming about network centric warfare (NCW) and a confusing use of EBO terminology as underlying causes.¹⁰¹ Some months before the outbreak of the war in the summer of 2006 a new doctrine had been introduced in the IDF, in which the concept of EBO played a prominent role. When the war broke out, it had not yet been internalised by the entire organisation. The disappointing results are in part attributed to the confusion brought about by using the new terminology in the realm of command and control.¹⁰²

Furthermore, Kober finds fault with the higher officer echelons for having a "weakened commitment" with regard to the Israeli tradition of striving for a "battlefield decision". It is doubtful whether this criticism is justified, or whether the officers were aware of the limitations of military means in the context of low-intensity conflicts. Kober himself earlier called "battlefield decision" an "almost irrelevant notion" with respect to guerrillas, terrorists and "civil resistance".¹⁰³

Leadership

In Kober's analysis, wavering and inexperienced political leadership in combination with the dominance of the armed forces in decision making on security policy issues forms one of the causes for the disappointing achievement in the war in 2006. As for its

management by the political and military leadership, its course showed a characteristic Israeli scene. The military leadership played a major role, with the political leadership leaning heavily on it, in this case, extremely so, as the Minister of Defence had no military background. After the action of Hezbollah on 12 July 2006, this military-political leadership collectively decided on an “immediate, intensive” military response, in short, a reprisal attack. Winograd states that this did not happen on the basis of an accurate study of the complex situation in Lebanon. If this had been the case, the conclusion would have been that such an action could not yield much international political gain, and that Hezbollah would respond with missile barrages that could not be stopped, except after a large-scale ground operation, for which no broad support was to be expected. These points were not discussed with the politicians and the government did not study all the available options, a sign of poor strategic thinking, according to Winograd.¹⁰⁴ The Cabinet agreed to a decision of which the consequences were unclear or unattainable. The impression Winograd gives, in short, is in line with the Israeli practice, described above. The choice was for a primary military reaction, without having a clear idea of the consequences, resulting in unintended escalation, which in the long run caused more harm than good.

Although Israel wanted to attain a maximum of strategic effect during the war within the constraints given (according to Israeli insights, an objective aimed at inflicting maximum damage on an opponent as long as the opportunity presents itself, in order to achieve a temporary lowering of the threat, and to have the damage benefit the deterrence¹⁰⁵), the approach does not show any well-considered long-term objective. When all was over, nothing in the status quo situation had essentially changed.

Israel’s strategic cultural development has spawned its own view on security policy priorities. The country is sometimes criticised for not being able to make political success follow military achievement.¹⁰⁶ In this context Yigal Allon made an enlightening statement two years after the Six-Day War, at a moment when the gap between Israel and its opponent seemed wider than ever. In Khartoum the Arab world had voiced the “three no’s”: no recognition of, no negotiations and no peace with Israel. For Israel, its existence remained at stake, undiminished. Though Israel might have friends, according to Allon, it would have to fight its wars on its own.

Accordingly, if she is faced with the choice between withdrawal to the old armistice lines for the sake of short term political gains and the establishment, even unilaterally, of new and secure borders even at the cost of political complications, the second alternative should be preferred. The political difficulties (one may hope) will ultimately pass away, but only the capacity for self defence will ensure Israel’s survival.¹⁰⁷

In Israel, during the past decades, short-term, military-strategic and operational requirements, and long-term, political, or alternatively, grand strategy considerations have come to stand in a different light than usual. The prioritisation that is expressed in Allon's words is still dominant in Israel's security policy.

The war in Lebanon in 2006 can be viewed as one in a series with the *Litani*, *Peace for Galilee*, *Accountability*, *Grapes of Wrath* operations and the occupation from 1982 to 2000. Each time there is talk of a war of choice, and an attempt is made to enforce a solution through the threat or actual use of military means, each time there is an irregular opponent, against whom Israel tries to exploit the technological asymmetry, and put pressure on the organisation by targeting the environment in which it operates. In the years between 1982 and 2000 Israel has learned that it is disadvantageous to venture into Lebanon on the ground. This is what was avoided as much as possible in 2006. Circular pressure on its own side led to a ground offensive, with all its negative consequences, while the missiles still could not be stopped.

Another similarity is the internal political considerations on the Israeli side. Keeping up credibility towards an opponent in order to maximise the deterrence has its pendant in maintaining credibility towards the home front. Shortly before the abduction of 12 July an IDF soldier had been kidnapped in Gaza, something the government could not ignore.¹⁰⁸ In the ensuing play of words the government brought trouble on itself by formulating unattainable objectives and creating expectations it could not meet.

Conclusion

The course and result of the Israeli actions during the Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006 are generally considered to have been disappointing. This contribution did not seek an answer to the question of 'why the poor performance' by following, for instance, Avi Kober, whose analysis meaningfully clusters the broad criticism of the Israeli actions, or the Winograd commission. It investigated, rather, to what extent the Israeli actions in the Second Lebanon War can be explained from the development of the Israeli strategic culture.

In the first instance, Israel wanted to carry out a retaliatory attack, and was not out for war. Hezbollah, however, reacted to the large-scale air raids with missile barrages against northern Israel. When Israel did not succeed in stopping these attacks with continued air raids, eroding the credibility and deterrence, it was forced to launch a ground attack.

This did not go smoothly, in part because preparations for it had been started at a late moment – it had not been planned and the consequences of the reprisal attack had not been foreseen – and also because of various deeper causes, and ongoing developments.

Kober's analysis seems in part to have been inspired by frustration, in keeping with the broadly experienced sense of dissatisfaction in Israel after the war. In part, his analysis can also be considered as a contribution to the debate that is being held in Israel against the background of the process of re-orientation on the security policy, at which Cohen points. Since 1982, Cohen finds, uncertainty has increasingly pushed aside the certainties of the period before. The spectrum of threats Israel has to deal with nowadays ranges from sub-conventional to supra-conventional. Similar to how Israel in the past tried to compensate for a quantitative disadvantage with quality, it seeks to address this by making use of technological developments. The debate is about the balance within the IDF. Kober sees too much attention for airpower, small units, a mushrooming of NCW and ensuing EBO theories, at the expense of land forces, which have to be able to force a battlefield decision. Furthermore, the unbalance was to be found not least in the emphasis on the work in the occupied territories, which went at the expense of training for other tasks and even training anyhow. The war in 2006 enlarged the state of affairs with regard to the re-orientation process. The elaborate self-examination that followed it will have its repercussions for the debate.

Kober observes that in 2006 Israel lacked the ambition to force the decision on the battlefield, and he attributes this to the reluctance to risk casualties, the post-heroic inclination that has taken root within the IDF. On this point, Kober's analysis is problematic. He himself has stated elsewhere that it is difficult to realise a battlefield decision in a conflict with an organisation like Hezbollah. It seems the Israeli political and military leadership held the same view. The casualty aversion, subsequently, with which in Kober's analysis Israel is hampering itself, is a given in Israeli history, and is a gradual rather than principled difference compared to previous years. Taking casualties must be proportionate to the threat and what can be achieved with it. In spite of the frustrating inability to make Hezbollah stop its barrages, the actions of the Shiite organisation did not constitute an existential threat. With the bad experiences of the years of Lebanese occupation still fresh in memory, no solution was expected from a large-scale land operation in Lebanon.

The final element in Kober's explanation for the disappointing performance is the wavering and inexperienced political leadership, in combination with the dominance of the armed forces in the decision making on security policy matters. The Second Lebanon War presented a characteristic picture with regard to the political and military leader-

ship, in line with Israel's strategic development and culture. Geo-strategic vulnerability, demographic proportions, a deep-rooted sense of insecurity with fear of extinction as a real possibility, international political isolation, and an internal political fragmentation are elements which focus Israel's security policy on survival as much as ever. Military operational considerations dominate strategic thinking, which is increased by the large share of (former) service personnel in the debate. Prior to 1967 Israel necessarily depended on military aspects of security in order to survive. After 1967, in spite of much more favourable conditions, this did not change. "Military strength has become *the* solution".¹⁰⁹

Kober's analysis does not take Israel's traumatic Lebanon experience much into account. Maoz calls the withdrawal in 2000 a "clear admission of defeat".¹¹⁰ It is, however, also possible to view it as an attempt to break out of the vicious circle. The government at the time realised it was a dead-end street, which had to be left behind, away from the "unnecessary self-inflicted disaster".¹¹¹ The conflict with Hezbollah cannot be solved with military means, and Israel did not intend to do so in 2006. It allowed itself to be provoked, first into a fierce retaliation attack, later into the course of events leading to a ground offensive, which eventually turned out to become the most problematic episode of the war. This round, too, ended with a UN resolution. A favourable compromise is a good result in such a situation.¹¹² However, when objectives are set too high prior to or during an operation, frustration is guaranteed.

In a general sense Handel's conclusion still holds sway. With survival of the state as its objective, Israel has come to depend on military solutions for its strategic problems, at the expense of longer-term planning and diplomatic options. As a result, the development of the strategy of one of the world's "foremost military performers" is often characterised by "confusion, indecision and a lack of vision".¹¹³ The manner of operating during The Second Lebanon War fits this picture.

Notes

1. Major P.M. (Marcel) de Goede, MA (Royal Netherlands Air Force) is an airpower lecturer and PhD-candidate at the Military Operational Art and Science section of the Netherlands Defence Academy.
2. See for instance Avi Kober (2008), 'The Israel Defense Forces in the Second Lebanon War: why the poor performance?', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 31, nr. 1, February 2008.
3. Colin S. Gray (1999), 'Strategic culture as context: the first generation of theory

- strikes back', *Review of international studies*, nr. 25, 1999, p. 49-69, there p. 51. See also G. Teitler (2002), 'Militair-strategische culturen', in: G. Teitler, J.M.J. Bosch, W. Klinkert et al., *Militaire strategie*, Amsterdam: Mets & Schilt, and Jeffrey S. Lantis (2005), 'Strategic culture: from Clausewitz to constructivism', *Strategic insights*, vol. IV, nr. 10, October 2005.
4. Gray (1999), p. 61. See also Kerry Longhurst (2000), 'The concept of strategic culture', in: Gerhard Kümmel and Andreas D. Prüfert (eds.), *Military sociology. The richness of a discipline*, Baden Baden: Nomos, pp. 301-310, there pp. 303-305.
 5. Longhurst (2000), pp. 301 and 305.
 6. Gray (1999), p. 50.
 7. Kober (2008).
 8. Ibid., pp. 5-6.
 9. Ibid., p. 6.
 10. Ibid., p. 9.
 11. *The main findings of the Winograd partial report on the Second Lebanon War*, point 14a, at: <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/854051.html>, 12 December 2007.
 12. Edward N. Luttwak (1995), 'Toward Post-Heroic Warfare', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, nr. 3 (May/June 1995), pp. 109-122.
 13. Kober (2008), p. 10.
 14. Martin van Creveld (2002), *The sword and the olive. A critical history of the Israeli Defense Force*, New York: PublicAffairs, p. 352.
 15. Kober (2008), p. 30. See also Van Creveld (2002), p. 349, and Stuart A. Cohen (2008), *Israel and its army. From cohesion to confusion*, London: Routledge, p. 50.
 16. Kober (2008), pp. 16 and 29-30.
 17. Ibid., pp. 16-17.
 18. Ibid., pp. 31-33.
 19. Ibid., pp. 34-37.
 20. Ibid., p. 36.
 21. Ibid., p. 37.
 22. 'English summary of the Winograd Commission Report', *The New York Times*, January 30, 2008: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/30/world/middleeast/31winograd-web.html?_r=1&sq=english%20summary%20of%20the%20winograd%20commission%20report&st=cse&scp=1&pagewanted=all, point 14.
 23. Ibid., point 15.
 24. Ibid., point 17.
 25. 'Winograd partial report on the Second Lebanon War', point 12.
 26. Ibid., point 12e.
 27. Ibid., point 13.
 28. Ibid., point 14.

29. Ibid., point 14e.
30. Ibid., point 19.
31. Ibid., point 21.
32. Israel Tal (2000), *National security. The Israeli experience*, Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, p. 47.
33. Cohen (2008), p. 35.
34. Tal (2000), p. 40.
35. Michael I. Handel (1995), 'The evolution of Israeli strategy: the psychology of insecurity and the quest for absolute security', in: Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, Alvin Bernstein (eds.), *The making of strategy. Rulers, states and war*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 539-540 and 544.
36. Cohen (2008), p. 37.
37. Handel (1995), p. 541.
38. See also Tal (2000), pp. 39-40.
39. Handel (1995), p. 543.
40. Ibid., p. 547.
41. Tal (2000), p. 43.
42. Handel (1995), p. 546. See also Van Creveld (2002), p. 322, Cohen (2008), p. 45, and Kober (2008), pp. 17-19.
43. Avi Kober (2001), 'Israeli war objectives into an era of negativism', in: Uri Bar-Joseph (ed.), *Israel's national security towards the 21st century*, London: Frank Cass, pp. 176-201, there pp. 190-191.
44. Handel (1995), p. 554; Van Creveld (2002), pp. 108-109.
45. Van Creveld (2002), pp. 213-215.
46. Handel (2002), p. 559.
47. Ibid., pp. 559-560.
48. Ahron Bregman (2003), *Israel's wars. A history since 1947*, New Delhi: Roli, pp. 156-157 and 162.
49. Handel (1995), p. 560. See also Bregman (2003), pp. 155 and 160, Van Creveld (2002), pp. 289-291, and Kober (2001), p. 185.
50. Handel (1995), p. 561.
51. Ibid., pp. 562 and 570.
52. Ibid., p. 564.
53. Van Creveld (2002), pp. 133-134.
54. Ibid., p. 305; Clive Jones (1997), 'Israeli counter-insurgency strategy and the war in south Lebanon 1985-97', *Small wars and insurgencies*, vol. 8, nr. 3, Winter 1997, pp. 82-108, there p. 82; Zeev Maoz (2007), 'Evaluating Israel's strategy for low intensity warfare, 1949-2006', *Security studies*, vol. 16, nr. 3, July – September 2007, pp. 319-349, there p. 329.

55. Maoz (2007), pp. 336-339.
56. Gil-li Vardi (2008), 'Pounding their feet': Israeli military culture as reflected in early IDF combat history', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2, April 2008, pp. 295-324, there p. 295.
57. Vardi (2008), p. 308.
58. Ibid., note 88, p. 316.
59. Kober (2001), p. 179.
60. Van Creveld (2002), p. 136.
61. Gilbert Achcar and Michel Warschawski (2007), *The 33-day war. Israel's war on Hezbollah in Lebanon and its aftermath*, London: Saqi, pp. 54-55.
62. Van Creveld (2002), p. 305.
63. Maoz (2007), p. 332.
64. Ibid., p. 347; Handel (1995), p. 553. On nuclear weapons, see Van Creveld (2002), pp. 220-221 and 279-281.
65. Cohen (2008), p. 37.
66. Ibid., p. 46.
67. Cited in Cohen (2008), p. 46.
68. Cited in Cohen (2008), p. 47.
69. Cohen (2008), p. 48; Avi Kober (2003), 'The intellectual and modern focus in Israeli military thinking as reflected in Ma'arachot articles, 1948-2000', *Armed forces and society*, vol. 30, nr 1, Fall 2003, pp. 141-160, there p. 154.
70. Alon Ben-David (2006), 'New model army?', *Jane's defence weekly*, 11 October 2006, p. 26. See also Alon Ben-David (2007a), 'Debriefing teams brand IDF doctrine 'completely wrong'', *Jane's defence weekly*, 3 January 2007, p. 7, and Alon Ben-David (2007b), 'IDF shifts focus to ground forces', *Jane's defence weekly*, 10 January 2007, p. 7.
71. Cohen (2008), pp. 49-50; Van Creveld (2002), p. 363.
72. Partly because the IDF is too large, on account of 'panic-stricken' force planning after Yom Kippur. Since the late eighties, the IDF aims at getting 'smaller and smarter'. Cohen (2008), pp. 93 and 83.
73. Cohen (2008), p. 52.
74. Ibid., p. 166.
75. Ibid., p. 167.
76. Ibid., p. 174.
77. Kober (2008), p. 3. Compare 'Nasrallah wins the war', *The Economist*, August 19, 2006: the war was 'a mistake after a provocation'.
78. Kober (2008), p. 18.
79. Maoz (2007), p. 329. See also Kober (2008), p. 9: 'Even when one opts for violence out of a rational choice, believing it could be tamed, controlled and directed to one's

- purposes, once the violence starts it gains its own momentum and dynamic.’
80. Vardi (2008), p. 316.
 81. ‘Winograd partial report on the Second Lebanon War’, point 10a.
 82. Moshe Arens, cited in Achcar and Warschawski (2007), pp. 57-58. Compare Elias Hanna (2007), ‘Lessons learned from the recent war in Lebanon’, *Military review*, September-October 2007, p. 87 and Ben-David (2006), p. 29.
 83. Achcar and Warschawski (2007), p. 62.
 84. Ibid., p. 67; Compare ‘Divided Lebanon’, *The Economist*, August 19, 2006, Hezbollah ‘gratefully accepted’ UNSC 1701.
 85. Achcar and Warschawski (2007), pp. 65-66.
 86. ‘Nasrallah wins the war’, *The Economist*, August 19, 2006.
 87. Nahum Barnea (2006), ‘Israel vs. Hezbollah’, *Foreign policy*, November/December 2006, pp. 22-28, there p. 23.
 88. ‘English summary of the Winograd Commission Report’, point 38.
 89. Luttwak (1995), pp. 109-122.
 90. Ibid., p. 122.
 91. Yigal Allon (1971), *The making of Israel’s army*, London: Sphere, p. 113.
 92. Bregman (2003), p. 97; Van Creveld (2002), p. 212.
 93. See Van Creveld (2002), p. xix.
 94. Kober (2008), p. 12.
 95. ‘Winograd partial report on the Second Lebanon War’, point 10a.
 96. Van Creveld (2002), pp. 352 and 334.
 97. Cohen (2008), p. 35; Ben-David (2007a), p. 7.
 98. Tal (2000), pp. 61-62 additionally mentions human quality (motivation, preparedness to contribute) and an economic and industrial base.
 99. ‘The air force should be congratulated on very impressive achievements in this war.’ ‘English summary of the Winograd Commission Report’, point 22.
 100. Cohen (2008), pp. 92-93.
 101. Ibid., pp. 105-106; Ben-David (2007a), p. 7.
 102. Winograd points out ‘clarity of orders is a vital component of combat effectiveness’. Cited in Cohen (2008), p. 105.
 103. Kober (2001), p. 194.
 104. ‘Winograd partial report on the Second Lebanon War’, point 10a.
 105. Tal (2000), p. 48.
 106. Handel (1995), p. 571.
 107. Allon (1971), p. 106.
 108. ‘Ending will be harder’, *The Economist*, July 22, 2006, pp. 27-30, there p. 28.
 109. Handel (1995), p. 575.
 110. Maoz (2007), p. 332.

111. Handel (1995), p. 570.
112. Winograd chalks up the resolution as a diplomatic success for Israel. 'English summary of the Winograd report', point 24.
113. Handel (1995), p. 534.