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THE FALLACY OF DEMOCRATIC VICTORY: DECISION-MAKING AND ARAB-
ISRAELI WARS, 1967-2006

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Abstract

This study explains the causes of war outcomes from the perspective of the decision-making process. It challenges the “democratic victory theory,” which contends that democracies are more likely to win wars because they make better decisions about initiating wars and have wider public support. Existing criticisms of this theory contest its assertion that voluntary public support and caution about initiating wars are unique to democracies and its reliance on statistical correlations. This study shows that these criticisms have not been adequate, and identifies significant flaws in the democratic victory theory in scope, application, and method and offers an alternative explanation of the quality of the decision-making process and war outcomes.

I use the groupthink and organizational theories to establish criteria for assessing the quality of the decision-making process independently from regime type. I propose an alternative explanation of the quality of the decision-making process drawing on the balance-of-power theory and group dynamics. The main argument is that when external environment poses a serious threat to a state’s security and a state’s leadership is cohesive, its leaders are more likely to engage in a high-quality decision-making process, which offers a greater chance of victory. This argument not only offers a more persuasive account of why democracies win wars, but also explains why non-democracies can win wars or achieve standoffs.

These propositions are tested in a case study analysis of four Arab-Israeli wars – June 1967, Attrition 1969-70, October 1973, and July 2006 – using process-tracing and counterfactual methods. The analysis reveals that democratic and non-democratic regimes do not operate in the way hypothesized by the democratic victory theory. Instead, the quality of

the decision-making process is influenced by the extent to which a state is facing a serious security threat and its leadership is cohesive. The case studies also show that war outcomes vary – victory, draw, or defeat – according to the leadership’s performance of the decision-making criteria, which plays an important role as relative to other factors affecting war outcomes, such as material power, weapons technology, military strategy, civil-military relations, and national culture.

Introduction

The question whether different political systems affect the chances of victory in war has long been controversial. One perspective holds that a democratic political system either does not matter or might even be a liability. Thucydides (1998, 64), in his account of the defeat of democratic Athens at the hands of authoritarian Sparta in the Peloponnesian War emphasizes that “wars were won by a combination of sound strategy and surplus wealth.” Ibn Khaldun (n.d., 241-48), the Arab social scientist of the fourteenth century, considers *Asabiyyah* (tribalism or nationalism) along with proper military tactics, and not some type of authority, the key to victory in war. Similarly, the renowned military theorist Carl von Clausewitz argues that nationalism combines unlimited resources with a strong will to achieve victory (Leonard 1967, 207). The French historian Alexis de Tocqueville has gone farther to warn that democracies may be at the disadvantage when fighting autocratic regimes, a view which was later to be shared by the father of the twentieth-century realism E. H. Carr.

From another perspective, democratic political systems enhance the chances of victory in war. The Greek historian Herodotus (1987, 389) made this case when he claimed that “Athens ... under the rule of [tyrant] princes proved no better in war than any of her neighbors but, once rid of those princes, was far the best of all.” However, it was not until the United States – the “arsenal of democracy,” as President Franklin Roosevelt called it – decisively won the Cold War against the totalitarian Soviet Union and the Gulf War in 1991 against Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship that the argument asserting the superiority of the democratic political system was synthesized. The observation that democracies were on the winning side most of the time since 1815 led some scholars to argue that democracies tend to

win because of the merits of their political institutions. There are two strands of the democratic victory theory.* One attributes the tendency of democracies to win wars to “war-fighting” capabilities: democracies have bigger economies, form stronger alliances, and can count on greater effort from their soldiers. The other posits that it is the “selection-effects” of democracies – democratic leaders make better decisions about initiating wars for the restraining effects of public opinion and checks-and-balances system – that make them start only those wars they are confident that they can win.

This study focuses on the “selection-effects” argument because the decision-making process is the key factor around which other factors that belong to the “war-fighting” explanation rotate. Economic resources and military alliances of a state and the capability of its armed forces are important factors in determining war outcomes. Nonetheless, what eventually matters is the way decision-makers *use* these factors in the war effort. Decisions at the political and strategic levels might very well waste enormous resources or make good use of scarce ones. At the same time, though political institutions are at the core of democratic victory, decision-making processes have not thus far been systematically examined as a factor influencing war outcomes.

I question the validity of “selection-effects” argument and offer an alternative explanation of the quality of the decision-making process. “Selection-effects” is limited in scope, application, and method. It cannot explain outcomes of wars between non-democracies. As far as decision-making is concerned, the application of “selection-effects” is imbalanced: it examines only decisions made by states initiating wars prior to the outbreak of fighting, and omits both the decisions made by the target state prior to the war and those

* “Democratic victory theory” is a convenient and widely-used shorthand form. Strictly speaking, however, the claim that democracies are more likely to win wars is a proposition, or a hypothesis, rather than a theory per se.

decisions made by either side during the fighting. Even critics of democratic victory have fallen short of examining both war participants – democratic and non-democratic – and of providing an adequate explanation for the defective decision-making processes detected in democracies. To do better require a more systematic theory that establishes the constituents of the quality of decision-making process independently from regime type, identifies its causes, and then applies these to both regime types.

But the critical limit is that of the method. Democratic victory theorists rely on the concept of political institutions to explain outcomes of wars fought by democracies but, instead of examining the processes taking place at these institutions, rely on political regime characteristics. The intervening variables linking political regime characteristics and decision-making processes are neither fully explained nor directly measured – something that makes it always possible to conceive of potential sources of spurious correlation. Instead, case-study approach is better suited for studying decision-making processes because it provides a close look at specific situations to verify whether events unfold and actors act as the theory predicts.

How can the quality of the decision-making process be measured independently from regime type? What causes the decision-making process to be of high- or low-quality? What are the mechanisms that link the causes to outcomes? Until these questions are answered, and the proposed answers are examined in specific cases, an important aspect of explaining war outcomes will remain a puzzle.

I argue that *groupthink* and *organizational theory* provide four useful criteria for the quality of the decision-making process: survey of objectives, survey of alternatives, information search, and information processing. Observing the policy makers' performances of these procedural tasks allows a systematic measurement of the quality of the decision-

making process along a continuum ranging from “very well” to “very poor.” The performance of these tasks depends on external and domestic factors other than the level of democracy. Two variables are key: threat environment (that comprises the level of security threat and past experience) and group cohesion. In other words, when external environment poses a serious threat to a state’s security and when its leadership is cohesive, its leaders are more likely to engage in a high-quality decision-making process. A high-quality decision-making process, in turn, allows a more objective view of the situation, and thus offers greater chances of victory.

This argument not only presents a more persuasive account of why democracies win wars, but also explains why non-democracies have been able either to win wars or achieve standoffs, especially in wars between non-democracies. Nevertheless, it should be clarified that challenging democratic victory theory does not imply questioning democratic values. Instead, this is to say that the democratic political system is not a panacea for all issues in domestic and international arenas. Even the staunchest advocates are aware that the democratic political system has its limits. Indeed, if democracies act as the “democratic ideal” suggests, they would excel in the quality of their decision-making. Also, if authoritarian regimes act as the “authoritarian ideal” suggests, they would perform miserably. But neither does.

To achieve the aims of this study, I utilize aspects of the two approaches of foreign policy decision-making research that are concerned with constituents of effective decision-making in order to establish criteria for measuring the quality of decision-making processes independently from regime type. These two approaches are groupthink and organizational theory. Groupthink argues that members of a foreign policy decision-making group are subject to social dynamics widely observed in groups of ordinary people, which lead to

malfunctions in the decision-making process. Groupthink theorists have also outlined prospects to prevent these malfunctions and to improve the quality of decision-making processes.

Organizational theory has built on groupthink propositions in order to provide a more nuanced framework for analysis. Assuming that the way the decision-making group is structured has an effect on its approach to the problem it faces, organizational theorists have proposed procedural tasks that are critical to enhancing the effectiveness of the decision-making process. In effect, these two approaches have identified several criteria that constitute high-quality decision-making, but the basic are four decision-making procedural tasks: survey of objectives, survey of alternatives, information search, and information processing.

Having identified the criteria of the quality of the decision-making process, I then turn to the question of causes. On the one hand, revisiting the literature on the balance-of-power theory, I show that the factor of decision-making is not as foreign to the balance-of-power theory as it might seem at first glance. Instead, it has been identified as an internal balancing behavior in both theoretical and empirical research. I draw on this insight to examine the link between threats to a state's security and the quality of its decision-making processes. A security threat is serious when it challenges the balance-of-power and is indicated by: (a) sharp increases in the offensive capabilities of the adversary; (b) a disadvantageous balance of political and military alliances; and (c) an unfavorable political/military status quo. The second component of threat environment is past experience. I define a past experience of failure as a recent occurrence of a major military defeat on the battlefield or a political fiasco in the international arena demonstrating in no ambiguous terms the wrongness of the previous strategic assessments. In particular, I argue that one way

state leaders can effectively respond to a severe threat environment is to undertake specific procedures in their decision-making, which eventually improve the quality of the process according to the four decision-making procedural tasks noted above.

On the other hand, I advance group dynamics, specifically group cohesion, as a complementary explanation to the threat environment argument and to account for cases in which states fail to balance against rising security threats. The concept of group cohesion, or the extent to which members of a group identify with the group and thus establish it as a unified unit, has been used by Irving Janis (1972) in his groupthink theory to explain defective decision-making. In Janis's view, members of a cohesive group seek concurrence among themselves to an extent that they fail to perform the tasks of vigilant information processing in making decisions. However, a considerable amount of research investigating the effect of group cohesion on performance has found that group cohesion improves the quality of the decision-making process. I build on the latter literature to argue that a cohesive group of policy makers is more likely to perform the aforementioned decision-making process tasks better than an incohesive group.

This dissertation tries to make a number of contributions to the study of military victory, foreign policy decision-making analysis, the balance-of-power theory, and the role of democracy in international relations. It explores the extent to which decision-making at the political and strategic levels affect war outcomes, a relationship that might look simple but has hardly been examined empirically. Building on the concepts of groupthink and organizational theory, this study seeks to establish the causal mechanism between the quality of the decision-making process and war outcomes, and to examine it by analyzing Arab-Israeli wars which present an easy case for democratic victory theory and a hard case for my argument. The selected cases favor democratic victory theory because they were only

between democracies and non-democracies with no mixed alliances. Thus, it shifts the focus of studying military victory from the use of purely quantitative techniques to the examination of decision-making mechanisms.

This study also applies the concepts of groupthink and organizational theories, which have usually focused on decision-making during crises in Western democracies, to new areas – Arab-Israeli wars. At the same time, while the study of foreign policy decision-making has so far been concerned mainly with state actors, this dissertation explores the applicability of decision-making concepts to non-state actors by studying the July 2006 war between Israel and the Lebanese organization of Hezbollah.

In seeking an alternative explanation of the quality of the decision-making process in the concepts of threat environment and leadership group cohesion, this study ties together approaches culled from two seemingly opposing systemic- and individual-levels of analysis. On the one hand, realists have long recognized that the balance of power determines state behavior, yet they traditionally focus on states as unitary actors whose responses to the security environment are material. On the other hand, the study of foreign policy decision-making has mainly focused on the processes, expectations, and personal attitudes of policy makers. The aim is to provide insights on how these approaches might interact to influence the decision-making processes.

Moreover, this study subjects the claims on the influence of the democratic political system on states' foreign policies to a thorough test. It comparatively analyzes the democratic victory "selection-effects" argument and the proposed alternative explanation against case-study evidence in *both* democratic and non-democratic regimes. This will also have important implications for the validity of democratic peace theory – according to which democracies do not fight each other because of the decisional constraints on leaders and the

democratic norms and culture – since it was from the latter’s claims that proponents of democratic victory have derived their “selection-effects” argument.

I test the above propositions in a case study analysis that examines the decision-making processes in both warring parties prior to and during the war. For that purpose, I use the process-tracing method to identify the factors that influence decisions and the actual course of events, and the counterfactual method to speculate what could have happened if the antecedent cause operated in a different way. The case studies are four Arab-Israeli wars: June 1967, Attrition 1969-70, October 1973, and July 2006. Several reasons account for this choice. Arab-Israeli wars are “crucial” cases for the democratic victory theory since the Jewish state has widely been seen as a small democratic country that could secure outstanding military victories over superior enemies. If I can show that despite constant levels of democracy in the war participants, war outcomes still vary according to changes in threat environment and group cohesion, my argument gains credibility. Also, these wars exhibit significant variance in the *explanandum* (war outcomes) with little, if any, variance in the alternative *explanans* (level of democracy). Of these four wars, one was won by the democratic party (June 1967), two were draws or ended in stalemates (Attrition 1969-70 and October 1973), and one was won by the non-democratic party (July 2006).

A secondary reason for the case selection is my knowledge of Arabic and Hebrew, which has allowed me to incorporate the considerable relevant literature written in these two languages and not translated into English, and to examine declassified public documents related to the decision-making processes and war events. I had hoped to include all of the Arab-Israeli wars – including Palestine War 1948, the Suez War 1956, and the Lebanon War 1982 – as case studies in this research, but the scarcity of both primary (and in some cases

also secondary) sources on the decision-making processes on the Arab side has prevented me from being able to make a balanced analysis of decision-making processes in these wars.

The analysis reveals that democratic and non-democratic regimes operate in ways other than the mechanisms hypothesized by the “selection-effects.” Rather, the quality of the decision-making process has been significantly influenced by the extent to which the state was facing a serious security threat and whether its leadership was cohesive. The case studies also show that war outcomes vary – victory, draw, or defeat – according to the performance of the tasks of the decision-making on the part of policy makers; in other words, the higher the performance, the better the outcome. Moreover, the examination of alternative explanations and counterfactuals demonstrates that the role that the quality of the decision-making process plays is indeed important as relative to other factors affecting war outcomes, such as material power, weapons technology, military strategy, human capital, civil-military relations, and national culture. Notably, the case of the July 2006 war, where a non-state actor (Hezbollah) was the warring party vis-à-vis a state actor (Israel), demonstrates that some non-state actors may not differ significantly from states in their decision-making processes.

The first part of this dissertation explains the research problem and proposes a framework for investigating this problem. Chapter One locates the democratic victory theory within the larger theories of military victory and democratic peace, details the arguments of both proponents and critics of democratic victory, and identifies the inadequacies of the existing literature and the potential contribution this dissertation can make. Chapter Two presents an alternative explanation of the quality of decision-making processes. It first reviews the literature on groupthink and organizational theory and establishes the constituents of the quality of the decision-making process, and then identifies the antecedents

of the quality of the decision-making process in the threat environment and group dynamics. Chapter Three presents the methodology used in this study: it first defines the variables, hypotheses, and the unit of analysis and elaborates on the employed methods, case-study selection, and case study materials.

The second part of the dissertation applies the argument developed in the first part to the four case studies: each of the four chapters is dedicated to one of the wars. All of these chapters have five sections: (1) an outline of the course of the war and an explanation of how its outcome is coded; (2) a test of the causal mechanisms of “selection-effects” argument on decision-making against case-study evidence; (3) an examination of how the threat environment and group cohesion affect the decision-making process according to the four criteria of decision-making; (4) an assessment of the effect that the quality of the decision-making process has on the war outcome both by examining alternative explanations and by conducting a counterfactual analysis; and (5) a conclusion of the findings. The dissertation concludes by discussing the findings and their implications for theory as well as for policy, and by proposing issues for future research.

PART I

THEORY

Chapter One

Democratic Victory Revisited

Theories of Military Victory

The concern with studying the determinants of victory in war could be as old as war itself. Sun Tzu credits seven elements for military victory, asserting that the superior side in all of them will win before doing battle: “Which political leadership has the Way? Which general has ability? Who has the better climate and terrain? Whose discipline is effective? Whose troops are stronger? Whose officers and soldiers are the better trained? Whose system of rewards and punishment is clearer?” (Tzu 2005, 7-8). The “Way” of the political leadership, according to Tzu, comprises five virtues: intelligence, trustworthiness, humaneness, courage and sternness (Tzu 2005, 6). Thucydides reports that “Wars were won by a combination of sound strategy and surplus wealth” (Thucydides 1998, 64). Clausewitz, in turn, identifies two inseparable factors leading to military victory: the sum of available means and the strength of the will (Leonard 1967, 44).

Alas, this established attention to the determinants of military victory has not been well reflected in the literature on international security. To be sure, there has always been a discrepancy between studying the causes of war and studying the outcomes of war. Scholars have paid greater attention to the former than the latter (Gartner 1998, 252-58). Yet two main approaches on military victory can still be discerned: realist approaches and non-realist approaches.

Realist Approaches

Realists maintain that the determinants for military superiority and, consequently, victory in war are material resources (Mearsheimer 2001). Notably, the empirical literature on interstate balance of power and military balance uses the material capacities as its principal criterion (Biddle and Long 2004, 528). The deduced argument is straightforwardly that the side that has greater material preponderance will prevail at war. An illustrative example is Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* though its scope is beyond military conflicts. His argument is that economic growth enhances the military strength of great powers that, accordingly, seek to increase this growth by expanding militarily (the *rise* of a great power). However, when too many economic resources are devoted to military commitments, this leads in the long term to the weakening of the great power's economic base that in turn declines to satisfy the needs of expansion which Kennedy identifies as "imperial overstretch" (the *fall* of a great power). In the same vein, Kennedy argues, the outcomes of great power conflicts are ultimately determined by their relative economic capacities (Kennedy 1987).

A variation of the realist approaches posits that it is the quality, rather than the quantity, of the material hardware that establishes military superiority and a greater likelihood of victory. This explains, for example, why US defense planners during the Cold War emphasized technological superiority over numerical superiority vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. This approach owes much to the defensive realism argument on the offense-defense balance – the relative ease or difficulty of conquest. When military technology and doctrine favors the offense, conquest is easier, states are less secure, and competition and war will be more intense and frequent (Van Evera 1998, 16-18).

Non-Realist Approaches

The non-realist approaches encompasses a wide range of theories, each of which holds one of the following variables as the most influential in achieving military victory: human capital, civil-military relations, national culture, and regime type (Biddle and Long 2004). Human capital refers to the able and skilled among a state's population from which soldiers can be drawn. The assumption is that states with high-quality human capital will be stronger as they are easily able to field large militaries with sophisticated weapons, and vice versa (Biddle and Long 2004, 531; Biddle and Zirkle 1996).

Advocates of the civil-military relations variable maintain that complicated civil-military relations negatively affect the military effectiveness on the battlefield (Biddle and Long 2004, 532). For example, regimes that are concerned about military coups often attempt to deny their militaries the capacity to challenge them, which takes a heavy toll on their military effectiveness. Note, however, that countries in which coup suspicions exist need not be non-democratic. Coup suspicions may exist also in democracies, such as India, the Philippines, and Turkey.

Another approach has attributed poor military performance to cultural attitudes. Exploring Arab armies' poor performances, some scholars have identified "information as power," "education problems," "officers vs. soldiers relationship," and "decision making and responsibility" as the factors that lead to military ineffectiveness (Pollack 2002; de Atkine 2002; Cordesman 1996). Kenneth Pollack has confined his explanation almost exclusively to the Arab culture, but Norvell de Atkine and Anthony Cordesman have combined elements of the variables of human capital and civil-military relations. McGregor Knox has also assigned significant importance to the factor of culture in explaining Italian poor military performance in World War II (Knox 1986; Knox, 2000). The final variable used to explain military victory

within the non-realist approaches, that is regime type, is the subject of the following section on democratic victory theory.

Democratic Victory Theory

The main argument of democratic victory theory is that democratic countries are more likely to win wars because of the merits of democracy. There are two strands of the democratic victory theory. One attributes the tendency of democracies to win wars to “war-fighting” capabilities: democracies have bigger economies, form stronger alliances, and can count on greater effort from their soldiers. The other posits that it is the “selection-effects” of democracies – democratic leaders make better decisions about initiating wars for the restraining effects of public opinion and checks-and-balances system – that make them start only those wars they are confident that they can win.

War-Fighting Argument

David Lake was probably the first to scholarly argue that democracies are more likely to win wars. Drawing on the microeconomic theory of the rent-seeking state, he attributed this phenomenon to that democracies *have bigger economies*. In his view, democracies tend: “(1) to create fewer economic distortions, possess greater national wealth, and devote more resources to security; (2) to enjoy greater societal support for their policies and therefore a greater extractive capacity; and (3) to form overwhelming countercoalitions against expansionist autocracies” (Lake 1992, 30). He offered quantitative tests of his argument, showing, first, the greater propensity of democratic states to win the wars they fight (of the 26 wars fought between democracies and autocracies since 1816, democracies won 81 percent of the cases, and, second, the existence of a consistent correlation between

democracy, economic power and military victory.* Remarkably, Lake's argument subordinated the conduct of foreign policy by democracies to their economic power, since he regarded decision-making by democracies as "often slow, inept, naïve, and prone to stalemate" (Lake 1992, 24). Lake also proposed a causal mechanism arguing that democracies possess greater wealth, and "since they recognize that, if defeated, they will be exploited by autocratic victors, [democracies] are likely to enter only those wars in which they possess asymmetric interests" (Lake 2003, 158-59). However, this claim that a democratic fear of autocratic exploitation leads to fighting with asymmetric interests is empirically untested.

Ajin Choi concurred with the proposition that democracies are more likely to win wars but differed on the explanation. She argued that democratic victory is accounted for by the greater likelihood of democracies to align with each other; in other words, democracies *form stronger alliances*. Choi identified two factors to explain democratic alliance behavior. First, democratic alliance commitments are difficult to reverse because competition and diverse interests, or veto players, produce stable preferences over time. Second, the transparency of the democratic political system – giving information about the allies' intentions and willingness to adhere to agreements – allows alliance partners to be assured of the allies' credibility (Choi 2003, 144-45). Choi statistically tested the impact of democratic alliances on victory in interstate wars between 1816 and 1992, and found that the greater the number of democratic partners in an alliance, the higher the likelihood of victory (Choi 2003, 146-9).

* These cases of war between democracies and non-democracies were originally 30 but Lake excluded the Korean, Israeli-Egyptian, and Israeli-Syrian Wars for want of clear victor.

Dan Reiter and Allan Stam reviewed several factors – political institutions, individual soldiering, democratic international community, and economic power – that have been used to explain why democracies are more likely to win wars against autocracies. They rejected the proposition that democratic targets are more likely to attract democratic allies – out of the 76 states targeted in wars, 11 were democratic and only 3 (27 percent) of these attracted allies, which is not a statistically significant proportion (Reiter and Stam 2002, 90-91). As for economic power, Reiter and Stam found that democracies do not win wars because of their overwhelming economic capacities. Employing the CDB90 data developed by the Historical Evaluation and Research Organization (HERO) and nations' Gross Domestic Product (GDP), they found that democracy correlates with *lower* levels of tanks, artillery pieces, and air sorties, and that the fraction of GDP democracies allocate to military spending is neither more nor less than other states (Reiter and Stam 2002, 120-43).

Instead, Reiter and Stam proposed that the political system and military effectiveness better account for democratic victory. The political system explanation or the “selection-effects” argument is discussed in the following subsection. The second explanation, military effectiveness, refers to that democracies can count on greater effort from their soldiers. When they are targets, democracies are more likely to win because of soldiering or higher military effectiveness; in other words, democratic political culture, focusing on individual rights and privileges, produces armies that fight with higher levels of leadership and initiative on the battlefield. Using the Correlates of War (COW) data set, Reiter and Stam examined 197 interstate war participants during the period from 1815 to 1985, and found that democratic targets won 63 percent of the time, compared to 34 percent and 40 percent for targeted dictators and oligarchs (Reiter and Stam 2002, 28). In order to measure the effectiveness of the armed forces, Reiter and Stam examined 572 military battles from 1800

to 1982, employing the HERO data set of major individual battles which was developed to measure combat effectiveness. They found that democracies won 76 percent of the time, and that democracy correlates positively with indicators of battlefield success (Reiter and Stam 1998, 271-74; Reiter and Stam 2002, 71-81).

Selection-Effects Argument

The second explanation for democratic victory that Reiter and Stam suggested was the “selection-effects” argument. It proposes two causal mechanisms for decision-making in both democratic and non-democratic political systems. The first mechanism focuses on the institutional constraints. Through fair elections and other forms of checks-and-balances, democratic governments are held accountable to their peoples. Since democratic leaders want to be re-elected, they will be careful to initiate wars only they are sure they can win, lest they lose office in next elections in case they lose the war. That is in contrast to autocratic leaders who are answerable only to themselves. Consequently, autocrats are less cautious about going to war since the populace is not empowered to punish them for losing or costly wars; dictators are unlikely to fall from power, unless the war is lost disastrously. The second mechanism focuses on informational constraints. Democratic governments are better at strategic decision-making because they enjoy more and high-quality information since both opposition parties and the free press facilitate open discussion of ideas – the so-called “marketplace of ideas.” This high-quality information would enable the leaders to make “better” – i.e., less biased and more accurate – estimates of the probability of victory and, accordingly, select winnable wars. That is in contrast to autocratic regimes which monopolize the mass media and are not affected by the public opinion, while opposition

parties either do not exist or are very weak. As a result, autocratic regimes deprive themselves from receiving accurate information about the costs and probability of war.

Using the COW data set, Reiter and Stam examined 197 interstate war participants during the period from 1815 to 1985 and found that democratic states that initiate war won 93 percent of the time (compared to 60 percent for dictatorships and 58 percent for oligarchs). To look at the actual decisions to initiate war, they generated predictions of war outcomes using national characteristics, such as military-industrial capability, and found that when the estimated chances of victory increase, democracies become more willing to initiate wars (Reiter and Stam 2002, 30-31). In response to critics, Reiter and Stam have defended the inclusion of mismatched cases because “it proves [their] selection effects theory that democracies seek out gross mismatches and avoid conflicts where their chances of victory are lower” (Reiter and Stam 2003, 172). Reiter and Stam also re-asserted the inclusion of asymmetric wars because it proves their theory since “[democratic] leaders are aware that when lesser interests are at stake, public support is likely to erode quickly. They therefore either avoid these wars or design strategies for short, low-cost wars” (Reiter and Stam 2003, 173).

More recently, Özlem Elgun attempted to contemplate the selection-effects argument by examining the usually-overlooked authoritarian regimes. She argued that regimes with more personalized decision-making mechanisms are more likely to lose the wars they initiate than democracies or authoritarian regimes with more collective decision-making mechanisms. Elgun statistically examined the conflict behavior of authoritarian regimes between 1952 and 1992, showing that personalized regimes are more likely to lose wars than collective ones (Elgun 2005). In other words, the more authoritarian the regime, the greater likelihood that it would lose the wars it initiates.

Critiquing Democratic Victory

Critics have challenged the validity of each of the variables used to explain democratic victory – political institutions, individual soldiering, democratic international community, and economic power – concluding that regime type is not the determining factor in making decisions about war.

Critiquing the War-Fighting Argument

Michael Desch identifies six problems with data used by advocates of democratic victory theory (or as he labels them, the “triumphalists”): mis-aggregation, mixed alliances, gross mismatch (imbalance of power), questionable coding and asymmetrical conflicts, which resulted in examining 54 “unfair” cases out of a population of 75 wars fought since 1815. Finding that democracies won 57 percent of the remaining 21 “fair” cases, he concludes that it is difficult to have confidence in the democratic victory proposition (Desch 2002, 10-16). Desch faults the approach employed by Lake, Reiter and Stam in examining cases, asserting, for example, that their large-*N* of 197 cases actually consists of 66 cases because three states – Britain, Israel and the United States – comprise approximately 56 percent of the cases and account for 75 percent of the results. Desch also argues that Choi’s proposition that democracies make better alliances suffers from four defects: (a) the number of democratic partners in an alliance does not conform with the causal mechanism that veto players and regime transparency make democracies more credible allies; (b) greater transparency often overwhelms the other side with “excessive and contradictory information,” while checks and balances might exist in non-democracies as well; (c) historically, there have been few purely democratic alliances; and (d) it is difficult to determine which partner made the greater contribution to the alliance victory (Desch 2003, 193-94).

In response to a critical assessment by Lake, Reiter and Stam, Desch asserts that the triumphalists fail to provide proof of their argument about the link between democracy and victory except as a statistical correlation, which is sensitive to model specification as it has proved to be insignificant when tested by the “fair fights” data noted above (Desch 2003, 183). Desch’s most recent and inclusive critique has been his *Power and Military Effectiveness* in which he complements his earlier critiques by examining three case studies of democracies at war: the Russo-Polish War of 1920, Israel’s wars from 1948 to 1982, and the Falklands War of 1982 (Desch 2008). Desch concludes by identifying national power as “the most consistent and influential factor explaining why states win their wars,” in addition to secondary factors which include the nature of the conflict, nationalism, and the degree to which a regime is consolidated (Desch 2008, 170-74).

Similarly, Risa Brooks offers two different critiques of Reiter and Stam’s theory. First, she notes their unjustified emphasis on military tactical proficiency as an explanation of victory. She argues that in the absence of sound strategic decision-making and operational planning, “a military organization’s tactical advantages may be rendered irrelevant to its ultimate success in war” (Brooks 2003, 167). Second, Brooks maintains that Reiter and Stam incorrectly equate democracy with liberal political culture when deriving their hypotheses on initiative and leadership. Democracy is different from the liberal social order advancing individualism, and states can be democratic without being necessarily liberal (Brooks 2003, 172-73). Another line of critique has re-examined the statistical data used by democratic victory theorists. Biddle and Stephen Long have attributed military victory to the unit-level variables of superior human capital, harmonious civil-military relations, and Western culture practices (Biddle and Long 2004, 525-46). Yet they could not decide whether these factors are the cause or the effect of democratic political organization. Michael Beckley has

conducted a multivariate analysis to explain military effectiveness with mixed findings on the effect of regime type. Running regime-type against numerical preponderance, tanks, air-support, and artillery, he finds a significant relationship between democracy and greater effectiveness. Nonetheless, these results reverse when other non-material factors (human capital, civil military relations, and culture) are added. Beckley concludes that “democracies perform better on the battlefield in spite of their democratic political institutions, not because of them” (Beckley 2008, 26-27).

Critiquing Selection-Effects Argument

Desch has also challenged Lake, Reiter and Stam’s “selection effects” argument, maintaining that historical evidence does not support the interpretation that caution about initiating wars is unique to democracies. Desch observes, “there are no studies available that assess whether democracies or non-democracies make better decisions about how to wage war. Indeed the triumphalists offer no systematic evidence to support this claim, but rather make their case by emphasizing the logic that underpins it” (Desch 2002, 33). The limited number of cases weakens the triumphalists’ selection-effects argument since “[t]here are only 16 cases of democracies starting wars since 1815, and half of these involve the same three countries: Britain, Israel and the United States” (Desch 2003, 187). The coding of 6 of these 16 cases, according to Desch, is questionable, and when the remaining 10 cases are examined more closely, they cannot be explained by the causal mechanisms the triumphalists had suggested (Desch 2003, 188-92).*

* The 6 questionable-coding cases are: France/Boxer Rebellion (1900), United Kingdom/Boxer Rebellion, United States/Boxer Rebellion, Czech-Hungarian War (1919), United Kingdom/World War II (1941-45), United States/World War II (1941-45), and the other 10 cases are: Spanish-American (1898), First Balkan (1912-13), Six Day War (1967), Bangladesh (1971), Turkey/Cyprus Invasion (1974), Mexican War (1846-48), Greco-Turkish War (1897), Russo-Polish War (1919-20), Sinai War (1956), Lebanon War (1982).

More to the point, Desch suggests that democracies are no better in making decisions than authoritarian regimes. His reasons are: (1) Arab-Israeli wars indicate that “Israeli democracy has not consistently fostered high-quality strategic evaluation and decisionmaking” (Desch 2002, 33); (2) the public will to avoid defeat notwithstanding, what eventually matters is how well leaders make decisions; and (3) systems allowing the participation of a large number of individuals with diverse opinions in decision-making (which is common to democracies), as Kurt Gaubatz argues, may not be able to produce coherent national security decisions (Desch 2002, 33-34).

At the same time, Desch has questioned the democratic “public support” proposition on the following grounds: (1) the claim that the voluntary public consent increases the likelihood for victory is weak since the World War II victors (the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union) were more centralized and more coercive than Germany; (2) there are no comparative studies that show that democratic governments enjoy greater public support in wartime than authoritarian regimes; and (3) though Israel could secure public support for its wars between 1948 and 1973, this was not a consequence of democracy since the Israelis believed they were fighting for their survival.

Other scholars have attempted to substantiate their critiques of the “selection-effects” argument by employing a case-study approach (Kaufman 2004; Downes 2007; Downes 2009). Chaim Kaufmann’s examination of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 demonstrates how the marketplace of ideas failed to operate as theorized in the world’s arsenal of democracy. The George W. Bush administration, Kaufmann argues, has manipulated information and the framing of issues to exaggerate the threat Saddam Hussein posed to the United States because the executive branch assumes a substantial authority in national security issues.

Concurrently, while American media were relatively “supine” and reported on the administration’s claims uncritically, the Democratic Party was split between those who were convinced of the administration’s argument on Saddam’s threat and those who were not but had “fears of seeming weak in the face of an external threat” (Kaufmann 2004, 44).

On the other hand, Alexander Downes points out that Reiter and Stam present a contradictory understanding of their “contemporaneous consent” model: while the “selection effects” argument suggests that democratic leaders would be punished by their citizens for losing or costly wars, that is *after* the war, Reiter and Stam’s explanation is what the public opinion currently supports, that is *before* the war. Also, whereas Reiter and Stam emphasized the limited ability of democratic leaders to shape public opinion, they repeatedly referred to leaders being able to generate public consent in democracies. Second, Downes notes that Reiter and Stam asserted that democratic leaders will pick weaker opponents to fight. At the same time, however, Reiter and Stam have rejected the two contentions, democratic alliances and democratic wealth, which might constitute a basis for such a selection, and fail to provide any alternative explanation (Downes 2007). Downes supports his critiques by examining the hypothesized “selection-effects” argument against the evidence in a case-study analysis of the US decision to initiate war against Vietnam in 1964-65 and reaches three important findings: (1) the Johnson administration did not decide to go to war in Vietnam when it was confident of victory; instead, it was skeptical about it; (2) the administration had sufficient high-quality information indicating the low likelihood that escalation would work, but this did not change its determination to go to war; and (3) the decision to go to war was made in secret by a few policymakers and the Johnson administration deliberately deceived the Congress and the public opinion about the nature and aims of the campaign.

Finally, there is no better proof of the doubts surrounding the validity of the democratic victory arguments than the recent analysis by Reiter and Stam themselves. Updating their population of cases to the year 2001, Reiter and Stam found that the new results support the “selection-effects” argument – that is democratic initiators are more likely to win wars – but they “call into question Reiter and Stam’s claim that democratic targets are more likely to win the wars they fight” (Reiter and Stam 2007, 7). Equally important is that the new results also show that Choi’s claim about democratic alliance behavior is not robust.

As far as “selection effects” argument is concerned, the critiques mentioned thus far have been focused more with the examination of its applicability to historical cases, and less with incorporating their criticisms with the original and broader context of the “selection-effects” variables. The next section deepens the debate by reviewing the literature on the “selection effects” variables within the framework of democratic peace theory.

Regime Type and Decisions about War

Democratic victory theory is different from yet essentially consistent with democratic peace theory. In particular, both maintain that democracy places constraints on the decision-making authority of leaders. These constraints encourage caution and risk-averseness on the part of leaders so that they do not decide recklessly to go to war. In this view, decisional constraints, along with democratic norms and culture, prevent democratic leaders from going to war against other democracies (to explain the almost complete absence of war between democracies). In the case of democratic victory, these constraints prevent democratic leaders from going to war against non-democracies unless they are confident of winning. In effect, democratic victory shares the first three institutional variables of democratic peace, though under different headings: accountability of leaders, public constraint, group constraint (that constitute the “selection-effects” argument) and information.

Accountability is referred to as the process by which fair and regular elections ensure that democratic governments are held accountable to their citizens who are unwilling to bear the costs of war in blood and money. As Michael Doyle put it: “When the citizens who bear the burdens of war elect their governments, wars become impossible” (Doyle 1986, 1151). The argument here is straightforward. If a democratic leader involves in a losing or costly war, the electorate will vote against him/her in the next elections and he/she will lose office. In contrast, autocratic regimes are accountable only to themselves. Consequently, autocrats are less cautious about going to war since the populace is not empowered to punish them for losing or costly wars. Applying their “selectorate” model to decisions about war, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* found that “[democratic] leaders are at great risk of political defeat at home from failed policies. Autocrats are not” (Bueno de Mesquita *et al.* 2003, 236).

The second constraint on the decision-making authority of democratic leaders is the public constraint. It refers to checks imposed on leaders by public opinion that prevents them from involving their countries in wars on their own whims. The idea behind this variable is succinctly captured by Immanuel Kant:

If ... the consent of the citizens is required to decide whether or not war is to be declared, it is very natural that they will have great hesitation in embarking on so dangerous an enterprise. For this would mean calling down on themselves all the miseries of war But under a constitution where the subject is not a citizen, and therefore not republican, it is the simplest thing in the world to go to war (Kant 1991, 100).

Unlike democratic leaders, autocrats either ignore public opinion or direct it through their control over the media. Group constraint means that the institutional structure of the democratic state maintains stable and predictable political institutions, including bureaucracies, the legislature and private interest groups (such as opposition political parties), independent of the government. These institutions maintain a checks-and-balances

system subjecting the leaders' preferences to a more extensive scrutiny. Thus, these institutions slow decisions to initiate wars (Russett 1993, 39-40). In an autocracy, institutional arrangements are usually nominal or highly unstable (Mansfield and Snyder 2005, 51). Institutionalized opposition groups either do not exist or are very weak in autocratic regimes.

The last variable, informational constraint, suggests that democratic institutions, through the free press and public debate, increase transparency of the political process. This transparency makes democratic governments better at sending credible signals of their resolve (Ritter 2000, 83-113). Conversely, autocratic regimes monopolize the mass media and, as a result, deprive themselves of accurate information about the costs and probabilities of war. Therefore, autocrats are more likely to rush into war by miscalculation (Mansfield and Snyder 2005, 49).

Clifton Morgan and Sally Howard Campbell question the first three types of variables. Since "no modern democracy puts a decision for war to a vote of the entire electorate" (Morgan and Campbell 1991, 189), they assume that it is decisions made by governmental leaders that produce the occurrence of war. Morgan and Campbell have tested, across all militarized interstate disputes between 1816 and 1976, the following three hypotheses of decision constraints: (1) the broader the "electorate," the greater the decisional constraints on the government; (2) the more formal and institutionalized political competition, the less likely the state is to engage in war; and (3) the larger the number of persons and institutions that must approve the decision for war, the less likely the government is to decide for war (Morgan and Campbell 1991, 191-92). Morgan and Campbell find that the probability that the occurrence of war decreases when the constraints on decision-making increase is barely significant, and that those structural constraints on the

chief executive's authority cannot determine the probability that disputes escalate to war (Morgan and Campbell 1991, 202-04). Attempting to explain these striking results, the authors provide three potential interpretations: (1) the employed statistical models do not adequately reflect the hypotheses; (2) domestic structures are irrelevant in determining whether disputes escalate to war; and (3) the populace is more eager to go to war than decision-makers are.

Also, Christopher Layne (1994) has questioned the validity of democratic norms and cultures in explaining peace among democracies, by examining four crises where two democracies almost went to war against each other: (1) Anglo-American crisis: The *Trent* affair, 1861; (2) Anglo-American Crisis: Venezuela, 1895-96; (3) Anglo-French struggle for control of the Nile: Fashoda, 1898; and (4) Franco-German Crisis: The Ruhr, 1923. Contrary to claims of democratic peace, Layne has found that public opinion either was eager to go to war or did not influence the decision-making process.

Joanne Gowa takes a stronger position on the checks-and-balances issue. Drawing an interesting analogy between tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade (NTBs) and the case of war, she argues that checks-and-balances would not be effective if the producers (leaders and defense contractors) have concentrated gains while the costs of war are diffused among the consumers (the populace), and thus the marketplace of ideas argument would fail. Second, non-democratic leaders confront as many – but different – constraints on their decisions as their democratic counterparts do. The interests of the coalition of forces that maintain non-democratic leaders in office provide informal checks on their decisions. Non-democratic leaders, Gowa argues, confront another constraint that is unique to them: whereas they deliberately maintain a weak military incapable of challenging them, non-democratic leaders confront the dilemma that having weak armed forces runs the risk of a foreign takeover of

the whole state. Accordingly, non-democratic leaders are less interested in waging wars (Gowa 1995, 516-18). Kenneth Shultz takes issue with the “institutional constraints” and “informational constraints” variables employed to explain the behavior of democratic states in international crises and the crisis outcomes. He concludes his theoretical and empirical tests by asserting that the behavior of democracies in international crises is better accounted for by the “information constraints” argument, than by the “institutional constraints” one, since the latter “implies that democratic states have a harder time convincing their targets that they are serious” (Shultz 1999, 259).

Finally, Sebastian Rosato scrutinizes all four variables of democratic peace. As for accountability, he empirically demonstrates that autocrats are more likely to suffer severe punishment for losing wars than democratic leaders, and that even when the data shows that democratic losers are twice as likely to be removed from office, the discrepancy is not statistically significant. Notably, as H. E Goemans argues, while dictators are unlikely to lose office, if ever, unless a war is lost disastrously, they can expect, unlike democratic leaders, severe punishment (Goemans 2000, 57-71). As for the public constraint, Rosato examined the 30 wars fought since 1815 by the world’s most militarily active democracies – Britain, France, India, Israel and the United States – and found that in 15 cases, these democracies were victims of attack, and, accordingly, it is not surprising that the public supported the decisions for war. In 12 of these cases, either the outbreak of war was received with powerful nationalistic response or the previously unengaged publics were persuaded to support war. Only in three cases – Britain in 1956, France in 1956, and Israel in 1982 – did the public remain opposed to decisions of war (Rosato 2003, 595).

When opposing groups and parties compete with the incumbents over policies (the group constraint), Rosato argues, this does not mean that the anti-war groups will generally

win. Rather, the historical record shows that pro-war groups (usually the ruling one) prevail in domestic debates. He also refers to two decision constraints in authoritarian regimes: (1) keeping weak militaries should prevent autocrats from provoking foreign aggression; and (2) financing the high costs of war requires greater coercion, which would trigger social unrest threatening the autocrat's position (Rosato 2003, 596-97). Unlike Shultz, Rosato argues that democracies cannot clearly send credible signals of their resolve for two reasons: (1) democracies produce too much information to be easily interpreted by the opposing party; and (2) having opposition groups against military action does not insure that the incumbents will reveal their private information (Rosato 2003, 598-99).

Inadequacies of the Existing Literature and Potential Contribution

Thus far, I have outlined the existing critiques of the democratic victory theory from different perspectives. Re-examining the democratic victory literature, scholars have not been able to determine the effect of democracy on military victory. The evidence is at the least mixed. At the same time, the main point to be made in light of discussing the "selection effects" argument is that a democratic government may differ very little from an authoritarian regime in making the decisions leading to war. Now I turn to point out four critiques that I believe have not been made.

First, democratic victory theory cannot explain the outcomes of wars between non-democracies. On the one hand, factors other than democracy surely influence outcomes of wars between non-democracies in modern times; and if these wars constitute 55 percent of all interstate wars between 1816 and 1990 then there is a rationale for questioning the external validity of democratic victory. On the other hand, democratic victory cannot

account for war outcomes throughout history prior to the introduction of modern democracy. The further back we go into history, the harder it is to find political organizations that qualify as democracies; by far, royal autocracy was the most common type of government across the ancient world. Even the well-established democracy of ancient Athens would fail the test of democratic victory since it had experienced defeat at the hands of authoritarian Sparta in the Peloponnesian War (Desch 2002, 5).

Second, the democratic victory theorists' claims about decision-making are undermined by being confined to these decisions made by the initiator prior to the war. Neither decisions made by the target state prior to the war nor those made by either side during the course of the war have been addressed. On the one hand, there is an arbitrary distinction in the literature between initiators and targets. This distinction inaccurately presumes that it is only initiators that make decisions, probably relying on the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) data set definition of the initiator as "the state that makes the first militarized action" (Jones *et al.* 1996, 178). Rather, both initiators and targets make decisions *prior to* the outbreak of war; the former decides for, or selects, action (by making the first militarized action), while the latter decides for or selects inaction (by denying the initiator's demands or making counter-demands). Indeed, decisions made by a target before the initiation of the war could be of no less significance than those made by the initiator to the outbreak and outcome of war. This argument is both theoretical and empirical. On the one hand, the International Interaction Game, designed by Bueno de Mesquita and David Lalman, assigns equal nodes in the model for choices made by state *A*, the initiator of the first move, and state *B*, the one that makes a reaction to the first move (Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992). In particular, it emphasizes that "[b]oth parties must choose the fight option to arrive to an outcome of war" (Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992, 34). Also,

Shultz identifies in his international crisis bargaining model the target state's reaction to the threat as the dependent variable, recognizing that even "[a] lack of reciprocation does not mean that the targets did nothing in response to the initial threat, but it does suggest that they did not consider military escalation of the conflict to be in their interests" (Shultz 1999, 249). On the other hand, while much scholarship of the Gulf War of 1991 is concerned with the United States' decision to initiate war against Iraq, Brandon Kinne's examination of Saddam Hussein's decision to remain in Kuwait alerts us that the Iraqi decision contributed to the US decision to initiate the war and, consequently, to its outcome (Kinne 2005, 122-23). Similarly, it was the failures of Israeli decision-making and intelligence before the outbreak of the October 1973 War, and not only the Egyptian-Syrian decision to initiate the war, that nearly resulted in Israel's defeat during this war (Desch 2002, 33).

Despite the fact that political institutions are at the core of Reiter and Stam's argument, their explanation is silent on the decision-making process in both democracies and autocracies during wars. It is limited to the military effectiveness or individual soldiering variables. Reiter and Stam thus assume that once the first shot has been fired either the political leadership makes no decisions and the conduct of the war becomes the exclusive realm of the military or that any decisions made by the political leadership do not influence the war outcome. Neither assumption seems sound. Military history reminds us that political leaderships do make decisions during wars and these can have a decisive impact on the course of events. Many analysts agree that despite the admitted military effectiveness of the *Wehrmacht*, it was Hitler's decisions to attack the Soviet Union in June 1941 and to declare war on the United States in December, and thus fighting on two fronts and expanding the war far beyond Germany's capacity to endure, that caused the eventual defeat of the Third Reich. Likewise, it was most likely President Harry Truman's decision to escalate the

Korean War in the fall of 1950, thus provoking China's intervention, rather than major deficiencies in the American vis-à-vis the Korean and Chinese individual soldiering that caused the turn of the tide and the war to end in a stalemate after the initial victory of the UN troops. Accordingly, any analysis seeking to test democratic victory propositions on political institutions should focus on comparative decision-making – both pre-war and wartime – rather than the pre-war time only. While the selection-effects mechanisms – electoral punishment and the marketplace of ideas – seem to operate the same way before and during war, I would rather stick to examine the democratic victory theory's assertions on political institutions according to what the democratic victory theorists have made claims on, i.e., the pre-war stage, and examine the alternative explanation I propose in both contexts.

Third, the common flaw of the arguments of both advocates and critics of democratic victory is the failure to look at *both* participants in the war. War is a two-directional relationship but scholars have so far examined the war behavior of democracies and non-democracies separately. Instead, the study of military victory should focus on the comparison between the two sides. Even though attempts have been made by scholars, most notably Downes, Kaufmann, and Desch, to examine cases in detail, these have been limited in that they have only been concerned the democratic side. As Stam has written, though in a different context, “[b]y ignoring half of the conflict at any point we might draw erroneous conclusions about the changes in the likely outcome of a potential conflict between two sectors” (Stam 1996, 34). Consequently, if the assumptions of democratic victory work as theorized, one would expect that when comparing the two decision-making processes in a war between a democracy and a non-democracy, the former would win and the latter would lose.

Finally, regardless of how one interprets the statistical link between regime type and war outcomes, causality is more complicated than a strong correlation. As far as decision-making is concerned, democratic victory advocates have almost exclusively been concerned with large- N outcomes-oriented analysis that falls short of explaining the decision-making processes. Equally, critics of democratic victory have not paid enough attention to political/strategic decision-making as an explanation of war outcomes. The two attempts to test democratic victory theory in detailed case studies of the decision-making process – Downes on Vietnam and Kaufmann on Iraq – fall short of providing an adequate alternative explanation for the defective processes they depict. Again, if the democratic victory theory has merit, one should observe not only that the decision-making process, all other things being equal, contributes directly to the initiation of war and its outcome, but also expect that it is the democratic political system that actually *causes* the “better” decision-making process.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that as far as decision-making is concerned, the literature on democratic victory theory is deficient mainly in that it does not examine neither decisions made by the target state prior to the war nor decisions made by either side during the war, and it fails to provide an alternative explanation for the defective decision-making processes detected in democracies. To fill this gap, three tasks should be fulfilled: (1) establishing what is meant by a “better” decision-making process; (2) providing an alternative explanation to variations in the quality of decision-making; and (3) conducting a detailed comparative case-study analysis that examines the decision-making processes in

both parties prior to war and during its course. The next chapter addresses the first two tasks for the purposes of reviewing the literature on the constituents and explanations of the quality of decision-making, and presenting a framework of analysis.

Chapter Two

The Quality of the Decision-Making Process: Constituents and Antecedents

The Quality of the Decision-Making Process: The Constituents

The study of foreign policy decision making can be classified into two groups. The first is concerned with exploring the motivations of a state's decisions. The second group is concerned with the process dynamics and the elements that constitute an effective decision-making process. Indeed, much of the research is identified with the former group while only a relatively few works belong to the latter literature to which this section (as well as in the following section) reviews.

But before that, it is worth noting that within the former group, two works are perhaps the closest to refer to standards for "good" decision procedures or proposes prescriptions to improve the process. The first is Robert Jervis's *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Acknowledging that there is no prescribed formula to eliminate misperception, Jervis proposes four ways to help decision-maker "apply the full measure of his intelligence to the tasks before him" (Jervis 1976, 409): (1) making assumptions and predictions explicit; (2) formulation and application of alternative images; (3) separation between identities and missions; and (4) awareness of common misperceptions (Jervis 1976, 410-24). The second is Janice Gross Stein and Raymond Tanter's *Rational Decision-Making*. Stein and Tanter assert that expected-value maximization is the criterion for evaluating the rationality of a decision, but their standard of performance is the extent to which decision makers identify their options, estimate the likely consequences of these options, and then make a "trade off" as they examine expected costs and benefits before

selecting the choice which “promises them the highest expected value” (Stein and Tanter 1980, 8).

The research that is concerned with the study the process of decision-making falls under two approaches: groupthink and organizational theory. Janis’s model of groupthink (Janis 1972) was the pioneering work of the first approach. Explaining six case studies of foreign policy decisions made by US presidential administrations, Janis argues that members of a decision-making group are subject to social dynamics widely observed in groups of ordinary people. These dynamics (collectively defined as “groupthink”) include biased leadership, an illusion of invulnerability, an illusion of unanimity, and shared rationalizations and self-censorship, which are likely to lead to defective decision-making process, though not necessarily unfavorable outcomes (Janis 1972, 197-98).

Subsequently, in his *Groupthink*, Janis identifies seven symptoms of “defective decision making”: the failure to survey objectives, the failure to survey alternatives, the failure to examine risks of the preferred choice, the failure to reappraise initially rejected alternatives, the failure to search for information, biased information processing, and the failure to work out contingency plans. He also elaborates on three prescriptions for preventing groupthink: (1) encouraging critical thinking; (2) discouraging biased estimates; and (3) following particular administrative procedures (Janis 1982). Janis and Leon Mann have later on refined these seven symptoms and proposed that the reverses of these symptoms would constitute the “ideal” procedural criteria for a high-quality decision-making, either by groups or individuals. The decision maker:

1. thoroughly canvasses a wide range of alternative courses of action;
2. surveys the full range of objectives to be fulfilled and the values implicated by the choice;
3. carefully weighs whatever he knows about the costs and risks of negative consequences, as well as the positive consequences, that could flow from each alternative;

4. intensively searches for new information relevant to further evaluation of the alternatives;
5. correctly assimilates and takes account of any new information or expert judgment to which he is exposed;
6. reexamines the positive and negative consequences of all known alternatives, including those originally regarded as unacceptable, before making a final choice;
7. makes detailed provisions for implementing or executing the chosen course of action, with special attention to contingency plans that might be required if various known risks were to materialize (Janis and Mann 1977, 11).

In their prescriptions for improving the quality of decision-making in policy-making groups, Janis and Mann have focused on three major interventions. The first intervention is for the policy makers themselves to adopt “a set of standard operating procedures designed to counteract the psychological conditions that foster defensive avoidance” (Janis and Mann 1977, 396). The second intervention they suggested, building on Alexander George’s work (George 1972; 1980), is the introduction of a multiple advocacy system (discussed below). The third is the prevention of groupthink among the executives through impartial leadership, assigning one member of the group the role of “devil’s advocate,” encouraging critical thinking among members, division of the group from time to time into sub-groups and then reunion to hammer out their differences, surveying all warning signals from the rival organization or outgroup, and holding a “second chance” meeting immediately after a preliminary consensus about a particular course of action (Janis and Mann 1977, 397-99).

Building upon the work by Janis on groupthink (Janis 1972; Janis 1982) and Janis and Mann on decision making (Janis and Mann 1977), Gregory Herek, Irving Janis and Paul Huth have examined US presidential decisions during nineteen Cold War crises to study the relationship between effective decision-making process – which they defined in terms of information gathering and processing – and crisis outcomes (Herek, Janis, and Huth 1987). Of particular interest here is that Herek and his colleagues have developed an innovative

research design to *quantitatively measure* the decision process by using a content analysis method. Decision-making processes were rated for each defective symptom in one of five categories which were subsequently collapsed into two major categories (relative absence or clear manifestation of the symptom) and then each crisis was assigned a composite score for defective decision-making (Herek, Janis, and Huth 1987, 210-212). They show that a high quality of decision-making (defined as the absence of the seven symptoms of “defective decision making”) correlate positively with more favorable outcomes (defined as achieving US vital interests without increasing international conflict, or leading to military confrontation or escalations that risk nuclear war).

More recently, Mark Schafer and Scott Crichlow investigate whether certain factors pertaining to foreign policy decision-making process (situational factors such as stress and time constraints; factors associated with the structure of the group; and information processing factors) influence foreign policy outcomes (defined as national interests and level of international conflict). In this research the authors have drawn on Herek, Janis, and Huth’s measurement design by developing a more refined model to quantitatively measure the decision process (Schafer and Crichlow 2002). They have developed three sets of operational definitions of process variables that comprise in the aggregate thirty variables according to the above listed factors;* and then coded thirty-one cases of decision relying on multiple case studies, and using regression models to assess the hypotheses. Schafer and Crichlow conclude that “situation variables matter very little in terms of affecting outcomes and

* Schafer and Crichlow identify situation context variables as: stress level, crisis, recent failure, short time constraints, level of interests at stake, allies’ views, international organizations’ views, public opinion, legislative opinion, military capability differential, and situational distractions; group structural variables as: group insulation, biased leadership, methodical procedures, group homogeneity, illusion of invulnerability, gatekeepers, group values disagreement, foreign policy interest, knowledge and experience, teamwork, and unusual structural factors; information processing variables as: poor information search, biased information processing, survey of objectives, survey of alternatives, stereotype of situation, stereotype of out-group, pressures toward uniformity, and unusual process factors.

quality of information processing. On the other hand, both group structural factors and information processing are significantly related to outcomes” (Schafer and Crichlow 2002, 45).

The organizational structure approach built on groupthink propositions on the process quality in an attempt to provide a more nuanced framework for analysis. Alexander George in his *Presidential Decisionmaking* has examined a range of decisions made by US presidential administrations, and identified five critical procedural tasks, adherence to which is likely to increase the effectiveness of decision-making process. He argues that a decision making group must: (1) ensure that sufficient information about the situation at hand is obtained and analyzed adequately so that it provides policymakers with an incisive and valid diagnosis of the problem; (2) facilitate consideration of all the major values and interests affected by the policy at hand; (3) assure a search for a relatively wide range of options and a reasonably thorough evaluation of the expected consequences of each option; (4) provide for careful consideration of the problems that may arise in implementing the options under considerations; and (5) maintain receptivity to indications that current policies are not working out well and cultivate an ability to learn from experience (George 1980, 10).

In a more extended treatment, Patrick Haney draws on the earlier discussion (Johnson 1974; George 1980; Herek, Janis, and Huth 1987; Janis 1982 and 1989; and Janis and Mann 1977) to produce a list of six procedural tasks that must be performed by an advisory group in a crisis in order to have a high-quality decision-making: (1) survey objectives to be fulfilled by policy response; (2) canvass alternative policy responses; (3) search for information; (4) assimilate and process new information; (5) evaluate the costs, risks, and implications of the preferred choice; and (6) develop implementation, monitoring, and contingency plans. Examining nine cases of crisis decision-making by five US presidents, he

has built on Herek, Janis, and Huth's method of measurement of the decision process, but he combines with it *qualitative* methods by coding each task along a continuum where two or three recognitions of the task correspond with the task being performed "well," and four or more recognitions of the task correspond with the task being performed "very well." On the other hand, two or three omissions of the task correspond with the task being performed "poorly," and four or more omissions of the task correspond with the task being performed "very poorly." Haney has assigned neutral coding if the case studies report only one omission or recognition of the task, while no coding has been assigned if the case study material is insufficient to draw credible inferences about the decision process (Haney 1997, 47-8).

Indeed, the two approaches of groupthink and organizational structure have been successful in advancing our understanding of what is meant by the quality of decision-making process, and has identified clear parameters for its measurement. For the purposes of this project, in terms of assessing the quality of decision-making processes in democracies and non-democracies, the previous literature offers help in that it provides measurement criteria independent of the regime type. However, these works still suffer from two major shortcomings. First, these works have almost exclusively been concerned with US presidential decision making. Advocates of the quality of decision-making theories had apparently no interest in applying their propositions to decision-making processes in different international contexts, such as regional conflicts. The exception was the work of Schafer and Crichlow (2002), which included five cases of British and Israeli decisions among their thirty-one cases (the rest are also US presidential decisions), but even this work has been employing case-survey and statistical methods other than detailed case studies.

Second, and more importantly, there is the problem with establishing clear causal links between the procedural tasks and policy outcomes. This problem is manifested in two aspects. First, in attempting to demonstrate how defective decision-making lead to foreign policy failures, previous research studied the behavior of the decision-making group at one side only. But the possibility that the behavior of the other side could have contributed to such outcome has rarely been examined. For instance, the literature cannot adequately claim that the outcome of the Korean War would have been different had the Truman administration did not order the US forces to cross the 38th parallel, as Janis claimed (Janis 1972; Janis 1982), because it completely ignores decision-making on China's part. Though attempts have been made to look at decision-making processes of both sides (Thies 1980; Blight, Allyn and Welch 2002) virtually no study has systematically shown how and why a particular foreign policy outcome has been the result of the different *qualities* of the parties' decision-making processes. Indeed, conducting a two-sided analysis for dyadic cases is necessary to explicate the link between the procedural tasks of decision-making and policy outcomes. Second, in testing the link between the procedural tasks and policy outcomes, scholars usually presuppose that a decision making process is about *a single* decision and, thus, have fallen short of elaborating on the chain linking procedural tasks (of individual decisions), a decision-making process (comprising more than one decision), and policy outcome. This shortcoming is observed in the works of Janis (1972, 1982), George (1980), Herek, Janis, and Huth (1987), and Schafer and Chinchow (1996). A decision-making process, in effect, usually involves more than one decision. For example, the Egyptian decision-making in the episode preceding the June 1967 war involved four decisions (mobilization, dismissing UN forces, closing the Straits of Tiran, and not to preempt). Otherwise, if the process involved more than one decision, then all of these decisions are

unrealistically conceived in the literature as necessarily of the same quality. In the multi-decision cases examined by scholars so far – such as the examination of the two decisions made by the Richard Nixon administration during the October 1973 War (Haney 1997), and the examination of the two decisions made by the Thatcher government prior to the Falklands War (Schafer and Crichlow 2002) – these decisions were all either of high- or low-quality.* Instead, the quality of decision-making may well vary *within* the same process. For example, in the October 1973 War, the Israeli decision-making was of poor quality prior to the outbreak of war (the decision not to mobilize or to pre-empt) while the processes to reach the next two decisions (crossing the Canal and accepting the cease-fire) were of high-quality.

The Quality of the Decision-Making Process: The Antecedents

The literature on the quality of decision-making has also attempted to identify, in addition to the constituents of the process quality (as discussed in the preceding section), the conditions under which a high-quality process is more likely from the perspectives of groupthink and organizational approaches. This section first examines these two perspectives and demonstrates how they present unsatisfactory explanations of the quality of decision making. Secondly, it introduces alternative explanations along the dimensions of threat environment and group cohesion.

* Haney (1997) divides the Johnson administration decision-making in the Tet Offensive of 1968 into two phases: one prior to the attack and the other after it; and assigns a poor-quality for the first decision process and a high-quality to the other (Haney 1997, 97-100). However, the examination of the first phase as a decision-making process is weakly founded because Haney fails to identify a particular action or policy taken during this phase different from that maintained in the previous four years.

Groupthink Explanation

Probably the most well-known study speaking for this approach is the work of Janis (1972; 1982). Groupthink refers to “a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members’ striving for unanimity overrides their motivation to appraise alternative courses of action” (Janis 1982, 9). In other words, members within a “cohesive” group seek concurrence among themselves to an extent that they fail to perform the tasks of vigilant information processing in making decisions. Of this psychological syndrome, Janis has identified, as noted above, eight observable behavioral consequences: biased leadership, an illusion of invulnerability, an illusion of unanimity, an illusion of morality, shared rationalization, stereotyping of “outgroups,” pressures toward uniformity, and self-appointed “mind-guards” who preserve the unanimity of the group from dissent. Janis proposed that the groupthink syndrome makes it more likely that the decision group would exhibit seven symptoms of “defective decision making” which, in turn, produce a low-quality decision process.

Using content analysis of decision-makers’ public statements, Philip Tetlock tested hypotheses derived from Janis’s examination of the six cases of US decisions, and found a greater support for Janis’s theory (Tetlock 1979). Groupthink theory was also applied to a number of decision-making cases and in different contexts such as Hitler’s decision to invade the Soviet Union in 1941, Israel’s lack of preparedness prior to the October 1973 War (Raven and Rubin 1976), and the Carter administration decision to use force to rescue the hostages in Iran in 1980 (Ridgeway 1983). Patrick Morgan had also employed Janis’s theory to explore how decision-making influences deterrence behavior, and found that groupthink produces greater propensity for risk-acceptance and reliance on stereotyping to define a situation (Morgan 1977, 179-82).

Janis's attempt to suggest causal factors for the quality of decision making did not match his success in identifying its constituents, however. Two major inadequacies of groupthink syndrome as an explanation of the process quality have been highlighted. The first inadequacy concerns the coherence of the theory. Jeanne Longley and Dean Pruitt have questioned the causal link proposed by Janis, noting that the eight symptoms of groupthink identified by Janis "appear to be a loose bag of partially related ideas" (Longley and Pruitt 1980, 80). Longley and Pruitt also find that while Janis assumed that cohesiveness interact with other variables (insulation from other groups, directive leadership, and/or lack of appraisal procedures) to determine the likelihood of groupthink, such an interaction is entirely unclear. At the same time, Glyne Whyte makes the point that "concurrency seeking," the main theme of groupthink, generally occurs in decision-making and is not limited to groups making defective decision processes, because "the task, after all, of a decision-making group is to produce consensus from the initial preferences of its members" (Whyte 1989, 41).

The second inadequacy concerns the empirical validity of the theory. Groupthink as a defective decision-making may occur in situations where only a limited number of antecedents can be observed (Raven 1974; Longley and Pruitt 1980; Schafer and Crichlow 1996; 't Hart 1998). Bertram Raven, for example, has re-examined one of Janis's cases – the performance of President Nixon's advisory group leading to the Watergate cover-up – only to find that what resulted in the defective decision-making, in terms of acceleration of riskiness and the adoption of extreme measures, was not the cohesiveness of the group as Janis suggested but rather its division between two competing factions (Raven 1974). Using a quantitative method, Schafer and Crichlow have investigated the same nineteen case studies examined by Herek, Janis, and Huth (1987) and have found that several factors

anticipated by Janis as important antecedent variables, such as recent failure and group homogeneity, do not correlate with defective decision making (Schafer and Crichlow 1996). Other studies suggest that groupthink may not be present even when most of the antecedent conditions exist. Testing groupthink theory in a different context – a case of jury deliberations – Chris Neck and Gregory Moorhead have found that while many of the major elements of groupthink were present, including the primary condition of a highly cohesive group, defective decision-making was avoided due to the establishment of methodical decision-making procedures (Neck and Moorhead 1992). Thus, as Haney correctly observes, “if groupthink is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the presence of decision-making malfunctions, then the nature of the causal relationship between them would be quite unclear” (Haney 1995, 108). Further complicating the causal relationship is that the same group of policy makers might engage in a defective decision making at some point of time (probably falling victim of groupthink), but do not do so at another (for example, the different performances of the John Kennedy administration in the Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and those of Golda Meir’s government in the War of Attrition 1969-70 and in the October War 1973). If this is the case, the proposed independent variable (groupthink) is unable to account for variations in the dependent variable (the quality of decision-making).

Organizational Explanation

Other scholars did not generally differ on the constituents of the process quality. However, they attempted to offer a more nuanced explanation of the quality of decision-making process by employing the organizational approach which would avoid the aforementioned disadvantages of groupthink while equally utilizing its advantages – Janis’s

proposition about the impact of the group structure on its performance. Richard Johnson has attempted to explore how US presidents organize their advisory groups for general policy-making and the impact that this might have on policy outcomes. He identified three patterns of presidential management: the formalistic (hierarchical structure that channels already-screened information to the president); the competitive (encourages open discussion among advisers to produce creative alternatives); and the collegial (establishes a team of colleagues who would work together). Johnson concluded by suggesting that the shortcomings identified with each pattern, which might in turn affect the policy outcomes, could be reduced by modifications borrowing the advantages of each of the three patterns (Johnson 1974, 237-39).

Johnson's work had inspired further research on how the way US presidents have organized the White House for policy making might affect the decision-making process. Alexander George has borrowed Johnson's patterns in such an attempt, but asserted that improving decision-making systems go beyond inserting modifications to involve multiple advocacy and the role of "devil's advocate" which are "recommended to widen the range of information, options, and judgment available to the president before he makes his decisions" (George 1980, 165-66). Multiple advocacy structure allows multiple advisers to present different points of view and policy options (George 1972). It would, George argued, maintain the value of disagreement (usually lost in highly-centralized systems) but avoids the dysfunctional effects of competitive internal processes through proper regulation by ensuring that advocates roughly have the same degree of influence and competence, under an institutionalized role of a "custodian" whose role is to manage the process (George 1980, 192-94). By illuminating the problem under discussion, this system would enhance the ability of the group to perform the above-noted five critical procedural tasks that George

identified as likely to increase the effectiveness of the decision-making process. Likewise, John Burke and Fred Greenstein examined the influence of advisory groups as well as personal properties of the presidents and the political environments in two US presidential decisions on Vietnam by Presidents Dwight Eisenhower in 1954 and Lyndon Johnson in 1964-65. They found that the organization of advising has the primary impact on the policy process, but the president's personal capacity and the political climate might also affect the process (Burke and Greenstein 1989, 274-300).

Another line of the organizational argument inquires how different "decision units" influence foreign policy behavior. Charles Hermann has proposed that "variation in the decision structure frequently alters the likely decision process" (C. Hermann 1978, 71). Hermann argued that changes in decision structures, i.e., physical size, power distribution, and member role, have an impact on decision processes in such a way to affect behavior (C. Hermann 1978, 101). This research has identified three different types of ultimate decision units: "predominant leaders," "single group," and "multiple autonomous groups" (M. Hermann, C. Hermann, and Hagan 1987). Empirical research demonstrated that self-contained units will engage in more extreme behavior than externally influenceable units and that single group units will show more extreme behavior than those comprised of multiple autonomous actors (M. Hermann and C. Hermann 1989, 361). Notably, Janis had eventually come to join the organizational approach at least partially in his *Crucial Decisions*. His aim was to answer two fundamental questions: (1) why leaders make "avoidable errors" that result in faulty decisions; and (2) how the management of policy-making groups can prevent these errors or at least keep them to a minimum? His answer to the first question was that decision-makers might confront a number of constraints (e.g., perplexing complexity of the issue, the need to maintain power, and strong personal motives) that can obstruct "vigilant

problem solving” (Janis 1989, 139-65). Drawing on this concept of decision-making, Janis identified, as an answer to the second question, a number of suggestions about how leaders can manage or structure the decision-making process to make it more effective (Janis 1989, 231-64).

However, the most elaborate attempt to establish the relationship between decision structures and the decision-making process was probably that of Patrick Haney (1995; 1997). He advanced an explicit merging of the two approaches of “structure” and “process” by bringing an institutional perspective to see how the structures established by leaders to manage a foreign policy crisis can have discernable effects on the decision-making process, because “it is one thing to suggest that the organization of a policymaking group might have an effect; [but] it is another to be able to specify what type of effects foreign policy structures might have on decision making” (Haney 1995, 112). Drawing directly from earlier research (Johnson 1974; George 1980; Herek, Janis, and Huth 1987; Janis 1982 and 1989; and Janis and Mann 1977), Haney applied his propositions to nine cases of crisis decision-making by five US presidents, as noted earlier.

Sound as it might appear, the organizational argument suffers from three serious problems. First, it is limited to a number of Western democracies where highly institutionalized settings of the government exist. Scholars have acknowledged this limit (C. Hermann 1978, 90; Neack, Hey, and Haney 1995, 85) but proposed no remedy. Second, the explanatory power of the organizational argument is questionable; in other words, the independent variable it proposes (structure of the decision group) has a small effect on the phenomenon under question (decision process). In fact, Haney’s propositions did not find high empirical support, and he makes such a bold statement in his concluding chapter: “there is no obvious, direct relationship between a particular advisory structure and the decision

process that results. The management models do not seem to have predictable results; nor do they have inherent advantages” (Haney 1997, 125). For example, why might a group of the same structure perform the procedural tasks quite poorly at one point, and perform these procedures in a better way during the deliberations over other issues? An illustrative example is the decisions made by the Johnson administration in the Tonkin Gulf crisis of 1964 (escalating the war in Vietnam) and in the Tet Offensive crisis of 1968 (declaring a partial halt of the bombing and inviting Hanoi to negotiations). The Johnson administration had maintained a structure of a formalistic-collegial mix throughout, but its performances in these two crises varied considerably to such an extent that the former is commonly cited as among the worst examples of decision-making, and the other is regarded as a thorough and wise decision process (Downes 2008; Schandler 1977, 320-50).

Third, it is doubtful that the organizational structure of the decision group is a “cause” in itself of the quality of the decision-making process. If leaders set up and change different management structures, what are their motives for doing so? Indeed, references were made to factors that affect the structure of decision groups. Charles Hermann writes: “these decision structures can vary as a result of numerous factors, including culture and tradition, type of problem, change in regime, and stage of the decision process” (C. Hermann 1978, 71). Similarly, Haney observes that “the decision-making process that emerges in each case is a result of more than just the management model – it is a combination of people, structures, and contexts” (Haney 1997, 125). Nonetheless, these acknowledgments were not matched by a serious effort to explore the likely possibility that situational contexts and individual leaders are the factors *causing* how decision-making groups are structured and managed. The next section is devoted to offer an alternative explanation of the quality of the decision-making process.

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion Explanations

As the foregoing review of the literature suggests, explanations provided thus far of the equality of the decision-making process – democratic institutions, groupthink, and organizational structure explanations – are unsatisfactory. What, then, accounts for variations in the quality of the process? I offer two major explanatory propositions along the dimensions of threat environment as drawn from the balance-of-power theory. A secondary factor that influences variance in the process quality is the cohesion of the leadership group. This section proceeds as follows. First, it summarizes the fundamentals of the balance-of-power theory. Second, it situates the threat environment argument within the balance-of-power literature. Finally, it outlines the group cohesiveness perspective, and proposes its addition to the threat environment explanation in a relatively parsimonious fashion.

Summary of the Balance-of-Power Theory

The balance of power is one of the oldest and most influential ideas in the study of international relations. It essentially concerns the perennial pursuit of power by individual states and the resulting struggle to *balance* against each other's power. The term "balance of power" may refer to several different meanings;* generally, however, it is used to imply either (1) an actual distribution of power; (2) an ideal or approximately equal distribution of power; or (3) a state policy aimed at a particular distribution of power (Morgenthau and Thompson 1985, 187n; Claude 1962, 13-25; Levy 2004, 29). Historians have traced the

* For example, Martin Wight (Butterfield and Wight 1966, 151) has identified nine distinct meanings of the "balance of power": (1) an eventual distribution of power; (2) the principle that power ought to be evenly distributed; (3) the existing distribution of power. Hence, any possible distribution of power; (4) the principle of equal aggrandizement of the great powers at the expense of the weak; (5) the principle that our side ought to have a margin of strength in order to avert the danger of power becoming unevenly distributed; (6) (when governed by the verb 'to hold'): a special role in maintaining an even distribution of power; (7) (when governed by the verb 'to hold'): a special advantage in the existing distribution of power; (8) predominance; and (9) an inherent tendency of international politics to produce an even distribution of power.

theory and practice of the balance-of-power in European interstate system in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Gulick 1955; Kissinger 1994); others have attempted to go back as far as ancient Greece and Rome to apply the concept, even though this latter attempt has increasingly been challenged recently (Sheehan 1996; Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth 2007).

However, it was not until the emergence of the realist theory of international relations that the balance-of-power concept has been synthesized as an analytical construction that explains both states' behavior and the resulting patterns of international outcomes. In this sense, the balance-of-power theory shares the core assumptions of realism: the system is anarchic without a superior authority to regulate disputes; the key actors are unitary states; states seek maximization of power or security; and they act rationally in pursuance of these goals (Morgenthau and Thompson 1985, 192-97; Waltz 1979, 118; Levy 2004, 31). More to the point, the primary aim of all states is fixed – their own survival – and they pursue uniformly conflictual goals for the similar systemic constraints on each state rather than each state's internal composition. States, according to Kenneth Waltz, “at a minimum, seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination” (Waltz 1979, 118).

When explaining states' behavior, balance-of-power theorists propose that a secondary goal pursued for the higher-order aim of survival, that is the prevention of hegemony – a situation in which a single state or a group of states has sufficient power to overwhelm the rest of states in the system (Organski 1968, 274; Levy 2004, 32). To prevent a potential hegemon from dominating the system (that is to address an actual distribution of power), states engage in balancing behavior (that is a state's policy aimed at a particular distribution of power), in order to restore the system's equilibrium (that is an ideal or approximately equal distribution of power). Balancing behavior may work in two ways:

external balancing and internal balancing. In other words, as Hans Morgenthau succinctly puts it, a balancing process can be carried on “either by eliminating the weight of the heavier scale or by increasing the weight of the lighter one” (Morgenthau and Thompson 1985, 198). External balancing primarily involves the formation of alliances to counter the potential hegemon, but it might also include compensations (by seizing territory, for example), setting up buffer zones (a weak state between two powers), dividing the counter coalition, intervention, and, if necessary, war. Internal balancing refers to mobilizing domestic resources through armaments, building economic capabilities and industrial foundations of military strength, and the emulation of successful practices of others (Morgenthau and Thompson 1985, 198-206; Organski 1968, 276-79; Waltz 1979, 118 and 168; Mearsheimer 2001, 157; Levy 2004, 35).

These balancing behaviors or “the uncoordinated actions of states” (Waltz 1979, 122) are the explanatory of the resulting pattern of international outcomes. Because balancing effort is made against any potential domination, “sustained hegemonies rarely if ever arise in multistate system” (Levy 2004, 35). Balance-of-power theorists, however, differ on the link between balancing behavior and outcomes. Defensive realists argue that the balance is being made deliberately. States want to enhance their security without threatening others, and thus they seek only “appropriate amount of power,” for fear of provoking a hostile coalition (Van Evera, 1998). Others argue that even if all states seek to maximize their power, balances of power will result. Balances occur in an unregulated way (Organski 1968, 280; Claude 1962, 21), namely, “whether some or all states consciously aim to establish and maintain a balance, whether some or all states aim for universal domination” (Waltz 1979, 119). Though having the goal of preventing hegemony, states do not intentionally limit their own power for the

sake of the system; a state's policy to maintain the balance is not ends but means to preserve its own security (Levy 2004, 32-34).

Threat Environment and the Quality of the Decision-Making Process

The balance-of-power theory, as noted earlier, depicts two types of balancing behavior: external (alliance formation, compensations, buffer zones, divide and rule, intervention, and war), and internal (armaments, building capabilities, and emulating successful practices). Empirical literature, however, has paid more attention to external balancing factors (Levy 1981; Morgenthau and Thompson 1985; Walt 1987; Christensen and Snyder 1990; Layne 2006), and less to internal balancing factors (Posen 1984; Resende-Santos 1996; Brawley 2004) with the exception of the factor of armaments which is discussed in the large body of arms-race literature. Even less attention has been paid to an important form of internal balancing, namely improving the decision-making process.

The factor of decision-making as internal balancing is not as foreign to the balance-of-power theory as one might first imagine. Identifying eight different implications of the balance-of-power, Ernest Hass highlights: "In the formulation of the balance of power as a system of political organization and guide to policy-making, emphasis is firmly thrown on conscious and deliberate behavior and decision-making" (Hass 1953a, 455). Hass has subsequently elaborated on this idea by specifying some operational assumptions underlying the balance-of-power as a guide to policy-making. Among these assumptions are the requirements of flexibility and vigilance:

Flexibility ... calls for a number of qualities in the mechanics of government. Decision-making must be rapid if not instantaneous upon the receipt of intelligence reports containing news upsetting previous planning. Furthermore it must be secret in order to keep the enemy in ignorance of the adjustments ... [also] Writers on the balance of power are

unanimous in urging the need for “eternal vigilance” in external affairs. Preserving the balance of power calls for incessant attention to all shifts of power everywhere and the continuous evaluation of these shifts with respect to the power position of the home state. Operationally, therefore, a premium is put on intelligence and analysis of intelligence reports (Hass 1953b, 374-75).

In short, states may involve in balancing behavior through the adoption of more efficient decision-making procedures. Waltz might have been less explicit on the decision-making factor but it is still implied in his description of internal balancing efforts that may include “moves to increase economic capability, to increase military strength, to *develop clever strategies*” (Waltz 1979, 118, emphasis added). But, of course, decision-making is substantially different from other forms of internal balancing. Similar to the propositions of Barry Posen in his seminal work, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, that states might “balance” qualitatively as much as they balance materially by arming or forming alliances as (Posen 1984, 75), improving the decision-making process is conceived of here as a qualitative form of internal balancing.

Empirical research examining the practice of internal balancing in historical cases equally refers to elements of decision-making, though the latter have not been labeled as such. For example, in reaction to Assyria’s expansionism in the seventeenth century BC, Stuart Kaufman and William Wohlforth explain, the kingdom of Urartu “fended off Assyria’s assaults in the north and developed its state institutions in part as an internal balancing” (Kaufman and Wohlforth 2004, 29). As evidence for internal balancing behavior, Richard Bittle cites the existence of political intelligence operating across Greece in the fifth century BC out of the Greek leaders’ desire to know what other states could do and intended to do (Bittle 2004, 50). Martin Wight has differed on tracing balancing behavior to the

ancient Greek civilization because one prerequisite for the emergence of a balance-of-power system, which is “a diplomatic system that provided them with a regular flow of information,” was absent in ancient Greece (Wight 1973, 86). Whether or not Hellenic city-states practiced balance-of-power policies, what is of interest here is that the above-noted elements of decision-making are understood as a form of internal balancing behavior. Finally, in an interesting comparative study of ancient China and early modern Europe, Victoria Tin-bor Hui refers, *inter alia*, to a state’s building of institutional capacity and meritocratic administration, that is compelled by international competition, as one form of internal balancing, though she uses instead the broader term “self-strengthening reforms” (Hui 2004, 181-82).

I draw on these insights of the balance-of-power theory to pursue the link between threats to a state’s security and the quality of its decision-making process. My argument is that, without prejudice to other forms of internal balancing, the leadership of a state facing a high-level threat environment may balance by improving the quality of the decision-making process. In other words, a high-level threat environment is a cause of a high-quality decision-making process, or vigilant information processing. A threat environment is comprised of actual threats and past experiences. On the one hand, when events pose a clear external threat to the state’s security, the political leadership tends to balance this threat. One way of doing this is for the leadership to take a close look at its objectives, alternatives and the available information. On the other hand, low or declining threats to a state’s security may produce poor information processing. Under circumstances representing a safe environment for the state’s security, the political leadership is inclined to react less vigorously and with fewer restraints; it would spend less effort investigating its aims, alternatives, and information of relevant courses of action towards the security situation. For example, serious threats to

Israel's security in 1948 and 1967 were the driving force behind the engagement of its government in a thorough process of consultations.

On the other hand, political and military disasters fresh in a state's memory are great promoters of balancing behavior (Posen 1984, 76-77). This is also valid with regards to vigilant information processing where historical experience matters. Under a rising threat, the tendency to contemplate the situation very carefully will be more definite in order to prevent another disaster that would substantially weaken the state politically and militarily. Conversely, a recent triumph may prompt the political leadership to react in overconfidence, and to draw on the past successful experience while giving little thinking to the different circumstances. A good example is the vigilant information processing by the Egyptian leadership prior to both the War of Attrition in 1969-70 and the October 1973 War; information processing in both cases was heavily influenced by the memoirs of the debacle of June 1967.

Perceptions of leaders might at times be a factor in, though not a determinant of, the decision-making process. In my view, more than perceptions are involved. That is because changes in the balance-of-power as conceived in this study – indicated by (a) sharp increases in the offensive capabilities of the adversary; (b) a disadvantageous balance of political and military alliances; and (c) an unfavorable political/military status quo – are hard for adversaries to avoid and would be supported by an objective reading of the available evidence.

Distinction should be made between the final overall recognition of the situation – which *follows* rather than *precedes* the decision-making process – and elements of perceptions/misperceptions that might be involved in the decision-making process but do not

determine it. For example, Jervis (1976, 409-24) prescribes to improve the decision-making tasks in order to avoid misperceptions. This tacitly implies that misperceptions have been the effect rather than the cause of the quality of the decision-making process. Finally, threat perceptions might be manipulated by leaders for political purposes – so-called “threat inflation.” Illustrative here are the cases of US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair on the post-September 11 war on Iraq (Kaufmann 2004; Doig and Phythian 2005).

It is my contention that the decision-making process is the medium through which rising threats (or imbalances of power) are transmitted into concrete actions or policies (to correct the imbalance). Thus, my argument contributes to the balance-of-power theory in two ways. First, it challenges the conventional view that the balance of power is about decisions and not decision-making. Indeed, there has been a long-running debate about whether the balance-of-power can account for the foreign policies of individual states. Waltz and a few other scholars argue that the balance-of-power is a theory about international politics not foreign policy, and differentiate between the structure of international system and its units (Waltz 1986; Peterson 1995; Waltz 1996), yet others argue that the balance-of-power can be used to explain states’ foreign policies because the latter is the mechanism through which the international outcome occurs (Walt 1987; Elman 1996; Christensen and Snyder 1990; Levy 2004: 35-37). Both sides, however, concur in that they attempt to make predictions about decisions and not decision-making (Elman 1996, 17). As Nicholas Spykman aptly writes, “political equilibrium is neither a gift of the gods nor an inherently stable condition. It results from the active intervention of man, from the operation of political forces” (Spykman 1942, 25). Randall Schweller had earlier attempted to fulfill this mission. He suggested that “[balancing] behaviors ... emerge through the medium of the political process; as such, they

are the product of competition and consensus building among elites” (Schweller 2006, 5). However, Schweller’s conception of the link between “the most necessary of necessary causes of balancing behavior,” that is elite consensus, and balancing behavior left open more questions than those it attempted to answer. Schweller argued that “when there is a consensus among policymaking elites to balance, the state will do so [and] where there is no elite consensus, the prediction is either underbalancing or some other nonbalancing option” (Schweller 2006, 47-48). This is not surprising. A more interesting endeavor would have been to search for factors contributing to such elite consensus/dissensus because stating that balancing will occur when the policy makers agree to balance is tautological.

Second, my argument bridges the artificial gap between “internal balancing” and “external balancing” efforts – a gap that does not exist in the real world. Balance-of-power theorists often cite the simultaneous occurrence of the two types of balancing behavior (Waltz 1979, 168; Walt 1991, 69; Vasquez 2003b, 91-2). Nonetheless, they hardly elaborate on the link between them. By demonstrating that it is through improving the quality of decision-making, as a form of internal balancing in itself, that the political leadership of a threatened state makes choices to balance the rise in security threat, the link between the two types of balancing behavior becomes clear. That is by no means to say that the decision-making process is the one single factor that explains balancing behavior and that the rest of balancing forms is the mere result of it. Rather, the point is that the quality of the decision-making process influences the undertaking of other internal and external balancing policies, such as increasing defense expenditures, forming alliances, and, if necessary, initiating wars.

Group Cohesion and the Quality of the Decision-Making Process

The variance in the quality of the decision-making process, I argued earlier, is primarily determined by changes in the threat environment: a highly threatening environment results in improving the quality of decision-making; and where there is a low-threat environment, the prediction is that a poor-quality decision-making is produced. However, there are cases in which states fail to balance against the security threat. I contend that whether the ultimate decision-making group is cohesive explains in part the quality of the decision-making process, but it assumes primacy when it comes to a balancing failure. Obviously, group cohesion is a domestic-level factor but this combination is necessary for making more determinate predictions of the quality of decision-making processes.

John Vasquez had been a strong advocate against adding auxiliary hypotheses that do not share the core assumptions of the paradigm to account for discrepant evidence. He viewed these additions such as Walt's theory of the "balance-of-threat" as rendering the realist paradigm, including the balance-of-power theory, "degenerative" in a Lakatosian sense (Vasquez 2003a, 25-35). More to the point, Colin Elman has identified three potential problems with adding unit-level variables to systemic explanations (loss of parsimony, assault on a core assumption, and producing a degenerating shift). At the same time, however, he maintains that:

If neorealists argue that unit-level variables are significant, none of the three potential problems that might be raised ... necessarily prevents such unit-level variables from being added to a neorealist model ... Inasmuch as the argument remains *primarily* systemic, the introduction of unit-level factors will not remove the theory from the neorealist research program" (Elman 1996, 40).

Elman then proposes four different situations that unit-level factors might be combined with and usefully seen as “dirtying up” a system-level argument: (1) if the systemic explanations are unable to make predictions of state behavior which is clearly influenced by domestic factors; (2) if systemic explanations makes an accurate account of state motives but unit-level factors are needed to determine the selection of a particular strategy to ensure state survival; (3) if cognitive factors affect the ways in which statesmen assess the most effective course of action; and (4) if bureaucratic factors influence either the selection of or the implementation of strategies even when the state identify systemic challenges. My argument would fit in the first situation.

At the same time, attempts to improve accuracy of the balance-of-power theory as a systemic explanation by incorporating domestic-level variables are by no means new. In addition to the above-noted study by Schweller in which he argued that competition and consensus-building among elites is the medium through which balancing behavior emerges, scholars have combined the insights provided by the balance-of-power theory with other variables factoring in military doctrine, organizational structure, and perceptions. Stephen Van Evera, for example, adds the “cult of the offensive” to explain the outbreak of World War I, arguing that “when the offense is strong, smaller shifts in ratios of forces between states create greater shifts in their relative capacity to conquer territory” (Van Evera 1985, 64). Also, Posen focuses “on how ... general [systemic] constraints and incentives combine with the unique situations of individual states to lead them to specific foreign or military policies” (Posen 1984, 35). Thus, he uses the organizational theory to explain a state’s adoption of a particular military doctrine when threat levels are low, but argues that the balance-of-power model would suffice when threat levels are high and war appears likely. Similarly, Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder incorporate perceptions of offensive-

defensive advantages to explain variations in the balancing behavior of European powers before World War I and II (Christensen and Snyder 1990, 138-39).

Now I turn to outlining the perspective of group cohesion as an explanation of the quality of the decision-making process. Group cohesion refers to “the resultant of all forces acting on the members to remain in the group” (Festinger 1950, 274). It is based on interpersonal liking among its members and the latter’s identification with the group as a unit (Cartwright 1968, 92-95; Zander 1979, 433). As far as policy making is concerned, cohesion of the decision-making group concerns the extent to which the political leadership has established itself as a largely unified unit. Group cohesion does not mean political unanimity or the absence of disagreements among the group members. All groups exhibit normal differences arising from various sources. The key to group cohesion is that members accept each other as partners and recognize the unity of the group. The group will be incohesive when it is impaired by consistent and divisive disagreements over ideological divisions, party factions, bureaucratic interests, or personal rivalries (Schafer and Crichlow 2002 Schweller 2006, 54-55).

As for the relationship between threat environment and group cohesion, the evidence is mixed: high threats have usually been seen as causes for group cohesion, but they might as well be causes of group disintegration. Group cohesion could also be independent of the threat environment. Reviewing the literature on conflict and group cohesion, Arthur Stein (1976, 165) concludes that there are many pre-conditions for the threat to cause group cohesion: “The group needs to have been an ongoing one with some pre-existing cohesion or consensus, and to have a leadership that can authoritatively enforce cohesion (especially if all the members of the group do not feel the threat). The group must be able to deal with the external conflict, and to provide emotional comfort and support to its members.”

I argue that a cohesive decision group is more likely to perform a high-quality decision-making process than an incohesive group. Members of a cohesive group will act in a cooperative manner equally emphasizing an acceptance of the established mechanisms for decision, coordination and teamwork. Thus, the group will essentially constitute a forum at which a common undertaking is possible. On the other hand, an incohesive leadership group prevents the minimal teamwork required for the undertaking of a decent decision-making process. Some members, especially those at the top of political and military echelons, will want to monopolize making decisions, considering that dealing with the security situation is their exclusive domain for their experience or authority, either real or perceived. Also, some members, especially within alliances, will not see (or cease to see) the threat as common to the group as a whole, and start making the distinction between “their” interests and “ours.” Arab leaderships on the eve of the June 1967 War is a telling example of the way incohesive groups work.

In a related study, Schweller had proposed that the degree to which a state’s elites are cohesive or fragmented would influence the state’s balancing behavior. In particular, “when elites are fragmented, it is highly unlikely that the state will be able to construct a coherent and effective balancing strategy” (Schweller 2006, 55). This explanation overlaps with my own since the decision-making group is, by definition, part of a state’s political elites. But it differs from my argument in that Schweller’s “elite cohesion” is conceived as a direct cause of the undertaking of balancing actions, while I take “group cohesion” as contributing to decision-making that in turn leads to such undertaking. Moreover, Schweller and I are looking at two different levels of analysis; “elite cohesion,” along with elite consensus, social cohesion, and government/regime vulnerability, is only part of a larger mechanism of state coherence, while I look primarily at the ultimate decision-making group.

The argument presented here – that group cohesion contributes to a high-quality decision-making process – appears to contradict Janis’s claim that group cohesion leads to defective decision-making. In his view, as discussed above, members of a cohesive group seek concurrence among themselves to an extent that they fail to perform the tasks of vigilant information processing in making decisions. However, a considerable amount of research investigating the effect of group cohesion on group performance corroborates the opposite claim. Extensive reviews of the literature on group cohesiveness and performance provided in Hare (1976), Raven and Rubin (1976), Nixon (1979), and Shaw (1981) reveal that, in contrary to what Janis and a few other psychologists had suggested, the proposition that cohesive groups are more likely to make a better performance and achieve their goals than less cohesive groups finds high support in the empirical research. In this regard, there are two notable examples. Kurt Back has designed an experiment to explore the effects of group cohesiveness on pressures toward uniformity. His main hypothesis, that group cohesiveness increases pressures on members to conform, proved valid and thus apparently concurs with Janis’s proposition. However, the patterns of group discussions that Back suggests are quite different. He finds that “low cohesive groups react to realization of difference by withdrawing from the situation, while high cohesive groups tend to eliminate the difference,” that is, Back explains, not because members suppress opposition but because they engage in thorough discussions as members give serious consideration to each other’s position (Back 1951, 16). The second example is the above-mentioned study by Raven in which he has re-examined the performance of President Nixon’s advisory group leading to the Watergate fiasco. Reviewing the transcripts of the White House tapes and the hearings of the Senate Select Committee and the House Judiciary Committee, Raven finds that Nixon’s advisory group did not share a fundamental to group cohesion, i.e., a high level of *esprit de*

corps, and was rather divided between at least two competing factions: Haldeman/Ehrlichman/Colson and Mitchell/Dean. Symptoms of defective decision-making, in terms of acceleration of riskiness and the reduction of restraint against extreme measures, were observed but are accounted for, Raven suggests, by the contention between the competing factions (Raven 1974, 318).

Conclusion

What does it mean to have a high-quality decision-making process? And what causes variation in the quality of decision-making? This chapter has sought to answer these two questions through an exploration of groupthink and organizational structure approaches. On the one hand, these approaches offer sound standards to measure the quality of the process, though in doing so they had two shortcomings: falling short of examining case-studies other than US decisions, and of establishing causality between these standards and policy outcomes. On the other hand, in their attempt to offer an explanation of the determinants of the quality of the process, these two approaches suffer from several shortcomings: incoherence and doubtful external validity of the theory (groupthink); and limited scope, weak explanatory power, and questionable causality (organizational structure). I have proposed an alternative explanation of the quality of the decision-making process drawing on insights from the balance-of-power theory and group dynamics, and argue that when external environment poses a serious threat to a state's security and when its leadership is cohesive, it is likely its leaders will engage in a high-quality decision-making process. The next chapter presents the methodology used to apply this argument. It defines the variables, hypotheses, and the unit of analysis, and then it turns to elaborate on the employed methods, case-study selection, and case study materials.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Variables

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable of interest here is war outcomes. David Singer and Melvin Small define interstate war as a “conflict involving at least one member of interstate system on each side of the war, resulting in a total of 1000 or more battle deaths. Thresholds for individual nations’ participation are at least 100 battle deaths or at least 1,000 troops in active combat” (Singer and Small 1972, 381). As for war outcomes, Stam had offered the following definition:

The general coding rule is such that the state that benefits in the new territorial status quo after the war is the winner while states that seek to change the status quo and prove unable to do so are coded as losers. In a draw, both sides formally agree to cease fighting in an internationally recognized and binding treaty (Stam 1996, 75-76).

Stam’s definition is inadequate in two ways. First, it presupposes that the war is over a territorial dispute, which is not necessarily the case. Wars may be fought over causes such as regime change, disturbing a political stalemate, deterrence, as well as territory. Second, a mere agreement by the parties to cease fighting is no indicator of war outcome either it is draw, victory, or defeat. Instead, this study adopts the subtler definition offered by Daniel Johnes, Stuart Bremer and David Singer (1996). Consistent with Clausewitz’s understanding of victory as achieving the objective of the war as “an act of violence intended to compel our

opponent to fulfill our will” (Leonard 1967, 41), Jones, Bremer and Singer define victory as follows:

The favorable alternation of the status quo by one state through the use of militarized action which imposes defeat upon the opponent. It denotes the attainment of tangible piece of territory, the significant change in an adversary’s foreign policy, or the successful downfall of another state’s political regime by force. A victory can be identified whenever one or more state(s) are able to secure a favorable change through the application of successful military action which directly leads to a forced alternation of the pre-dispute status quo (Jones *et al.* 1996, 179-80).

On the other hand, Jones, Bremer and Singer define stalemate as follows:

A stalemate is defined by the lack of any decisive changes in the pre-dispute status quo and is identified when the outcome does not favor either side in the dispute. Stalemates usually are produced when there was no alternation of the status quo. However, they can occur even if the status quo has changed so long as net balance results in a draw (Jones *et al.* 1996, 197-180).

This study includes cases of war ending in draws or stalemates. Following Desch (2002), there is neither theoretical nor empirical rationale for the exclusion of these cases by the advocates of democratic victory (Reiter and Stam 2002).

Independent Variable

The independent variable is the quality of the decision-making process. It is widely recognized that a high quality decision making, or vigilant information processing, is more likely to produce better outcomes. This intuitive assumption has also been supported by empirical evidence (Janis 1982; Herek *et al.* 1987; Schafer and Crichlow 2002). To be sure, the literature has identified several major criteria that constitute high quality decision-making (Jervis 1976, 410-24; Janis and Mann 1977, 11; George 1980, 10; Stein 1980, 44-50; Haney

1997, 48). Nevertheless, I elect four procedural tasks that are thought to be comprehensive enough to explain variation in war outcomes: survey of objectives, survey of alternatives, information search, and information processing, as follows:

- 1) Survey of Objectives: The decision-making group discusses its objectives and the nature of its goals and values in a particular situation before deciding on a course of action. The clarity of objectives and ensuring that the employed means would achieve these objectives is a central component of the quality of decision-making.
- 2) Survey of Alternatives: The group thoroughly canvasses a wide range of alternative courses of action, and calculates whether it knows about the costs and risks of negative consequences, as well as the positive consequences, that would flow from each alternative.
- 3) Information Search: The group obtains available information necessary for critically evaluating the preferred course of action and other alternatives. This includes contacting experts (professionals, the mass media, and outside critics) whose knowledge could be particularly useful.
- 4) Information Processing: The group shows a definite tendency to accept new information from experts even when it does not support the preferred course of action. Information processing is efficient when the policymakers revise their estimates and positions after receiving reliable information challenging the prevailing assumptions.

To measure the decision-makers' performance of these procedural tasks, I draw directly upon Haney (1997) in his method of measurement of the decision process. Each task is coded along a continuum where two or three recognitions of the task correspond with the task being performed "well," and four or more recognitions of the task correspond with the

task being performed “very well.” On the other hand, two or three omissions of the task correspond with the task being performed “poorly,” and four or more omissions of the task correspond with the task being performed “very poorly.” A neutral coding is assigned if the case studies report only one omission or recognition of the task, while no coding is assigned if the case study material is insufficient to draw credible inferences about the decision process (Haney 1997, 47-8).

Antecedent Variables

The two antecedent variables of the above independent variable are the threat environment and the group cohesion. First, the threat environment is measured along two factors: threat level and past experience. A high level of threat to a state security is indicated by: (a) increases in the offensive capabilities of the adversary through a mobilization of forces or a procurement of offensive weaponry; (b) a disadvantageous balance of alliances that implies a lack of allies or an obvious asymmetry of power between each party’s allies favoring the adversary; and (c) an unfavorable political/military status quo such as lacking strategic depth relative to, or a prolonged occupation of strategic territory by, the adversary. Notably, this definition refers to sharp and adverse changes in the external security environment not to a constant situation; otherwise, the weaker party in a conflict would have a perpetual high-level security threat. On the other hand, a past experience of failure means the recent occurrence of a major military defeat on the battlefield or a political fiasco in the international arena demonstrating in no ambiguous terms the wrongness of strategic assessments made during this earlier episode.

Second, group cohesion refers to “the resultant of all forces acting on the members to remain in the group” (Festinger 1950, 274). It is based on interpersonal liking among its

members and the latter's identification with the group as a unit (Cartwright 1968, 92-5; Zander 1979, 433). As far as policy making is concerned, cohesion of the decision-making group concerns the extent to which the political leadership has established itself as a largely unified unit. Group cohesion does not mean political unanimity or the absence of disagreements among the group members. All groups exhibit normal differences arising from various sources. The key to group cohesion is that members accept each other as partners and recognize the unity of the group. Disagreements will be dangerous and the group will be incohesive when it is impaired by consistent and divisive disagreements over ideological divisions, party factions, bureaucratic interests, or personal rivalries (Schafer and Crichlow 2002; Schweller 2006, 54-5).

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The higher the level of the threat a state is facing and the more severe the last experience, the greater the ability of decision-makers to perform the tasks of the quality of the decision-making process.

Hypothesis 2: The more cohesive the decision-making group is, the greater the ability of decision-makers to perform the tasks of the quality of the decision-making process.

Hypothesis 3: The better the performance of the tasks of the quality of the decision-making process by the state leadership, the more favorable the war outcome.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the ultimate decision-making group in foreign and military affairs. I draw on the concept of the “ultimate decision unit” developed by Margaret Hermann, Charles Hermann and Joe Hagan (1987) as these actors at the apex of the foreign policy making in a government or ruling party with both the ability to commit the government resources and the authority or power to make a decision that cannot be readily reversed (M. Hermann, C. Hermann, and Hagan 1987, 309-11). The composition of ultimate decision units, however, varies with time and issue (Hermann and Hermann 1989, 363). As far as decisions about war and military affairs in general are concerned, this unit consists of the highest political authority (including the president or prime minister, ministers of defense and foreign affairs), top military commanders, and the chiefs of intelligence services.

In order to capture a fuller picture of the decision-making process impact on the war outcome, as well as for practical reasons, the examination of the decision-making by this group includes but is not limited to political decisions. Rather, it involves all decisions about war that are discussed and made by the ultimate decision unit. Thus, it essentially covers decisions at the political and strategic levels as opposed to operational and tactical levels (Millett, Murray, and Watman 1988, 1-30; Downes 2007, 7-8).*

At the same time, given that the dependent variable in this study is war outcome and not the occurrence of war or its termination, the examination of the decision-making process is exclusive to *these decisions relevant to the course of the war*. Policymakers may make

* Political and strategic levels are close but distinct. Alexander Downes (2007, 7-8) identifies the political level as “the wisdom with which civilian elites in a nation choose to employ the military instrument to achieve grand strategic objectives or national interests.” Drawing on Millett, Murray, and Watman (1988), Downes defines the strategic level as the one that “concerns how to use various campaigns and operations to achieve the political objective of the war.”

decisions prior to or during the war that might affect the war occurrence or termination, but not necessarily its course or outcome. For example, in the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars, war participants made decisions to accept cease-fire proposals. However, while the cease-fire acceptance decisions in 1967 were merely acknowledgments of the already realized war outcome, those decisions in 1973 had a decisive impact on how the war actually ended. Here, the guiding line is Ranan Kuperman's notion of "decision episode." In Ranan's account, "a decision episode is defined as a period when a specific problem was discussed and contemplated" (Kuperman 2006, 539). Accordingly, this study identifies the beginnings of decision-making processes on a case-by-case basis depending on when the problem (either war initiation or a particular prosecution of the war) was first being raised and discussed.

Methods

This study draws on the case-study method which affords the opportunity to test the competing explanations of war outcomes offered by democratic victory theory and my argument. On the one hand, I test the "selection-effects" argument by examining its two causal mechanisms (outlined above in Chapter One) against case-study evidence. As Arthur Stinchcombe observes, "by eliminating the most likely theory, we increase the credibility of our theory much more than we do by eliminating alternatives at random by checking consequences of our theory without thinking" (Stinchcombe 1968, 25). Indeed, case study approach might be at the disadvantage as compared to large-*N* method with regards to theory-testing external validity since single case studies cannot offer determinate predictions on within-case variation to reject a hypothesis, and are always less representative of the

population of interests than the cross-case approach (George 1979, 53 and 58; Gerring 2007, 40-43). However, these risks are checked through the use of the counterfactual method and the application of a careful procedure of case-selection as explained below.

On the other hand, I use a multi-case comparison of decision-making cases to explore the validity of the alternative explanation this study proposes. For this purpose, the case study approach offers certain advantages which are the better elucidation on the causal relationships between variables and the depth of analysis exploiting the background knowledge of the historical cases (George 1979, 58-59; King, Keohane and Verba 1994, 45; Gerring 2007, 43-55). Because “the intensive comparative analysis of a few cases may be more promising than a more superficial statistical analysis of so many cases (Lijphart 1971, 685), the use of case study helps avoid the inadequacy of the existing literature in failing to explain the decision-making processes both in democracies and non-democracies.

Second, I use the process-tracing method to examine the proposed explanatory factors and the war outcome in each case study. Thus, the use of process tracing would help achieve two important aims: (1) to establish the causal mechanisms between threat environment and group cohesion, the quality of the decision-making process, and the war outcomes in supplementary of the case study research (Gerring 2007, 177); and (2) to “overcome the dilemmas of small-*n* research by providing more observation to the implications of a theory” (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, 227). Process-tracing constitutes an exploration of chain of events in a process that links initial conditions to outcomes through multiple type of evidence (Gerring 2007, 172-85). The link between the independent variables and the dependent variable is found in the sequence and structure of the process steps; each of these steps should be given observable evidence by the investigator (Van Evera 1997, 64-66; King, Keohane and Verba 1994, 226-28). The use of this method closely

fits the purpose of this study in examining decision-making processes, for which Alexander George and Timothy McKeown offer process-tracing in which the researcher look closely at “the decision process by which various initial conditions are translated into outcomes” (George and McKeown 1985).

Finally, I look at the relationship between the quality of the decision-making process and war outcomes using counterfactual analysis. The goal of employing this method is twofold. The first is to strengthen and complement the “factual” causal argument that the case studies present. Counterfactuals are thought experiments that speculate what might or could have happened in a “possible world” other than the actual world if the antecedent was not present or operated in a different way – in this study, exploring the extent to which the war outcome could have changed had the decision-makers opted for different choices. When combined with “factual” causal analysis, counterfactuals help determine the sensitivity of outcomes to variation in the *explanans* because they can identify “the range of values at which [key variables] will have the most impact on the outcome (Lebow 2000, 562), and offer a fuller justification of causal inferences by showing “that in each case the proposed causes indeed produced the effects attributed to them” (Fearon 1991, 181). By so doing, the researcher checks the general risk in the case study method of a “selective reconstruction of the event to support a favorable theory” (Odell 2001, 164).

The second goal is to demonstrate the significance of the quality of the decision-making process as relative to other causes of military victory. Since a detailed examination of all other admitted causes (national material power, weapons technology, military strategy, human capital, civil-military relations, and national culture) is beyond the scope of this study, the use of counterfactuals to show the relative significance of the proposed cause is a natural tool (Weber 1949, 164; Fearon 1991, 177n; Goertz and Levy 2007, 16).

Approximating *ceteris paribus*, the researcher in the counterfactual analysis “tries to imagine another (not actual) case in which the presumed causal agent is absent but everything else that is relevant is identical” (Fearon 1991, 173), and thus can reasonably tell which factor (s) were more important and which were less so.

Counterfactuals, however, cannot in themselves “offer proof” (Jervis 1996, 310), and they “like any historical argument, are only as compelling as the logic and ‘evidence’ offered by the researcher to substantiate the links between the hypothesized antecedent and its expected consequences” (Lebow 2000, 556). Thus, in order to prevent “anything-goes subjectivism” in counterfactuals (Tetlock and Belkin 1996, 16-17), the literature offers criteria for their application that emphasize clarity, logical consistency of connecting principles (cotenable rule), consistency with historical facts (minimal rewrite rule), and consistency with well-established theoretical laws (distinct from the hypothesis being tested) (Tetlock and Belkin 1996, 16-31; Fearon 1991, 176 and 189-194; Lebow 2000, 581-85; Gerring 2001, 221-22). Following these criteria, I make my argument by answering three questions: How could this counterfactual have changed the war outcome? Why was this counterfactual possible? And how was this counterfactual possible?

Case Studies

Case Study Selection

The case studies are four Arab-Israeli wars: June 1967, Attrition 1969-70, October 1973, and July 2006. Table 1 illustrates the participants to and the outcomes of these wars.

Table 1. Arab-Israeli Wars: Participants and Outcomes

War	Participants	Outcome
June 1967	Israel vs. Egypt, Syria, and Jordan	Victory for Israel
Attrition 1969-70	Israel vs. Egypt	Stalemate
October 1973	Israel vs. Egypt and Syria	Stalemate
July 2006	Israel vs. Hezbollah	Victory for Hezbollah

These cases meet three important criteria. First, they exhibit a significant variance in the dependent variable with little, if any, variance in the alternative independent variable (George 1979, 55). Of these four cases, one was won by the democratic party (June 1967), two were draws or ended in stalemates (Attrition 1969-70 and October 1973), and one was won by the non-democratic party (July 2006). In particular, they were all fought between democracies and non-democracies, since Israel was democratic and the Arab side was non-democratic throughout. These wars present an easy case for democratic victory theory and a hard case for my argument. The selected cases favor democratic victory theory because they were only between democracies and non-democracies with no mixed alliances. At the same time, they represent a balanced number of democratic initiators and targets: in two cases the democratic side was the initiator (1967 and 2006), and in the other two it was the target (1969 and 1973).

To assign values of regime type and war outcomes, this study uses two data sets that are consistent with and utilized by much of the existing literature on democratic victory theory. On the one hand, it uses the definitions of the COW Project data set to measure the war outcome. The COW coding for the June 1967 War is victory for Israel, and a stalemate

in the War of Attrition 1969-70. However, the COW Project (and the bulk of the literature for that matter) mistakenly code Israel as the victor in the October 1973 War, and I hereby re-code this war outcome as stalemate as explained in greater detail in Chapter Six. At the same time, since the July 2006 War is yet to be included in the most updated version of the COW Project that stops at the year 1997, I code this war outcome as victory for Hezbollah following the COW Project criteria on war outcomes, and this coding is elaborated upon in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

On the other hand, this study uses the definitions of the POLITY IV Project data set, developed by Monty G. Marshal, Keith Jagers and their co-authors, to measure the level of democracy in a state. Using the POLITY IV indices, states that score 6 or higher are considered democracies; all other states are non-democracies.* However, POLICY IV Project does not consider the existence or trait of non-state actor polities (Marshal and Jagers *et al.* 2007, 1-2). Nevertheless, though technically a non-state actor, Hezbollah is conceived of in this study as a polity that is eligible for inclusion in this primarily state-actor analysis. In particular, “when a non-state, identity group is regionally concentrated and has mobilized to establish and/or control a regional authority structure, then that non-state polity could be coded if a reliable source of information on governance was available” (Monty Marshall, June 23, 2008, email message to author).

* Marshall *et al.* include measures of both institutional democracy and institutional autocracy: competitiveness of the selection process of a state’s chief executive, the openness of this process, the extent to which there are institutional constraints on a chief executive’s decision-making authority, the competitiveness of political participation within a state, and the regulations governing this participation. These measures are combined to create additive eleven-point scales (0-10) of each state’s democratic characteristics (DEMOC) and autocratic characteristics (AUTOC). The regime type value (POLITY) is derived by subtracting the AUTOC value from the DEMOC value ($DEMOC - AUTOC = POLITY$). POLITY value ranges from -10 (strongly autocratic) to +10 (strongly democratic). Composite POLITY values in the war years are as follows: 1967 (Israel, 9; Egypt, -7; Syria, -7; Jordan, -9); 1969 (Israel, 9; Egypt, -7); 1973 (Israel, 9; Egypt, -7; Syria, -9); 2006 (Israel, 10).

In this regard, Hezbollah fits quite well within the definition of states-within-states as one type of para-state entities introduced by Katarzyna Pełczyńska-Nałęcz *et al.*:

“States-within-states” [category] comprises regions that formally recognize the central government but in fact maintain a very high degree of independence. Such para-states do not seek international recognition. Their leaders formally declare adherence to the home state, but in practice establish their own norms and rules which are incompatible with those in force in the remaining part of the country. Even though they remain largely or completely beyond the control of the central authorities, they are tolerated by the latter for various reasons. Such “states-within-states” also have clearly defined institutions of power (Stanislowski 2008, 371).

Hezbollah challenges neither the legitimacy of the Lebanese state, nor the government’s authority; in fact, it participates as a political party in the coalition government. At the same time, Hezbollah runs an extensive social and economic network in Lebanon. The Party offers an array of services, mainly to its Shiite constituents but also to any other Lebanese, which include construction companies, hospitals, schools, dispensaries, and financing institutions (Norton 2007, 107-12). Therefore, it has an organizational apparatus that is closer to that of a government than to that of a political party. Hezbollah’s highest decision-making body, *Majlis al-Shura* (Consultative Council), is headed by the Secretary-General, and is comprised of the heads of secondary councils responsible for the organization’s military, social, political and judicial activities (Qassem 2005, 62-64). Hezbollah does not have a permanent population or defined territory *per se*, but it considers itself responsible for Lebanon’s Shiite community in particular and the whole Lebanese population in general and it freely operates within the borders of Lebanon. When it comes to security matters it is Hezbollah, not the Lebanese government, that has the final say. Finally,

Hezbollah not only engages in its own international relations, but also runs an organized armed force independent of that of the Lebanese state.

As far as Hezbollah's "regime type" is concerned, Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah maintains that "Hezbollah is a democratic movement" citing that he is elected "unlike Arab leaders who stay in power all their lives" (Shelah and Limor 2007, 142). This might be true with regards to the party's internal politics, but this is not so when it comes to Hezbollah as a state-like polity. Because "Hezbollah is actually a military force with a political wing" (Saad-Ghorayeb 2008), it still lacks at least two basics of a democracy; openness (Hezbollah persists to be a semi-clandestine organization), and public accountability (the party leaders are elected by mid-career party members and not by the population it claims to represent).*

Second, the selected cases might be seen as of limited representativeness since they all belong to a single regional conflict. However, as Richard Ned Lebow aptly put it, "Not all cases are equal. Some have greater visibility and impact because of their real world or theoretical consequences" (Lebow 2007, 88). Historians and political scientists alike agree that it was through Arab-Israeli wars that the modern Middle East was formed. The Middle East was and is one of the world's most war-prone regions – with far-reaching global implications. Equally, Israel's wars are "crucial" cases for the democratic victory theory in that they "have come to define, or at least to exemplify, a concept or theoretical outcome" (Gerring 2001, 219). The Jewish state is widely seen as a small democratic country that could secure outstanding military victories over superior enemies. Accordingly, Arab-Israeli wars appear to be typical of the democratic victory argument on how democracy helps states

* I apply POLITY IV criteria to the case of Hezbollah in 2006 and code its composite POLITY score as -4.

select and fight winnable wars. It is also worth noting that Israel (along with Britain and the United States) comprises approximately 56 percent of the cases and account for 75 percent of the results of democratic victory advocates (Desch 2002, 16-17). In addition, the origins, prosecution and consequences of the Arab-Israeli wars have contributed, probably more than any other regional conflict, to our understanding of domains such as political psychology, deterrence, crisis management, and asymmetrical conflict.

Third, the selected cases are different on three important variables other than the dependent variable and the proposed independent variables (Gerring 2007, 90):

- a) *Dyadic vs. Multilateral*: in two cases (1969 and 2006), the participants were dyads, while in the other two cases (1967 and 1973), multiple states participated.
- b) *General vs. Limited War*: in three cases (1969, 1973, and 2006) at least one participant employed limited-war strategies, while one (1967) was a general war.
- c) *State vs. Non-state*: in three cases (1967, 1969, and 1973), war participants were nation states, while in one case (2006), a non-state actor was the warring party vis-à-vis a state actor.

Case Study Material

Extensive case-study materials were gathered for each decision-making case. Relying principally on primary sources, and taking advantage of my knowledge of Arabic and Hebrew, I have consulted the memoirs of key contemporary actors. In Egypt, these included the memoirs of Anwar Sadat, President (1970-1981); Amin Howeidy, Minister of War (1967-8) and Chief of the General Intelligence Service (GIS) (1967-1970); Gen. Mohamed Fawzi, Chief-of-Staff (1964-1967), Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces (1967-1971) and Minister of War (1968-1971); Lt. Gen. Saad al-Shazly, Chief-of-Staff (1971-1973);

Mahmoud Riyad, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1964-1972); Amb. Ashraf Ghorbal, Ambassador to Washington (1973-1984); Salah Nasr, Chief of the GIS (1957-1967); and Hafez Ismail, Chief of the GIS (1970-1971) and National Security Adviser (1971-1974). I have also consulted published interviews of Field Marshal Ahmed Ismail Ali, Commander-in-Chief and Minister of War (1972-1974); and Lt. Gen. Saad al-Shazly (with whom and Amin Howeidy I also conducted an interview in December 2007). In Syria, this included the memoirs of Gen. Mustafa Tlass, Minister of Defense (1972-2004); and Colonel Khalil Mustafa, the chief Military Intelligence Officer in the Golan (1964-1966); and the biography of Hafez al-Assad, Minister of Defense (1966-1970), and President (1970-2000). In Jordan, these included the memoirs of King Hussein (1952-1999). In Israel, these included the memoirs of Golda Meir, Prime Minister (1969-1974); Abba Eban, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1966-1974); Moshe Dayan, Minister of Defense (1967-1974); Gen. Meir Amit, Chief of the Mossad (1963-1968); Lt. Gen. Yitzhak Rabin, Chief of Staff (1964-1968) and Ambassador to Washington (1968-1973); Maj. Gen. Eli Zeira, Chief of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Intelligence Branch (AMAN) (1972-1974), and the biographies of Lt. Gen. Chaim Bar-Lev, Chief-of-Staff (1968-1972); and Lt. Gen. David Ben-Elazar, Chief-of-Staff (1972-1974). As for the Israel-Hezbollah war of July 2006, no key decision-maker on either side has published his/her memoirs so far.

Official documents, particularly protocols of government meetings, diplomatic correspondence, and intelligence estimates, were important to understand the kind of information decision-makers actually had, the extent to which they consulted their bureaucracies, and the alternative courses of actions they considered. In Egypt, protocols of the meetings of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) Central Committee (1968-1970) are available on the official website of President Gamal Abdel Nasser, and some other protocols

of the ASU Central Committee and government meetings are available in a book edited by Abdel Magid Farid, Nasser's long Secretary of Information. I made a research trip in December 2007 and January 2008 to access Egypt's National Library and Archives; however, red tape prevented access to supposedly accessible documents, those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until the year 1968. The most significant documentation – that is of the Presidency and those of the Ministry of Defense – is still under lock and key. Documents relevant to this study are still classified in both Syria's national archive, the Center for Historical Documents, and Jordan's National Library. I had hoped to include all of the Arab-Israeli wars – including Palestine War 1948, the Suez War 1956, and the Lebanon War 1982 – as case studies in this research, but the scarcity of both primary (and in some cases also secondary) sources on the decision-making processes on the Arab side has prevented me from being able to make a balanced analysis of decision-making processes in these wars. As for Israeli documents, I made a research trip to access Israel State Archive in Jerusalem in March-April 2008 where I had access to declassified documents of the Prime Minister Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Government Secretariat, beside the final report of the Agranat Commission established to investigate the circumstances that led to the outbreak of the October 1973 War.

There were obvious limits to obtain primary sources on Israel-Hezbollah war of July 2006. However, the official reports of the Commission of Inquiry into the Events of Military Engagement in Lebanon 2006, or the Winograd Commission, and the published witnesses of individuals who appeared before the Commission were extensively consulted in this study. Due to the strict secrecy Hezbollah maintains regarding its military activities, knowledge about the *Majlis ash-Shura* decision-making process remains limited. I have attempted to bridge this gap through a series of interviews with Hezbollah officials and specialists, which

I conducted in January 2008 in Beirut, Lebanon. The interviewees were: Mr. Nawwaf al-Mousawi, Hezbollah's International Relations Officer, Mr. Ibrahim al-Mousawi, former chief of Hezbollah's *al-Manar* TV and current editor-in-chief of the Lebanese *al-Intiqad* newspaper, Dr. Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Middle East Center and a leading expert on Hezbollah, Mr. Ibrahim al-Amin, editor-in-chief of the Lebanese *al-Akhabar* newspaper, and Mr. Walid Charara, an opinion writer with *Le Monde Diplomatique* and an expert on Hezbollah.

While there may be errors in and controversies over the historical accounts of the decision-making processes, these primary sources are indispensable. At the same time, the problems of credibility can be controlled by cross-examining the records of the individuals taking part in the decision-making, and by not exclusively relying on primary sources. Secondary sources, in the form of academic studies of the decision-making processes in each case, were also consulted.

PART II

CASE STUDIES

Chapter Four

The June 1967 War

Case Outline

The origins of the June 1967 War date back almost two decades when the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948 concluded with the establishment of the State of Israel in historic Palestine with armistice agreements on the Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian fronts, supervised by the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). In 1956 Israel invaded Sinai in collusion with Britain and France in reaction to President Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal. The Suez War (known in Egypt as the Tripartite Aggression) ended with two principal arrangements: the establishment of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) along the Egyptian-Israeli border, but stationed only on Egyptian territory, and the Egyptian approval of the free passage of Israeli ships in the Gulf of Aqaba – leading to the Israeli port of Eilat – through the Straits of Tiran.

In the aftermath of the Syrian-Israeli clashes in April 1967, a crisis emerged when Syria and the Soviet Union reported to Egypt (then formally the United Arab Republic – UAR) on Israeli mobilization preparatory to an attack on Syria. Egypt vowed to come to Syria's aid and on May 13-14 Nasser and his second in command, Field Marshal Abdel Hakim Amer, decided to send troops to Sinai. Shortly later, on May 16 Nasser requested a partial withdrawal of the UNEF. When the UN position was that such a partial withdrawal was not possible, he requested a full pull-out on May 18. In reaction to the mounting threat,

i.e., Egyptian mobilization in Sinai and the withdrawal of UNEF, Israel's Prime Minister Levi Eshkol and the Chief-of-Staff Yitzhak Rabin ordered on May 19 on a general mobilization of reserves. On May 22, Nasser declared the closure of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping and strategic cargo heading for Israel. Pondering initiating a pre-emptive attack, Israel's Ministerial Defense Committee (MDC) decided on May 23 to postpone a decision for 48 hours, in response to President Johnson's advice; and Foreign Minister Abba Eban was sent in a clarifying mission to Washington. On May 28 the Cabinet decided to continue Israel's restraint, following Johnson's urging against a pre-emptive strike. Seriously concerned about a civil war in Jordan, King Hussein made a surprise trip to Cairo on May 30 and signed with Nasser a common defense treaty. But Syria failed to stick to the defense treaty with Egypt of 1966, as it neither made any military coordination nor did it put its armed forces on alert. Nonetheless, Nasser told his top command on June 2 that he was expecting an Israeli attack on June 5 and decided to accept the first strike out of fear of US involvement if Egypt started the war.

On June 4, in reaction to the Egyptian-Jordanian treaty and being sure of the US support, the Israeli government decided for pre-emption: a large-scale attack against the Egyptian army in Sinai; no attack against Jordan unless it attacked first; and only defensive measures on the Syrian front. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched in the morning of June 5 an all-out attack in which it destroyed virtually the whole Egyptian Air Force and started an invasion of Sinai (figure 1). Shocked by the destruction of Egypt's air force in the first hours of battle, Amer decided on June 6 on an immediate general retreat to the west bank of the Canal. The IDF troops continued their advance in Sinai, destroying the retreating Egyptian forces (figure 2).

On June 5, misled by Egypt's false victory reports, King Hussein ignored an appeal from Prime Minister Eshkol not to intervene, and ordered his forces to attack. The IDF defeated the Jordanian troops and moved on to occupy the West Bank (figure 3). Syrian forces defending the Golan Heights were given "oral" orders, probably driven by the knowledge of the defeat of Egyptian and Jordanian armies, of general retreat late on June 8. On June 10, Radio-Damascus untruthfully announced the fall of Qunaytra city, the capital of the Golan. Both orders resulted in a state of chaos which allowed the IDF to capture on the opportunity and attack the entire Golan (figure 4). The war ended in the defeat of all three Arab armies and the IDF secured the occupation of Sinai, the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip.

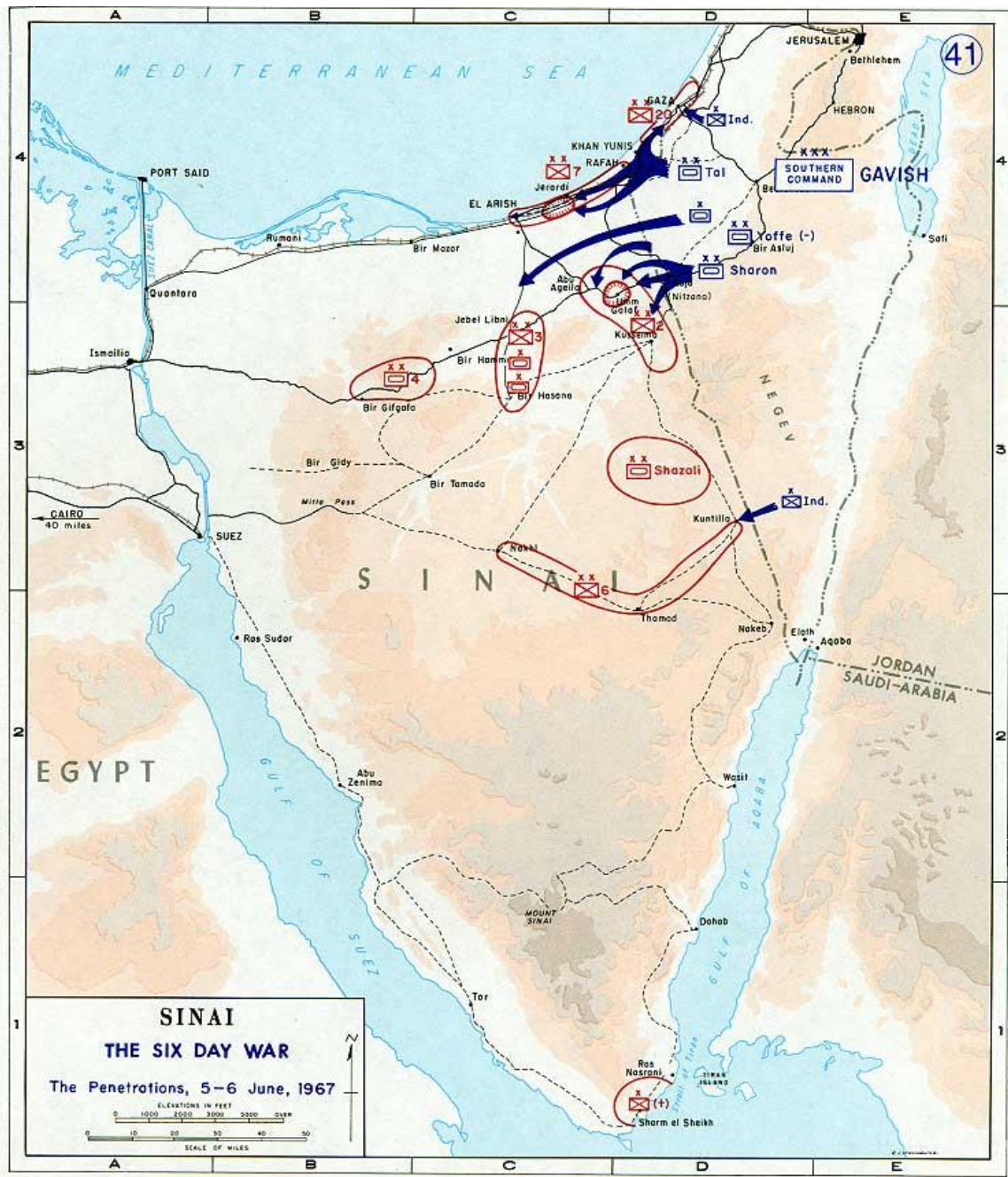


Figure 1. Israeli Initial Attack on Sinai on June 5, 1967.
 Source: US Military Academy History Archives.

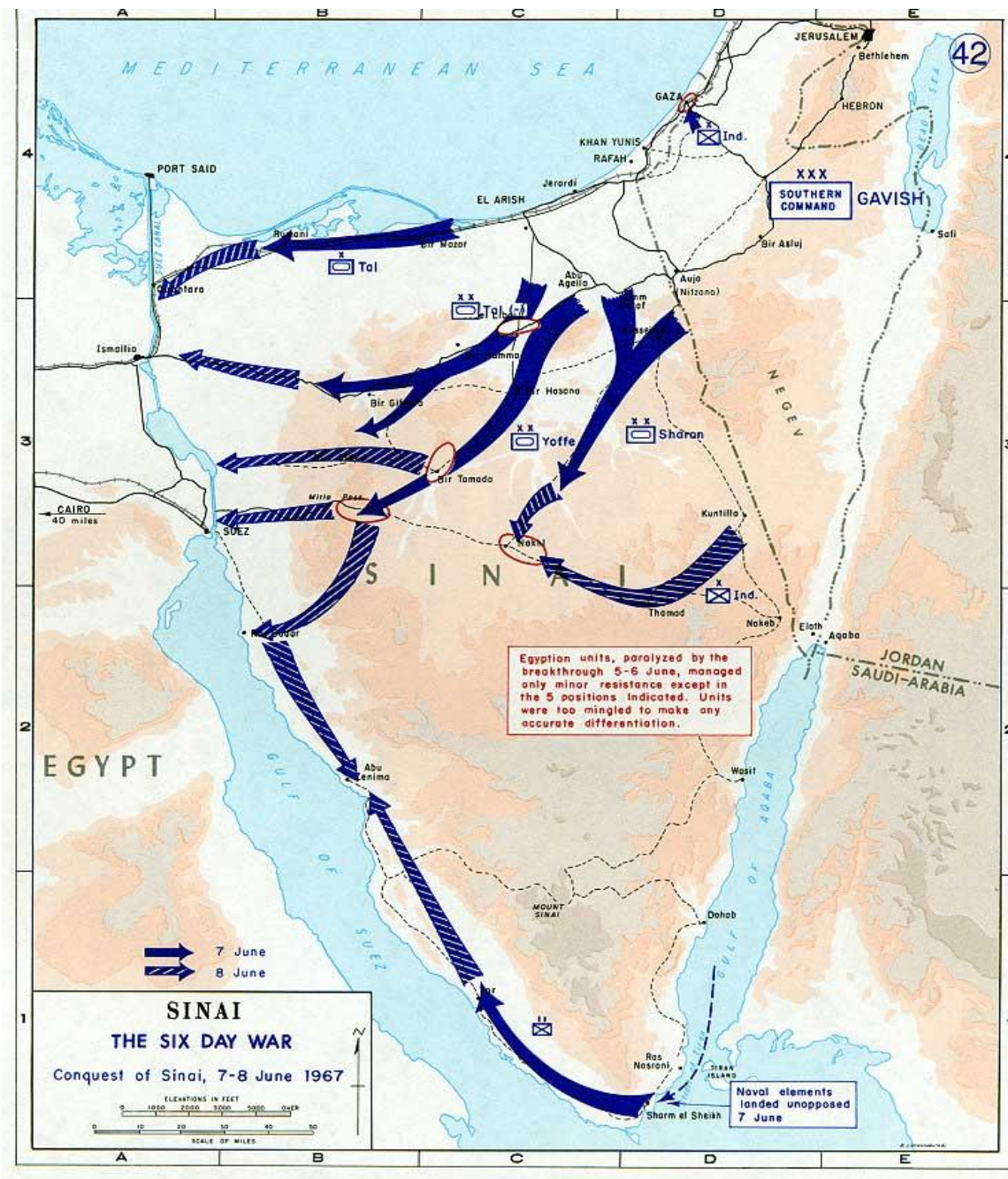


Figure 2. Israeli Conquest of Sinai, 7-8 June 1967.
 Source: US Military Academy History Archives.

Democratic Victory Theory

Selection Effects: Institutional Constraints

The selection effects mechanism does not appear to be at work for either type of regime. The humiliating defeat forced Nasser to resign from any official post. Though it was not long before Nasser returned to office under popular pressure, his regional leadership certainly came to an end since “with no army or air force to defend his own country, he could hardly aspire to the leadership of any other” (Nutting 1972, 433). Amer, Vice-President of the UAR, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and Commander-in-Chief, was relieved from his posts and committed suicide, or allegedly killed by Nasser’s agents for his role in the war. The Minister of War, the Chief of the General Intelligence Service (GIS), and the top military commanders all faced court-martial and were sentenced to extended periods of imprisonment. The Syrian leadership blamed for losing this war – and the other mini-war with Jordan in 1970 – was removed from power; Nur ad-Din al-Atasi, Jadid, and Suwaidani were arrested and imprisoned (Bar-Siman-Tov 1983, 161-62). King Hussein feared a public reprisal after losing Jerusalem and the West Bank (Desch 2008, 104). But he kept his throne since, as his pre-war calculations correctly predicted, he could present himself as having done everything possible for the Arab cause.

In Israel, decision-makers appeared not to have been concerned with their electoral chances as much as their role in Jewish history. Janice Gross Stein, for example, finds the evidence on political coalition-building to explain the government’s decisions inconsistent (Stein and Tanter 1980, 209-10, and 250). Indeed, Eshkol gave Dayan the Defense portfolio but this inclusion, or enlarging the government in general, does not appear to have been related to policy preferences or party affiliation as much as to Dayan’s personal standing

(ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on May 31 1967). Instead, opposition leaders had participated in the discussions on an informal basis prior to their inclusion in the Cabinet. Also, Dayan's initial preference, to which he came close for his experience and military reputation as a former IDF Chief-of-Staff (1953-58), was to be appointed as the Southern Command GOC or the IDF Chief-of-Staff rather than to get any ministerial position. At the same time, the Prime Minister was about to press the Cabinet for a decision to preempt – the preference of opposition and to which he would have got a majority of votes – but for the American confirmed commitment to opening the Straits and Johnson's plead for restraint (Brecher 1974, 396).

Selection Effects: Informational Constraints

While Arab regimes obviously controlled the media and Arab countries had no opposition parties to speak of, they were largely being fed by their institutional settings of accurate information about the costs and probabilities of war – processing information was another thing. At the same time, Arab political leaderships were not insulated from the public opinion which played a crucial role in their calculations. A plausible explanation of Nasser's escalation is that it was an attempt to restore his dominant regional leadership. The Arab masses had unquestionably sanctioned the escalation decisions. Some might argue that this selection-effects mechanism could explain Arab decision-making at wartime since unauthorized decisions of massive retreat on the Egyptian and Syrian fronts were taken by individuals (in Syria they remain unidentified) amid a complete absence of coordination in the Arab coalition. Thus, it is possible to argue that had a greater number of people been involved in making these decisions, the outcome could have been different. Nonetheless, this poor strategic evaluation by the Arab states is better accounted for by the lack of leadership group cohesion, as explained below.

Israel's leaders also enjoyed accurate information which enabled them to make better estimates of victory. The sources, however, were the bureaucracy and the military not the free press or the marketplace of ideas in society. Not only did the Israeli public remain ignorant about the course of the war (Desch 2008, 125), but there was also a particular tendency of decision makers to control it. For example, Minister Israel Galili stated that at the beginning of the crisis, the public opinion believed that this was just a test and should not be taken as dangerous until the Prime Minister statement on May 17 at the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Knesset, and Minister of Posts Israel Yeshayahu and Minister of Social Welfare Yosef Burg explicitly asked Prime Minister Eshkol to make statements to "direct" and "form" the public opinion (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on May 21, 1967). The Prime Minister later approved the proposal of the Chief-of-Staff to impose greater censorship restrictions on the press (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on May 28, 1967). The role opposition leaders played is better accounted for by the quality of decision-making process variables, as explained below. Finally, though the cabinet made collective decisions to delay and preempt, the Minister of Defense monopolized over the process later on. It was Dayan himself who "gave the army most of the orders during the war ... he did not always consult the cabinet or the prime minister" (Shlaim 2001, 242). Dayan had reportedly warned Allon during the war: "in security matters there's no democracy. If you try to interfere, I'll quit" (Oren 2002, 229). Dayan explicitly rejected in the MDC session on June 8 discussing initiating an attack on Syria the government interference in what he perceived as his exclusive job: "In military matters, I'm against making decisions on the basis of majority decisions" (Oren 2002, 276).

Threat Environment, Group Cohesion, and Decision-Making in Arab States

Pre-War Decisions

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

The Middle East regional security environment in May-June 1967 was much more favorable to the Arab countries than to Israel. Two conditions persisted throughout. First, because of their geographical location surrounding Israel, having extended strategic depths, Egypt and Syria – allies in a mutually defense pact – faced no serious security threat from Israel, but could rather force Israel to fight a multi-front war. Here, the Suez War of 1956 was particularly relevant. It was a military defeat but a political victory for Nasser who had established his role as the leader of Arab nationalism thereafter. According to Salah Nasr, the Chief of the GIS at the time, “Nasser declared that Israel would not be able to wage a war on two fronts unless Israel depended on the power of the West at least to provide air cover like in 1956” (Nasr 1999, 209). Perhaps Jordan was the only threatened state even this was partly an internal threat of disintegration. Second, military balance indicated that a coalition of Arab states would obviously prevail in any military confrontation against Israel. The third condition was the momentum gained from increasing efforts to strengthen the Arab alliance and attempts to coordinate Arab military efforts, exemplified by Jordan joining the Egyptian-Syrian Joint Defense Pact on May 30.

Egyptian decision-making group was impaired by a severe power struggle between Nasser and his Vice President and Commander-in-Chief Amer. Nasser held Amer and his cronies responsible for the failure of the union with Syria in 1961, and attempted to dismiss him. But Amer prevailed and the 1962 crisis ended up with the Field Marshal’s power expanded (Fawzi 1984, 32-39; Nasr 1999, 24-39; Oren 2002, 40-41); Amer and his loyalists,

the Minister of War Shams Badran and the Chief of the GIS Salah Nasr, managed to rival Nasser's authority and marginalize his loyalists, the Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riyad and the Chief-of-Staff Gen. Mohamed Fawzi. Thus, upon the May-June crisis, Amer wanted "to exploit that situation to elevate his status yet higher, leading the army to a glorious victory. Nasser sought to prevent this, to regain his prerogatives at home and the initiative in the region" (Oren 2002, 57). The result of this conflict, as Fawzi put it, was "the fragmentation of the unified leadership and a division in making the state's crucial decisions" (Fawzi 1984, 44).

The Syrian leadership – seizing power in a military coup a year earlier in 1966 – was composed of five young officers: Mohammed Umran, Salah Jadid, Abdul Karim al-Jundi, Ahmed al-Mir, and Hafez al-Assad, who allied with a civilian group of Ba'th Party members who served as President, Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister. Syria's leadership did not act as a unit since it was divided into two factions: Salah Jadid, assistant Secretary-General of the Ba'th Regional Command, supported by the Chief-of-Staff Ahmed Suwaidani, Chief of Military Intelligence Abd al-Karim al-Jundi, and Commander of the 70th Regiment, Izzat Jadid, and al-Assad's group (mainly in the air force). This leadership was fragmented to the extent that the attempted coup by Colonel Salim Hatum in September 1966 failed largely because of the unfulfilled promise of the Minister of Defense and Air Force Commander, Hafez al-Assad, to provide air support (Bar-Siman-Tov 1983, 153). In Jordan, the decision-making group was perhaps the relatively most cohesive among the three Arab countries. Rivalries among the group members, including Prime Minister Saad Jumma, Foreign Minister Ahmad Touqan, and the King's private secretary Zeid Rifai, and the Chief-of-Staff Gen. Amer Khammash, were limited since King Hussein maintained a strict dominance over the group.

Inter-Arab group cohesion was no better than those of individual states' leaderships. Relations between the leaders of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan could not probably have been worse. Each leadership was accusing the other of collaborating with Israel against the rest – Nasser went as far as publicly calling King Hussein “the whore of Jordan” in February 1966, and their relations had reached “the point of no return” (Oren 2002, 37). Even when Egypt and Jordan signed their joint defence treaty, photographs of Nasser, King Hussein, and Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Ahmed al-Shuqayri, were featured in Syria's official newspaper *al-Ba'th* under the banner, “The Three Treasonous Agents.” Appeasing missions to Damascus by Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riyad and Vice President Zakkariya Muhieddin proved unsuccessful. Later on, Amer complained that “Syria's present position is disappointing ... They received Muhieddin poorly, and have turned down our military requests” (Oren 2002, 162).

Decision-Making

In the pre-war decisions, the quality of the decision-making processes in Egypt and Syria were partly restricted by having a favorable regional balance of power vis-à-vis Israel, not because either of which was more powerful than Israel but because there were opportunities for alliance building or buck-passing within the Arab regional system. Egypt, Syria, and Jordan all had something against Israel and might be either willing or coaxed to join the alliance. Therefore, Arab policy makers focused their balancing efforts externally and quantitatively, rather than internally and qualitatively. President Nasser of Egypt, the major Arab regional player, had two past experiences of triumphs: the Suez crisis of 1956 and Operation *Rotem* of 1960 in which the Egyptian mobilization into Sinai deterred an Israeli attack on Syria (Yaniv 1987, 84-85). Indeed, the *Rotem* analogy might have provided Nasser with good reasons to doubt that Israel would attack (Mor 1991, 359-75). Syria was

more powerful than Jordan yet still inferior to Israel as a military power. However, it recognized the opportunities allowed by its mutual defense treaty with Egypt and its growing alliance with the Soviet Union. Indeed, the alliance with Egypt in 1966 gave the Syrian leadership “added self-confidence; they became even more aggressive in their speeches and actions; secure in the knowledge that however much they provoked Israel, they now had an effective guarantee against retaliation” (Laqueur 1968, 49).

Unlike Egypt and Syria, Jordan was a vulnerable state whose survival depended on skilful combination of Western support and appeasement to regional powers (Walt 1987, 55). King Hussein had no hope of overcoming Israel alone, but he had the option of allying or bandwagoning with more powerful Arab states since “he was convinced that any Arab confrontation with Israel would be greatly enhanced if the Arabs fought as a unified body” (Parker 1996, 169).

Decision-making in Egypt

The Egyptian leadership performed the task of survey of objectives rather “very poorly.” Extremely confident of the power of the Arab coalition, Egypt’s leadership had no clear view of its objectives throughout the episode. Each decision was presented in terms of “no-other-choice” that prevented making a coherent evaluation of the overall expected outcomes. Before deciding to dismiss the UNEF, Nasser told his officials that to retreat on the withdrawal request would cost Egypt its credibility and that “the cycle of events is already on a way which does not allow Egypt but for one request: a complete UNEF withdrawal” (Heikal 1990, 475). When the withdrawal of UNEF raised the problem of controlling the Straits, Nasser’s rationale was that since the Egyptian troops were already in Sharm el-Sheikh, “the Egyptian Armed Forces have no other option but to apply the same regulations which it had applied prior to the introduction of UNEF” (Heikal 1990, 515).

According to Salah Nasr, Nasser was heavily influenced by his definition of the crisis as typical to that of 1956 whose political victory had established Nasser's role as the leader of Arab nationalism (Nasr 1999, 209). Consequently, Nasr explains, when his reputation was put at risk by the UN refusal of his request of partial UNEF withdrawal, Nasser chose the escalatory course of action (Nasr 1999, 210). The decision to accept to receive the fist strike was made on the premise that the United States would intervene militarily against Egypt if it started the war (Fawzi 1984, 124-5). But it was also against the background of no clear US threat, and in contrary to Nasser's belief that "the USSR supported us [UAR] in this battle and would not allow any power to intervene until matters were restored to what they were in 1956" (Laqueur 1968, 318).

Decision-makers performed the task of surveying alternative courses of action "poorly." Saving face could have been achieved with at least two alternatives other than requesting UNEF withdrawal. One alternative offered by Egypt's ambassador to the UN was to delay the request until after the conclusion of the special session of the UN General Assembly so that the issue would not be raised before it, but this alternative was rejected by Nasser on the grounds that Egypt did not make its initial request "out of the blue" but in reaction to the Israeli threat to Syria (Heikal 1990, 473-75). A second alternative was hypothetically proposed by King Hussein after the war: "It might have been better perhaps if he [Nasser] had deployed his forces in Sinai behind those of the U.N. and said: 'If you attack Syria, we are ready'" (Hussein 1969, 49). A single alternative was raised to the closure of the Straits – mining of the Straits instead of intercepting ships – but this was rejected because it would both violate international law and threaten shipping to the Jordanian port of Aqaba.

The task of information search was performed "poorly." Decision-makers did not lack adequate information from their institutional settings but failed to seek counsel and

effectively process available information (Maher 2005, 118-33). Facing the dilemma of whether to close the Straits of Tiran after controlling Sharm el-Sheikh, Nasser convened the ASU Supreme Executive Committee, and suggested that any other position but a blockade would diminish Egypt's sovereign rights. Given that this would raise the probability of war to over ninety percent, Nasser argued, it all depended on the readiness level of the Armed Forces. Amer confirmed that the Armed Forces was ready (Heikal 1990, 515). The Cabinet was kept in the dark throughout the crisis except for a briefing by the Minister of War on May 30. The only time in which Nasser appears to have encouraged subordinates to present different views was his meeting on May 14 with Dr. Mahmoud Fawzi, deputy Prime Minister for foreign affairs, in which he asked for advice on the issue of evicting UNEF. But this counsel involved an examination of neither the reported Israeli troop concentrations nor the mobilization in Sinai. Nasser was probably looking for a half-way measure, which he got: requesting the UNEF to withdraw from the border and to concentrate in Gaza and Sharm el-Sheikh (Oren 2002, 58).

The Foreign Minister failed to ask for any legal or political assessment from his staff. Salah Bassiouny, then a special assistant in the office of Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Ahmed Hasan el-Feqi, reports that they reminded the Minister of the implications of the UNEF withdrawal request, especially the US commitment to the freedom of navigation, and "from that day on, the developments and decision-making were a mystery to most of the ministry's officers" (Parker 1996, 44). After Nasser received a message from the Soviet ambassador on an imminent Egyptian attack on Israel, he met with Amer on May 25, and then "it became clear for President Abdel Nasser that Israel's information was correct, and that he himself was not aware of these plans" (Fawzi 1984, 114). When Amb. el-Feqi was delivering his assessment to the President, "Nasser and Amer were not on

speaking terms ... Amer was not listening and was staying away from Nasser” (Parker 1996, 44). One June 2, Nasser predicted the Israeli attack on June 5, but his warning went unheeded and was not transmitted to the field commanders because Amer did not take Nasser seriously (Murtagi 1987, 109). Nasser undertook his decisions without even the knowledge of Syria or Jordan. Indeed, since the blockade of the Straits, they “were to be no more than anxious spectators” (Seale 1988, 130).

The group processed the information it received in a “poor” manner. Nasser did not seriously consider ample intelligence warning against the risks of escalation and indicating the Israeli intentions for a pre-emptive strike (Nasr 1999, 251-74). Egypt received mixed signals from the Soviets during the crisis. The Egyptian delegation headed by Minister of War visiting Moscow on May 25 to explore the Soviet position received mixed results. Nasser received both: those of Badran reporting a message of full support from the Soviet Union, and those of Amb. el-Feqi, reporting the Soviet urgent request of de-escalation. Nasser failed to appraise the report from Amb. el-Feqi and exclusively relied on Badran’s assurances, as he said in his address to the National Assembly on May 29 (Laqueur 1968, 318). The point of interest here is Nasser’s failure to carefully clarify the position of his superpower ally. On May 14, Nasser disregarded a message from King Hussein that the Syrian regime is penetrated by foreign intelligence services, and would entrap Nasser in a war through igniting tensions on the Syrian-Israeli border (Heikal 2000, 15). Syria’s Prime Minister and Chief-of-Staff visited Cairo on May 24 to coordinate their positions but the visit eventually “added up nothing more than general understanding” (Zisser 2002, 180). Syria also failed to stick to its treaty with Egypt, as it refused to make any coordination with Cairo and declined an offer of Egyptian planes to be stationed in Syria, while the Syrian armed forces were not even put on alert.

Even the military professionals had not been paid enough attention. Not only reports by Gen. Fawzi and Military Intelligence on May 15 on the absence of Israeli concentrations were ignored, but also was the General Staff recommendation on May 18 not to blockade the Straits in order to avoid confrontation (Oren 2003, 64; Fawzi 1984, 78). Finally, the decision to accept the first strike was made against the objections of the Air Force Commander who argued that this would render the Egyptian Air Force (EAF) “crippled,” and recommended instead that Egypt should initiate the offensive (Mazhar 1990, 80-81).

Decision-making in Syria

The decision-making process that took place in Syria during the crisis is difficult to evaluate because some details are missing. But it is still possible to get a picture of that process and its characteristics from the available sources. The Syrian leadership performed the task of surveying objectives “very poorly.” The Syrian leadership did not apparently engage in strategic decision-making but in the end it made a significant, though informal, decision: reporting on false Israeli mobilization. There is a near-consensus among scholars that the Syrian report was made to deflect internal opposition to the Ba’th regime to the external threat facing Syria (Bar-Siman-Tov 1983, 147-61; Lawson 1996, 20-51; Parker 1996, 155; Oren 2002, 42-46). Inconsistencies in the Syrian policy indicate a lack of appraisal for the overall situation. For example, the Israeli mobilization report by the Minister of Defense was shortly denied by the Chief-of-Staff to his Egyptian counterpart.

Syrian leaders performed the survey of alternatives “poorly.” They had probably sought and attempted to apply an alternative – declarations of a Zionist-reactionary-imperialist conspiracy against Syria – but the general population did not pay much heed to them, while the shutting down of six Syrian MiGs by the Israeli Air Force (IAF) in April had

demonstrated the army's incompetence (Bar-Siman-Tov 1983, 158). Insincere escalation of conflict with Israel, on the other hand, resulted in ceasing the internal conflict and reinforced the regime's political position (Bar-Siman-Tov 1983, 158; Lawson 1996, 47). However, the latter alternative should have been considered as serious provocation which, given the army's ill-preparation, would threaten the very aim of escalation. Later on, Syria's leaders realized the negative consequences of their false report on Israeli mobilization and tried to avoid further escalation by non-cooperation with Egypt and preserving the relative calm on their border with Israel which persisted since April (Zisser 2002, 179-180). They probably did not realize that it was too late for this, and that coordinating plans with their allies could have prevented the Israeli invasion of the Golan.

The task of information search was performed "poorly." Given the schism within the Syrian decision-making group, there is a reason to suspect that a counsel with the military, let alone the bureaucracy, had been made. That would explain the later denial of the Israeli mobilization information by Gen. Suwaidini. The role of the Foreign Ministry was probably confined to delivering the message to the outside world, particularly the UN Security Council and Secretary-General U Thant (Bar-Siman-Tov 1983, 160). Syrian leaders did not make enough effort to explore the position of Moscow in case of war, even though the motivation of the Soviets to transmit the false information on Israeli mobilization might have been to bolster the Damascus regime. After the air battle of April 7, Syrian leaders flew to Moscow on April 10 but the visit did not produce any agreement on military aid (Ben-Tzur 1975, 86-90). Neither did the visit by the Syrian President, Nur ad-Din al-Atasi and his Foreign Minister to Moscow on May 29-30 succeed in soliciting Soviet support (Seale 1988, 140; K. Mustafa 1980, 137).

The evidence indicates that the Syrian leadership made a “poor” job in processing information. The Syrian leadership had probably made a re-examination of information, but only after the decision has *already* been made. In their second decision, they realized the negative consequences of their first – a losing war – and tried to retreat by declining the Egyptian offer to coordinate and by preserving the relative calm on their border with Israel.

Decision-making in Jordan

Hussein and his advisors performed their survey of objectives “well.” They had a clear aim of preventing the Kingdom’s disintegration, under the belief that war was inevitable after the UNEF withdrawal (Hussein 1969, 33). The King had doubts of the Arabs’ ability to defeat Israel but he chose to participate in the upcoming war preferring a defeat within an Arab coalition to the outbreak of a civil war in Jordan as a result of his failure to participate (Dann 1989, 162-63). Hussein recalled:

We had the following choice: either to act at the right time, with no illusion of what the results might be but with a chance to do better than we would otherwise, or not to act and to have an eruption occur within, which would cause us to collapse and which would obviously immediately result in an Israeli occupation of the West Bank. This was really the reason why I went to Egypt to meet Nasser (Mutawi 1987, 103).

The Jordanian leadership has performed in a “neutral” manner the task of canvassing alternative courses of action. Other than his alliance with Egypt, Hussein had explored two alternatives that would attain his dual aim of preserving his throne and the country’s unity with no provocation to Israel. He first appealed to the United States to issue an open statement assuring Jordan’s territorial integrity. Washington confirmed its commitment to the Kingdom’s independence but refused to make it public for congressional restraints (Oren 2002, 128). However, Hussein limited the consideration of alternatives before his decision to

ally with Egypt. When Nasser announced the closure of the Straits on May 18, Hussein held a meeting with his Cabinet and top military commanders and explained to them “his belief that war was inevitable and that the Jordanians should fight” (Mutawi 1987, 104). He then tried to revive the United Arab Command (UAC) for which he sent his Chief-of-Staff to Cairo on May 21. However, Gen. Khammash reported to the king that the UAC “had no role in present plans. Egypt was conducting the matter bilaterally with Syria” (Hussein 1969, 40). According to Samir Mutawi, the King had probably calculated that if Jordan did not participate, his fall would be inevitable any way: if the Arabs lost, the defeat would be attributed to his failure to participate, and if they won, he would be accused of betraying the cause of Palestine. Given the negative consequences of both alternatives, Hussein had no alternative other than to ally with Nasser and participate in the war (Parker 1996, 168-69).

Notwithstanding his clear aims and the tried alternatives, Hussein had made a “poor” information search. The decision to ally with Egypt had exclusively been made by the King on his own. The King appears to have consulted only his close associates, Prime Minister Saad Jumma and his private secretary Zeid Rifai (Hussein 1969, 33-38). Both the Cabinet and the Foreign Ministry were merely executive organs with virtually no role in the formulation of foreign policy (Mutawi 1987, 10-13). The meeting of the king with his military commanders on May 25 reviewed the situation with pessimistic expectations and, as Gen. Khammash says, “the only solution was an initiative by His Majesty who decided to fly to Cairo himself” (Mutawi 1987, 107).

“Poor” information processing followed the poor search. Hussein had repeatedly ignored advices of caution and warnings of the disastrous consequences of his alliance with Nasser both from his uncle, Sharif Nasser bin Jamil, deputy Commander-in-Chief, and his former Prime Minister Wasfi al-Tall (Oren 2002, 129; Lund 1989, 89). However, after the

Egyptian-Jordanian treaty was signed, Wasfi al-Tall again objected the King's course of action, telling him that "I'm ready to kill 2,000 rebels to prevent you from losing the West Bank," urging him to wait to make sure of the promised air cover (Oren 2002, 131). Sharif Nasser bin Jamil also appealed to the king to stay his hand (Dallas 1999, 114). But in vain.

Wartime Decisions

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

Threat environment has significantly changed by the second day of fighting. By that time, Israel had already destroyed the entire air forces of the three Arab warring states, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, and part of Iraq's air force. Moreover, the IDF was no longer waiting for the Arabs to attack, but it was itself operating on Arab territories. These developments had three important implications. First, the Arabs' offensive capabilities have been radically reduced for a long time to come. Second, Israel had an absolute superiority in the air which significantly enhanced the IDF chances of victory. Third, the threat to Israel security was removed and it was the Arab states then that were threatened.

Egyptian decision-making group remained impaired by the power struggle between Nasser and Amer. The Field Marshal and his loyalists persisted to prevail. Amer apparently wished to exploit the war to prove his leadership credentials over Nasser's as the commander who would lead Arab armies to victory. For Amer, to receive such an enormous credit, Nasser had to be marginalized in the decision-making and to be updated with information as little as possible. At another level, Amer and Badran sought to bypass Nasser's loyalist, the Chief-of-Staff Fawzi by issuing direct orders to the troops and by establishing new command structures responsible only to Office of the Deputy Supreme Commander and the Office of

the Minister of War. Fawzi later acknowledged that he was a mere “scarecrow” in June 1967. Since the war was Amer’s own “business,” the Foreign Minister and other Cabinet members were kept in the dark. The Syrian leadership group remained its lack of cohesion, especially when the two competing factions – each of which controlling part of the armed forces – feared that a military engagement by its forces would allow the other faction to dominate.

Decision-Making

In the wartime decisions, the threat environment variable has less explanatory power. The balance-of-power substantially turned into Israel’s favour with the successful surprise attack of the IAF in the morning of June 5, but still Egyptian and Syrian leaders failed to improve their decision-making processes. It is better accounted for by the leadership group incohesion. In Egypt and Syria, conflicts and mistrust dominated both within and among the political and military leaderships. This in effect paralyzed the decision-making.

Decision-making in Egypt

In the decision to retreat troops from Sinai, the task of surveying objectives was performed “very poorly.” Amer made his retreat decision with the aim of avoiding a complete destruction of the Egyptian army in Sinai. But he did not examine whether such an order was meant to achieve this aim. “Very poor” survey of alternatives followed. Giving the troops no plan, Amer could not hope for a successful operation. Even if one assumes that the retreat order might have saved the Egyptian army in Sinai, Amer failed to consider the consequences of such a serious action taken under no coordination with the allies. Syria and Jordan would have to face the IDF in an unbalanced battle after the strongest of Arab armies was out. Also, Amer did not consider other alternatives that military logic would support, primarily directing the army to hold its defenses while the air losses were being

compensated, as actually happened immediately after the war (Murtaji 1987, 164-65). The feasibility of this alternative is corroborated by that the Field Marshal did change his mind in the night of June 6-7, giving orders to hold the defenses of the Sinai Passes, relying on advices from the Soviet military attaché in Cairo, but it was too late (Fawzi 1984, 156). The decision was made under “very poor” search for information and assimilation of new information. Amer made the general retreat decision entirely on his own without asking permission from Nasser or consulting his staff. Only on June 6-7 night when Amer thought of the possibility of defending the Passes, did he call Nasser who replied bitterly, “have you consulted me first in the retreat [decision], to ask now for my opinion about [holding] the Passes?” (Fawzi 1984, 156). Amer allowed no consultation, whatever it might be, to be delivered to him in the first place before making his decision.

Decision-making in Syria

The Syrian leadership performed “very poorly” the task of surveying objectives. The Syrian order of retreat and the announcement of the Qunaytra’s fall probably attempted to evade a military disaster, especially after Nasser’s cable urging accepting the cease-fire (Mutawi 1987, 189). But the Syrians’ policy led to the very likelihood they attempted to avoid. As it was the case with Amer, without a clear and detailed retreat plan, it was almost certain that the Israeli forces – already enjoying absolute air superiority – would obliterate the retreating troops. Survey of alternatives was “poor.” The negative consequences of general retreat obviously exceeded its advantages since the need to pressure the Soviet Union to impose a ceasefire did not justify such a risky option. A better and feasible alternative was to enhance the Golan defenses, taking advantage of the terrain, at the time when the cease-fire efforts were taking place. Information search did not virtually take place and thus its performance was “very poor.” According to Khalil Mustafa, the chief Military Intelligence

Officer in the Golan prior to the war, oral orders of general retreat given to the troops did not go through the chain of command. Officers in the Golan called the commander of the front, Colonel Ahmed al-Mir, asking for clarification, but he declined to instruct them: "I am no longer commander of the front, call the Minister of Defense." When they called the Minister, he replied that "he took note of the situation, and necessary procedures have been taken" (K. Mustafa 1980, 101). But no further orders were received until the end of fighting on June 11. Finally, Gen. Suwaidani witnessed before a Ba'th party conference after the war that "I, as an official, was not consulted about issuing the announcement of the fall of Qunaytra ... and as a citizen, I heard it from the radio like everybody else" (K. Mustafa 1980, 262).

Information processing by the Syria leadership was "very poor." The decision on a general retreat was made against clear opposing evidence. First, the Egyptian retreat on June 6 did not provoke any Soviet intervention. Second, the Golan front was far from collapse. In fact, before the Syrian "informal" orders of retreat, the Syrian troops defending the Golan were achieving victories and caused the IDF heavy losses – forcing Israel to decide to halt the attack on June 10 (Rabin 1979, 117-18).

Threat Environment, Group Cohesion, and Decision-Making in Israel

Pre-War Stage

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

The political conditions under which the Eshkol government worked in May-June 1967 are important to understand the decision-making prior to and during the war. Two conditions persisted throughout. First, because of Israel's geographical position lacking strategic depth, Israel faced many Arab adversaries whose potential coalition against her

could be overwhelming. Arab states bordering Israel had a perfect opportunity to mount a multi-front offensive that would force Israel to spread out its already numerically-inferior forces.

Second, Israel faced the May-June 1967 crisis with no allies. Unlike the Suez crisis in 1956 in which Israel's collision with the leading Western powers, Britain and France, against Nasser's Egypt provided it with clear military superiority, not even the most sympathetic country was willing to offer help. The third condition was the mounting unambiguous threats from Arab states which made accepting the status quo increasingly limited.

Evidence suggests that the pre-war decision-making group in Israel was cohesive. This group is a good example of how group cohesion means members' acceptance of each other as partners and their recognition of the unity of the group, rather than unanimity or absence of differences. The relationship between Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Eshkol and the Chief-of-Staff Rabin was not free of "occasional skids of friction," but because of their personal proximity and mutual respect, they worked together efficiently and their relationship "remained felicitous through the first months of 1967" (Oren 2002, 51). Also, though Eshkol was sometimes critical of Eban's diplomacy style (Oren 2002, 100), he trusted his abilities; in the words of Eban, their working relationship was "very smooth and very intimate. There was no inhibition" (Shlaim 2003, 169). Thus, throughout the crisis either the Cabinet or the MDC convened almost daily, both in formal and informal meetings, and sometimes around the clock, and "was engaged in what one civil servant aptly termed 'an exercise in collective cable reading'" (Brecher 1974, 332).

Decision-Making

In the decision to delay, Israel recognized that Arab states apparently engaged in a military coordination effort that was unprecedented since the Palestine War of 1948 (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on May 28, 1967). At the same time, the Suez War, though a military victory, was a political defeat for Israel because the United States compelled it to withdraw its troops from Sinai and Gaza, and Egypt restored the *status quo ante* under no peace treaty. Israeli leaders recognized that regardless of the war outcome, without American support, “[Israel] would well win a war and lose the victory” (Eban 1977, 334). In the face of mounting Egyptian and Syrian threats, Eshkol insisted that “for any worrisome signal, the government would meet immediately,” telling his colleagues that “we have to be careful, and to give our concern” (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on May 28, 1967). To avoid complicating Israel’s isolation Eban made the case for an “intensive political effort” (Brecher 1974, 397), and called on the Cabinet “to deliberate and design plans toward negative possibilities” (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on May 21, 1967) of the hard questions that Israel would have to answer. As Minister of Religious Affairs Zerach Warhaftig interestingly put it, “I’m in favor of ‘a people living alone’ but not to hasten to be ‘a people fighting alone’” (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on May 28 1967).

Decision makers performed the survey of objectives task “well.” They had the dual aim of restoring deterrence and gaining international support, under the assumption that delay would not endanger Israel’s prospects of offensive (Rabin 1977, 78). The connection between ends and means was to be briefly distracted in the early stage of the delay decision when the US proposed managing an international task force to open the Straits. Decision makers might have confused the two aims of opening the Straits and restoring deterrence,

because the task force might have opened the straits but would not have restored Israeli deterrence (Stein and Tanter 1980, 166-67). However, this was to be shortly reserved when Eshkol received a message from President Johnson warning Israel against going to war (Rabin 1977, 91). Both Eshkol and Minister of Labor Yigal Allon emphasized at the Cabinet meeting on May 28 that it was the Egyptian mobilization, not the closure of the Straits, the central issue for Israel (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on May 28 1967). Thus, the original assumption persisted: there should be no military action without US backing.

The decision-making group performed the survey of alternatives task “very well.” It gave serious consideration to two alternatives. The first alternative was a preemptive strike. Rabin and Minister of Transport Moshe Karmal indicated the negative consequences of delay as the erosion of Israel’s reputation, and fighting under less favorable political and military conditions (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on May 28, 1967). Allon also observed that “in anticipation of the arrival of such an international expeditionary fleet, the Arab High Command [could] put forward the date of its attack on Israel” (Allon 1970, 81). A preemptive attack would avoid these negative consequences and re-establish a credible deterrent. The second was a forty-eight hour delay to solicit support from the Johnson administration. Positive consequences of this alternative were securing the US support; even if the American effort failed, the Foreign Minister argued, US-Israeli relationship would improve if Israel remained patient (Eban 1977, 367). War, Eban and Minister of Interior Haim Moshe Shapira argued, should not be waged for reputation concerns but rather for vital national interests; a preemptive attack would not probably achieve its aims since Egypt would be able to revive and re-send the army to Sinai with Soviet and Arab support, and American neutrality (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on May 28, 1967).

Decision makers performed a thorough search for information, and thus generally performed the information search task “very well.” AMAN and the national intelligence service, Mossad, used a variety of indicators of both capabilities and intent, and each made an independent examination of the probability of Arab attack and both estimates converged (Stein and Tanter 1980, 201). Available evidence indicated a change in Egyptian intent in that waging a general war against Israel was made explicit by Nasser in his speech on May 26, and an increase in Egyptian capabilities to launch ground and air attacks against Israel (Dayan 1976, 265). Decision makers encouraged different actors to challenge the group’s preferences and present alternative interpretations of available information. At the beginning of the MDC session on May 23, Eshkol did not state his chosen preference but rather invited the participants to deliberate the issue by telling them “We have news on the political front ... It requires consultation and, probably, action as well” (Eban 1977, 332). After this meeting, Rabin asked H.M. Shapira to explain why he was opposed to the notion of taking offensive action. Shapira challenged the assumption that Israel’s security was threatened by the blockage of the Straits since they were closed prior to 1956 but Israel did not go to war. He also questioned the IDF capability to defeat the Arabs alone without a superpower support and protection (Rabin 1979, 80-81). Also, when the Prime Minister met on May 25 with officers of the Southern Command, Major Gen. Ariel Sharon felt free to challenge the then proposed plan to occupy Gaza as a bargaining chip to re-open the Straits. Sharon told the Prime Minister: “we must not enter the war in stages, for after each state, in a big or small war, you are subject to the same international pressures the aim has to be the destruction of the whole Egyptian army” (Stein and Tanter 1980, 181).

Opposition leaders, including Moshe Dayan, Menachem Begin and Shimon Peres, were invited to a cabinet meeting on May 23 to discuss the Egyptian closure of the Straits. In

the cabinet meeting on May 27, deliberating the alternatives of delay and preemption, Eshkol was convinced of the view that war became inevitable and that if Israel made a preemptive strike, it could win. Nevertheless, he made no attempt to impose his view. As he said later, “I knew that if I would pressed them I would have received the support of the majority ... had I banged the table and insisted, no one would have resigned from the government ... I do not regret it” (Brecher 1974, 396).

The group also processed new information “very well.” Based on the 1956 Suez War experience, Israel went to great lengths to secure US support if the war broke out. In fact, the resolution by the MDC on May 23 was to the following effect: “a decision on our response to this act [blocking the Straits] is postponed for forty-eight hours, in the course of which the foreign minister will make inquiries as to the United States’ position” (Rabin 1979, 79). Eban was told by President Johnson that the United States supported a plan to open the Straits but they had to make it through an international effort and that “Israel will not be alone unless it decides to be alone.” Also, the representative of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Tel Aviv told the Chief of Mossad Meir Amit on May 25: “If you attack, the United States would land forces on the side of Egypt to defend it ... do not create a situation in which we would have to act against you” (Amit 1999, 235). Cabinet members were skeptical of Eban’s report on his talk with President Johnson until they received an official confirmation of it from US sources (Eban 1977, 368-370). A vote was taken in the government meeting on May 27 and the cabinet was evenly divided. The Prime Minister suspended the meeting to the next day, with a tendency to recommend preemption (Brecher 1974, 401). Then new information was received: an official State Department summary of Eban’s discussions in Washington, including the plan to organize an international naval force, and a memorandum from Secretary of State Dean Rusk reporting progress on the

international naval force (Eban 1977, 370). More important was the message from President Johnson warning that “Israel should by no means take a preemptive military action and by doing so make itself responsible for initiating hostilities” (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on May 28 May 1967), and requesting a two- to three-week delay before Israel would resort to force to open the Straits. On the basis of this new information, decision makers increased the estimate of the cost of preemption as well as the probability of international task force, and, accordingly, revised their positions and decided for further delay (Stein and Tanter 1980, 207).

In the decision to preempt, decision makers faced a sharp rise in the threat level by the Egyptian-Jordanian defense pact, placing all three Arab fronts under a united command, and a remarkable decline in the international commitment to the freedom of navigation. These two factors, combined with the massive build-up of the Egyptian troops in Sinai, reawakened the Holocaust syndrome (Brecher 1980, 94). The deteriorating situation was reflected in the words of Prime Minister Eshkol when opening the Cabinet meeting on June 1: “In this hour ... we have to work intensively, to sit and to think and to draw conclusions ... it should be possible for the colleagues to provoke and to ask questions” (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on June 1, 1967).

The group performed the survey of objectives task in a “neutral” manner. Eshkol and his colleagues made an effort to clearly identify their objectives, but did not explore a wide range of these. They defined their aim solely as restoring deterrence assuming that “almost all the actions which had been specified individually as *casus belli* had now occurred” (Stein and Tanter 1980, 241). Nevertheless, their performance of survey of alternatives task was “very well.” Delay and preemptive strike remained the two obvious alternatives. Proponents of further delay were concerned that an immediate Israeli first strike would complicate

relations with the United States whose efforts to open the Straits were yet to be entirely exhausted, especially that Israel would need US arms supply in case of war. Accordingly, Minister of Health Israel Barziali and Minister of Housing Mordechai Bentov, proposed to wait for the US efforts to set up an international task force to open the Straits while making clear the military threat that Israel was facing and demanding immediate arms supplies (Dayan 1976, 346-47). Dayan identified the negative consequences of further delay as establishing the closure of the Straits – with the international task force no longer a feasible possibility – as a *fait accompli* and making the war cost to Israel heavier after the Egyptian-Jordanian pact. Advantages of preemptive strike were removing the growing threat of an Arab first strike and restoring deterrence, especially with the confidence in victory even under the possibility of multi-front war. Freedom of Israeli shipping in the Straits would then be a certain result. H. M. Shapira proposed a third alternative: given that Israel should not make the first strike unless the support of a superpower was assured, it could send a test ship through the Straits and this would make Egypt responsible for firing the first shot. This alternative was immediately rejected by Dayan who argued that Israel was capable of acting alone and that sending such a ship would signal to Egypt the intent to attack and therefore lose all the advantages of surprise (Stein and Tanter 1980, 240).

Israeli decision makers' performance of the information search task was "very well." Eban was meeting with his staff in the ministry almost on a daily basis. In the meeting of June 1 the Foreign Minister requested a "meticulous scrutiny" of all cables with the United States in the previous forty-eight hours and "it emerged that since the communications which reached [Israel] on the morning of May 28, no responsible American leader had assumed the authority to urge Israel to wait for any length of time or to place excessive reliance on international action" (Eban 1977, 385). Eban and his staff concluded that the US was now

less committed to action and less likely to restrain Israel. At the same time, the Cabinet members were presented with regular detailed reviews of the situation of the Arab armies and, in the governments meetings of June 3 and 4, of the IDF operational plans. On May 28, Eshkol opened his meeting with the senior military officers by saying: “You can and should say anything your like to me. Talk as if you were out of uniform” (Stein and Tanter 1980, 214). In what later became known as “the night of the generals,” the commanders criticized the government policy of delay not only because of the futility of a diplomatic solution but also because it would invite an Egyptian preemptive strike and deprive the IDF of the advantages of surprise. In the cabinet meeting on June 4, even though there was no longer any strong support of further delay, the session started not with the Prime Minister explaining his preferences but with a military assessment of the situation, and, at Eshkol’s request, an evaluation by the Foreign Minister of the likely international reaction (Eban 1977, 397). As Stein puts it, “Eshkol generally favored a wide-range and open process of deliberation ... He actively solicited advice and attempted to build consensus from below rather than impose it from above” (Stein and Tanter 1980, 208). Similarly, though Eshkol had agreed with a small group of key decision makers in a meeting at his home on June 3 on the choice of preemption, “at the cabinet meeting the following morning, however, they did not communicate their shared preference but again reviewed evidence and argument” (Stein and Tanter 1980, 249).

Eshkol and his colleagues did perform “very well” the task of processing information. They were presented with new evidence challenging their assumptions which led them to make their delay decision. In a highly unexpected development, Egypt and Jordan signed a joint defense pact providing for a united command and the admission of Arab forces in Jordan – something repeatedly defined by Israel as *casus belli*. Rabin gave a

detailed account of the Arab force deployments to the Cabinet on June 1 – but a discussion of the IDF deployment was moved to the MDC (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on June 1, 1967). At the same time, the foreign ministry's "meticulous scrutiny" of recent communications with Washington and Moscow revealed not only the decrease of the prospects of the international task force led by the United States, but also that "delay was increasing rather than diminishing Soviet hostility" (Stein and Tanter 1980, 230).

Incoming information in the following days indicated an erosion of the United States position on opening the Straits. In particular, the National Security Advisor Walt Rostow told the Israeli Minister in Washington Ephraim Evron that the President was misunderstood in his talk with Eban and he was "disturbed by the Prime Minister's references to "the assurances that the United States would take any and all measures to open the straits" (Brecher 1974, 414). Also, Secretary Rusk told Harman that "measures to be taken by the maritime powers were still under consideration, but that 'nothing had been firmly decided'" (Eban 1977, 394). To clarify the US stand, the Chief of Mossad, Amit, was sent to Washington. Amit was told by the CIA Director Richard Helms that "there is no task force ... There is no armada of the maritime powers and there is no concrete plan of action" (Amit 1999, 239). On May 31, Amit attended a forum with the CIA staff, under the aegis of the CIA Director of Intelligence, to make sure that their estimates of the situation were identical. And so they were (Amit 1999, 239-241).

Amit concluded that there probably would not be an international task force and that there is a possibility of American political support if Israel took the initiative (Amit 1999, 241). Having clarified any ambiguities concerning the US position, decision makers calculated that, given the IDF capability, Israel would go to war depending on US diplomatic support and being sure that any Soviet intervention would be neutralized by the US. Having

their uncertainties about a possible Arab attack and American support significantly reduced, they concluded that a cost-benefit calculus was in favor of preemption (Stein and Tanter 1980, 247).

The Decision to Attack Syria

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

The Middle East balance of power by June 10 has completely reversed. The IDF had achieved a decisive victory that removed the threat from the major Arab force, Egypt, for a long time to be. The defeated Egyptian and Jordanian armies not only lost thousands of men and the bulk of their equipment, and thus ceased to function as fighting forces, but had been pushed back behind difficult water barriers. The IDF had also occupied large territories, Sinai and the West bank, that would secure Israel from renewed threats. That is why the Syrian leadership probably refrained from committing its forces into the battle. The behavior of Damascus was not missed in Israel whose leaders, primarily Dayan, recognized that Syria presented no longer a threat to Israel (Zisser 2002, 169).

The cohesion of Israel's decision-making group had changed following the appointment of Moshe Dayan as Minister of Defense. Dayan has been a harsh critic of Eshkol throughout arguing that he was "soft" at times that needed firm action. There was another rivalry between Dayan and Allon, a former general and GOC of the Southern Command, who had long aspired to receive the Defense portfolio (Zisser 2002, 187). In fact, on May 30, Eshkol suggested to Dayan to join the government as Deputy Prime Minister while the Defense portfolio will go to Allon – an offer that Dayan utterly rejected (Dayan 1976, 335-36).

Decision-Making

Israel's decision-makers performed the survey of objectives task "poorly." Israel did not appear to have a clear objective. To punish the Syrians for their pre-war artillery shelling of Israel's northern settlements was not a clear objective. As Dayan himself stated later "You don't screw the enemy because he's a scoundrel but because he threatens you, and the Syrians on the fourth day of the war were no threat to us" (Zisser 2002, 169). Israel's leaders had rather been tempted by the overwhelming capability to attack Syria after being done with the two other Arab fronts. Following the reports on the Syrian general retreat, Dayan called the Northern Command GOC Major Gen. David Elazar and asked him: "Can you attack?" when Elazar replied "I can – and right now," Dayan gave the order (Oren 2002, 279).

In stark contrast to its pre-war performance, the Israeli leadership performed "poorly" its survey of alternatives task. Given its poor definition of objectives, the Israeli leadership faced two oversimplified alternatives: either to attack and take the entire Golan or not to attack at all. Israeli decision makers identified only a single and vague advantage of the attack alternative – not letting the Syrians get away from the fighting. On the other hand, the likelihood of Soviet intervention was the clear disadvantage. Allon minimized the possible Soviet reaction to severing diplomatic ties with Israel, which was even unlikely (Oren 2002, 276). Conversely, Dayan argued, along with H.M. Shapira, that opening a third front would provoke a Soviet military intervention (Oren 2002, 229; Zisser 2002, 188). Paradoxically, Dayan eventually went along with the decision reasoning, in a note to Eshkol on June 9 that giving the collapse of Egyptian and Syrian leadership, Israel "must exploit this opportunity to the utmost" (Oren 2002, 279). Also, alternative options that might have satisfied this

objective, such as attacking the army but without occupation or a limited occupation of the DMZ were not discussed.

Information search task was also “poorly” performed. Dayan made the decision to attack Syria entirely on his own without asking permission from Eshkol, or consulting his Chief-of-Staff. He might have only depended on some intelligence reports. In fact, Dayan informed the Prime Minister of his decision *only* after he gave the order to Elazar. Eshkol’s reaction was an enormous shock: “That’s despicable. That’s despicable ... Can I cancel the order now? It’s illogical” (Oren 2002, 280). Rabin was similarly shocked, noting in his memoirs: “Moshe Dayan the unpredictable, whose moves were unforeseeable, surprised us once again” (Rabin 1979, 199). Information processing task was no exception and was “poorly” performed. Dayan had ostensibly changed his position only after he received the reports on the Syrian retreat and an intercepted cable between Nasser and Attasi in which the former advised the latter to accept the cease-fire (Oren 2002, 279; Zisser 2002, 189), but this had nothing to do with his stated reason for opposing the attack earlier, which was the possibility of a Soviet intervention which became even more probable after the collapse of Egyptian and Jordanian armies.

The Quality of the Decision-Making Process and War Outcome

Alternative Explanations

Three explanations have been advanced so far to account for the war outcome, but alone cannot explain the outcome. The first is Israel’s military numerical superiority. Desch has argued that Israel’s numerical superiority partly accounts for its victory. The Arab-Israeli balance in manpower in engaged forces was roughly even: on June 5-7, the balance ratio was

1.3: 1 and on June 9-10 was 1:1.05. Citing the CIA estimate on May 26, 1967 that 50,000 Egyptian were facing 180,000 Israeli troops approximately, i.e., Israel had between a 2:1 and 3:1 quantitative advantage in Sinai front alone, Desch shares Ronald Popp's argument that given these numbers "the Israeli victory is less stunning than self-evident" (Popp 2006, 303-4; Desch 2008, 136-7). However, while the even balance in manpower might question the claim that Israel was outnumbered, it cannot explain the outcome since conventional military wisdom holds that "quantitative balance between the defender and the attacker should be 3:1 in favor of the attacker" (Tal 1989, 41). Also, the CIA estimate of the balance of forces on May 26, 1967 was no longer valid on the eve of battle. According to Egyptian Chief-of-Staff at the time, Gen. Fawzi, "the Egyptian forces amassed in Sinai in the morning of June 5, 1967 were 10,000 officers and 130,000 soldiers" (Fawzi 1984, 93). Finally, Israel's numerical superiority was highly contingent on Arab political decisions. As Desch acknowledges: "the *most important* advantage Israel had in 1967 was that Arab unity was largely illusory and the Jewish state never really had to face a united coalition of adversaries" (Desch 2008, 137; emphasis added).

The second explanation is force employment. Cordesman asserted that "the Israelis succeeded because they used a number of key elements of the operational art in concert," including deception, combined arms operations, and manoeuvre (Cordesman 1987, 27). In a similar vein, Biddle has stressed the IDF's successful use of breakthrough and exploitation strategy (Biddle 2006, 43). The third explanation stresses the role of Arab social and cultural attitudes. Pollack has attributed the defeat of Arab armies to their manifestation of similar pathologies: inflexibility, slow reaction, and lack of initiative, which rendered them no match for the IDF troops at the tactical level (Pollack 2004, 78-80, 329-30, and 469-73). Likewise, de Atkine has pointed out the lack of unit cohesion, due to social gap between officers and

soldiers in Arab armies, and lack of trust, manifested in Nasser's misleading of Hussein, as key factors in the Arab defeat in 1967 (de Atkine 2002, 30 and 34).

These two explanations are closely linked: specific social and cultural attitudes, compounded by deficiencies in education and training, inhibited Arab armies from adopting the modern system of force employment that the Israelis – being cosmopolitan, more aggressive, and better educated – mastered. This dual argument seems plausible; given what is now known about the status of the two sides' armies, once the armies engaged the way they did, the IDF had every reason to prevail. However, this explanation remains partial. Force employment and cultural/human capital arguments are highly contingent on decisions made at the political/ strategic levels. The three Arab armies were admittedly in advantageous defensive positions with adequate plans. Yet it was the abandonment of allies and the unplanned massive retreats – both of political rather than cultural or military nature – that essentially allowed Israel to take each of them individually and then to fight disordered armed mobs rather than united and organized, though inferior, forces.

Counterfactuals

Counterfactual 1: The Egyptian leadership decides on May 16-21 on a general war against Israel, but postpones the action until the army was prepared and plans were coordinated with the Arab allies.

How could “a delayed action” have changed the war outcome?

A concerted Arab offensive, following a withdrawal of the Egyptian troops mobilized in Sinai on May 14, was likely to overcome the IDF and occupy parts of Israel, or at least

end in a stalemate like that of 1948. A planned action under a revived UAC would have deprived Israel from the advantage of surprise, used the Arab quantitative superiority to force Israel to fight a multi-front war, and exploited Israel's strategic vulnerability especially on the Jordanian frontiers which were at a distance of 20-15 kilometers from Israel's Mediterranean coast. Israeli accounts on the possibility of such an offensive during Israel's waiting period (*ha-Hamtana*) and its probable consequences indicate that the course of the war would have been different, though not completely changed, in the Arabs' favor if the Egyptians had made the strategic first strike (Herzog 1984, 150-51; Dayan 1976, 334-35).

But the time factor was extremely important. A delay of action would not have definitely been sufficient neither to overcome the inherent cultural weaknesses in Arab armies, nor to fully adapt the modern-system of operations. Nonetheless, it could have given time to elaborate Egypt's offensive plan, code-named *Fajr* (Dawn), which the Field Marshal hastily proposed on May 23 (Fawzi 1984, 107-8), to gather and analyze intelligence, and to train the troops accordingly. For example, Egypt's 2nd Armored Brigade was significantly upgraded in both equipment and training from April 1966 to March 1967 (Ali 1994, 205-6). Thus, it is probable that a delay of action until March 1968 could have been sufficient. It might be argued that preparations for such a delayed action would have provoked an Israeli preemption. True, but Israel's preemptive strike would have probably failed to gain any significant achievement had the Arab leaderships (even individually) stuck to their defensive plans, as explained in greater detail below.

Why would "a delayed action" have been possible?

There are three reasons why this counterfactual was possible. First, the option of delaying military confrontation was actually raised by Nasser himself. In the meeting of the

ASU Supreme Executive Committee on May 21, Nasser asserted that if the Egyptian Armed Forces was not ready yet, he could find a way out of the current crisis by political action until preparations were complete (Heikal 1990, 576). Second, it was possible for Nasser to withdraw his forces while saving face by claiming that the Egyptian mobilization had already deterred the Israeli attack against Syria – Egypt’s declared aim – as he did in Operation *Rotem* in 1960. Third, it is consistent with the widely acknowledged argument that Nasser had no intention to initiate war at that time, and with his previous behavior in turning down calls from his fellow Arabs to go to war against Israel during the 1960s until the right time. In the Arab Summit of January 1964, held after Israel’s diversion of the Jordan River water, Nasser detailed these preconditions for war against Israel: “[Arab states] must first attain and secure Arab unity. They must also reform and expand their armies to the point where they were bigger, stronger and better than the IDF. Finally, they must ensure Israel’s diplomatic isolation” (Gat 2005, 615).

Ostensibly, a critical challenge to this counterfactual is whether the UAC could have really been activated given the inter-Arab conflicts. Nonetheless, Nasser’s evident popularity over Arab masses and his regional leadership cannot be overlooked. In retrospect, it was Nasser’s influence which forced King Hussein in 1955 to dismiss General Glubb, the commander of the Arab Legion, and other British officers (Dupuy 1992, 130), and it was only under Nasser’s request that Jordan did not join forces in the Suez War 1956. Likewise, it was Nasser’s overwhelming popularity among Arab masses that led to the Egyptian-Syrian merger as the United Arab Republic in 1958. Thus, it is not unlikely that had Nasser had sufficient time, he would soon unite Arab allies practically under his command.

What could have made “a delayed action” possible?

A better performance of the decision-making tasks could have made this counterfactual possible. It is not unrealistic to assume that had Arab decision-makers made a better job at defining their aims, they could have probably averted escalation and delayed action. Given Nasser’s awareness of the unreliability of the current Syrian regime, he could have avoided entrapment into war by Syria’s reckless behavior through restraining Syria or reducing his alliance commitments (Snyder 1997, 185-86; Seale 1988, 126). A more thorough information search and processing could also have convinced the Egyptian leadership of the logic of delay given the army’s low preparedness. Also, had the Egyptian leadership invested more in clarifying the position of and interpreting the signals from Moscow, it might have been discouraged from escalation since its major ally was not ready to offer the perceived support. Had this been the case, a natural choice of Nasser was to accept the alternative offered by his ambassador to the UN of delaying action.

In Syria, though Patrick Seale downplays the importance of the false Israeli mobilization report and assigns greater importance to an Israeli conspiracy to entrap Nasser (Seale 1988, 128-29), a careful survey of objectives by the Syrian leadership testing the link between ends and means would not have led to such undertaking. Had Syria’s objective been to restore deterrence after the April air battle (not excluding promoting the regime’s status), they might have preferred to maintain credibility with allies. A more thorough information search should have convinced them that Moscow was not going to offer substantial military support in case of war. A better information processing would have prevented Damascus from practicing classical alliance abandonment: failure to fulfill alliance commitments when the *casus foederis* clearly arises (Snyder 1997, 182), and rather conducted joint military

planning with Egypt and Jordan and mobilized its army, which would have prevented Israel from fighting the three countries in turn, until the right time comes.

Even though King Hussein might have relatively made the best of Arab decision-making, his eleventh-hour alliance was hardly forming an effective military coalition (Walt 1987, 51). This alliance was ostensibly consistent with the King's objective, but had the King consulted his political or military staff adequately or paid greater heed to the information he received from his advisors, he would have probably recognized that the timing for this alliance was critical; in the absence of its prerequisites (adequate military planning and Syrian air cover) it was better to delay action until they were met.

Counterfactual 2: Egyptian and Syrian decision-makers decide on June 5-9 to stick to their pre-prepared defensive plans in the face of the IDF offensives.

How could “sticking to the pre-prepared plans” have changed the war outcome?

The basic concept of the Egyptian plan, code-named Operation *Qahir* (Vanquisher), was mobile defense in depth. Accurately identifying key advance routes, it deployed an infantry screen in eastern Sinai to disrupt the Israeli advance, set up the main force in central Sinai to envelop the marching IDF, and positioned a strategic reserve back at the Passes (western Sinai) to destroy enemy forces that might evade the proposed envelopment (Fawzi 1984, 100-01; Dupuy 1992, 240-41). The plan did not expect sand dunes in north-east Sinai to be passable, while in fact they were used by the Israelis, and had some inadequacies in training (Fawzi 1984, 100-01; Pollack 2004, 60), but it was a sound plan fitting the capabilities of the average soldier. Therefore, the diversion from *Qahir* was the “most disruptive of Cairo's action” (Pollack 2004, 61).

Carrying out the pre-prepared plan (and, if partially failed, an organized retreat and defense of the Passes, i.e., second phase of *Qahir*) while compensating for the air force losses would have far-reaching consequences. This would have deprived the IDF from reaching the Canal and expose it to attacks in the plain desert in central Sinai (or prolong the fighting to time periods intolerable to Israel), while allowing a greater effort by the allies who were yet to be fully engaged. Trevor Dupuy writes that by the afternoon of June 5, i.e., after the preemptive Israeli strike, that *Qahir* was “designed to deal with exactly the kind of attack which was being received, and that it still could have been implemented, despite the manner in which [Amer] had confused the deployments in the days before the war” (Dupuy 1992, 267).

In the Golan, the Syrians had taken advantage of the rocky terrain and prepared a formidable defense zone of bunkers and tank and gun emplacements throughout the depth of the plateau with interlocking fields of fire. It was highly probable that a sticking to this defense plan would have greatly impeded the Israeli advance. In fact, during the day of June 9 when the plan was being held, the Syrian troops in the Golan were achieving victories and caused the IDF heavy losses – forcing Israel to decide to halt the attack (Rabin 1979, 117; Bartov 2002, 157). Pollack accurately identified the main cause of Syrian defeat but for the wrong reason. In his view, the Syrian plan was “obvious and entirely appropriate ... The critical Syrian failing was the unwillingness of any officer in the chain of command to take the initiative and actually execute the counterattacks that were the key to their defensive plan” (Pollack 2004, 469). But to initiate a counterattack is not the decision of individual commanders but rather that of the political and military leadership.

On the other hand, the impact of the unplanned retreat cannot be exaggerated. Rabin recalls: “the announcement [of the fall of Qunaytra] had two immediate results: the retreat of

the Syrian troops turned into a panic-stricken flight; and, in view of this turn of events, our defense minister extended the deadline for our offensive until 2:00 P.M.” (Rabin 1979, 117-18). Also, the IDF attacked the Golan with seven brigades, four of which were called from the Sinai and West Bank fronts once the fighting there was over; in other words, the IDF superiority was partly the result of the failure of the other two Arab armies to hold their lines.

Why would “sticking to the pre-prepared plans” have been possible?

There are two reasons why this counterfactual was possible. First, when a surprise attack occurs, it is natural to expect decision-makers of the target state to carry out the defensive plan that took years of preparations. That is not to say that pre-prepared plans are necessarily appropriate, but it is simply unusual to make a drastic diversion from such plans abruptly, especially when the offensive comes as these plans anticipated. Second, after the political leadership in Egypt and Syria made their decisions for massive retreats, they later attempted to return to the original plan. Based on advices from the Soviet military attaché in Cairo, Marshal Amer changed his mind in the night of June 6-7, giving orders to hold the defenses of the Passes, but it was too late (Fawzi 1984, 156). Similarly, Minister of Defense Assad ordered a broadcast of a correction of the retreat orders over the radio but the Syrian forces had already been in chaos by that time (Seale 1988, 140-41). This means that the pre-prepared plans were fitting the military situation, and were the natural choice in the first place but for the decisions on massive retreats.

What could have made “sticking to the pre-prepared plans” possible?

A better performance of the decision-making tasks could have been made this counterfactual possible. An improved survey of objectives would probably have led the

Egyptian leadership to adopt more appropriate means to achieve the objective of saving the army other than the unplanned massive retreat which had no chance of success by its very nature. The same applies to the survey of alternatives. What could have happened had the Egyptian leadership explicitly discussed the merits of the two alternatives it faced on June 6? It should have reasoned that given the Israeli surprise attack, the opportunity of preemption had already been missed, and that the pre-prepared defensive plan should be carried out. At the very least, it would have decided on an ordered retreat that would have saved the army while inflicting heavy losses in the attacking forces, as the General Staff actually recommended (Fawzi 1984, 150-51).

The Egyptian information search and processing could not have been worse. Had Amer consulted with President Nasser and his Chief-of-Staff; had the Egyptian leadership spent a little more effort and sufficient time investigating the military situation, it is almost certain that they would have reached the conclusion that despite the IAF strike, the military situation was not bleak and there was an opportunity to regroup and initiate the counterattack as *Qahir* prescribed and, accordingly, ordered carrying out *Qahir*, even out of “face saving” considerations instead of the humiliating retreat that took place.

The situation in Damascus was no different. An improved survey of objectives would probably have led the Syrian leadership to adopt more appropriate means to achieve objective of saving the army other than the unplanned massive retreat which had no chance of success. Surveying their alternatives, what could have happened had the Syrian leadership explicitly discussed the merits of the two alternatives it faced on June 9-10? It should have reasoned that given the IAF air superiority, retreating forces would be destroyed from the air, and their best hope was to hold the defense line, especially when the cease-fire was to enter into force at any time.

At the same time, had the Syrian leaders held joint meetings for consultation, sought counsel from the Soviet military advisers, or coordinated with their allies, nobody would have probably suggested such a retreat and everybody would have recommend to hold the defenses. Had the Syrian leaders paid the slightest attention to the Egyptian retreat of June 6, or even the reports of their own officers in the Golan, they would have concluded that retreating under IAF superiority is a recipe for suicide, especially when the Syrian resistance in the Golan proved to be paying.

Counterfactual 3: The Israeli government decides on June 4 on further delay of action well until diplomatic means to open the Straits got exhausted.

How could “a delayed action” have changed the war outcome?

Had Israel waited longer (that is a further delay of decision) there is a great probability that Nasser would have been convinced that Israel was really on the edge of collapse and that the United States was unwilling to intervene. Thus, even when he did not intend to initiate a war, he might have been well tempted to follow Amer’s earlier offensive plans against Israel. In Allon’s view, “in anticipation of the arrival of such an international expeditionary fleet, the Arab High Command [could] put forward the date of its attack on Israel” (Allon 1970, 81). Of course, the possibility of this counterfactual depends on the aforementioned counterfactual of an Arab “delayed action.” In particular, apart from depriving the IDF from the element of surprise, an Israeli delay of action would have given the Arabs the time they needed for coordination, intelligence gathering, and training.

Second, had both Israel and the Arabs decided to delay action, the Arabs would have added a far decisive numerical superiority to their preparations. Israel depended on a people’s army whose extended mobilization would result, as it did in May-June 1967, in

paralyzing the country's economy. Accordingly, what would have naturally followed a decision on a further delay of action is a de-mobilization of the IDF. Given that Israel in 1967 manned a regular army of 55,000 men in peace time and that the mobilized Egyptian army in Sinai was 130,000 soldiers, the numerical superiority would have been 3:1 in the Arabs' favor in Sinai alone. Had Israel delayed action and the Arabs attacked first, they would have caught Israel off guard as they did six years later on October 6, 1973.

Why would "a delayed action" have been possible?

A delayed action by Israel was possible for two reasons. First, this option was actually raised for not unreasonable arguments. Proponents of further delay, the ministers Barziali and Bentov, were concerned that an immediate Israeli first strike would complicate relations with the United States whose efforts to open the Straits were yet to be exhausted, especially that Israel would need US arms supply in case of war. Accordingly, they proposed to wait for the US efforts to set up an international task force to open the Straits. Second, the results of Israel's eleventh-hour deliberations with the Johnson administration to clarify the US position – the decisive factor in the decision to preempt – were not entirely clear-cut. Rather, there were strong voices in Israel asking for a delay of action. Up until the night of June 4, the influential former Prime Minister David Ben Gurion was advising caution until Israel had secured a strong alliance with the Western superpowers as it was the case in the Suez War of 1956 (Troen and Shalom 1999, 209).

What could have made "a delayed action" possible?

A worse performance of the decision-making tasks on Israel's side could have been made this counterfactual possible. A poorer survey of objectives would probably have led Israel's leaders to confuse, instead of the single clear aim of restoring deterrence, between

the latter objective and opening the Straits, because the task force might have opened the straits but would not have restored Israeli deterrence – a confusion which actually happened in the earlier decision to delay (Stein and Tanter 1980, 166-67). Also, with less thorough survey of alternatives, Israel might have not considered its best option in preemption. Setting the aim as opening the Straits would have necessitated selecting the alternative of delaying action awaiting the formation of the international naval force since Israel could not practically open the Straits without initiating hostilities.

At the same time, had it not been for the rigorous information search conducted by the Israeli government – Eshkol’s wide consultations with his colleagues and the military, Eban’s “meticulous scrutiny” of all cables with the United States and Amit’s last minute “fact finding” mission to Washington – Israel might have fallen into the dual misperception of overestimating the United States’ commitment to the international naval force and underestimating its support for a war initiated by Israel. Equally, had the Israeli government not processed the incoming information carefully, it was very likely to stick to its previous position, that is a delay of action, because it would have concluded that nothing required a change of position.

Conclusion

Israel’s astonishing victory in June 1967 cannot apparently be accounted for by the “selection-effects” mechanisms. Autocratic leaders in Egypt, Syria and Jordan were proportionally punished for their role in the defeat, while Israeli policy makers were influenced in making decisions by factors other than the concern with electoral chances. On the other hand, the evidence on informational constraints is mixed on the Arab side. Arab leaders in most cases enjoyed public support and were fed by their institutional settings of

accurate information. Israel's leaders also enjoyed accurate information which enabled them to make better estimates of victory. But the sources were the bureaucracy and the military not the free press and the marketplace of ideas in society.

As my argument would predict, in the pre-war period it was the threat environment in the Arabs' favor and the lack of group cohesion vis-à-vis group cohesion in Israel that caused the disparity in the quality of the decision-making processes on both sides. Arab performances of the decision procedural tasks was usually either "very poorly" or "poorly," whereas Israel's performance of the decision procedural tasks was usually either "very well" or "well." In wartime, the threat environment was reversed but group incohesion persisted on both sides. Arab performances of procedural tasks were all "very poorly" but one, while Israeli policy makers engaged in process was of poor-quality in deciding to attack Syria.

In turn, this disparity in the quality of the decision-making processes in the war participants had had a significant impact on the war outcome. Other explanations, the IDF numerical superiority in the front, Israel's advantage in modern force employment, and defective Arab social and cultural attitudes, are also plausible, but these explanations remain both partial and their influence was made possible by political decisions. The analysis of three counterfactual scenarios – Egypt decides to preempt but postpones action; Egypt and Syria decide to stick to their pre-prepared defensive plans; and Israel decides on a further delay of action – has demonstrated that had only decision-makers performed their procedural tasks differently, they probably would have made different choices, and the war could have ended with an Arab victory or a stalemate.

Chapter Five

The War of Attrition, 1969-1970

Case Outline

The June 1967 war ended with the Israeli occupation of the Sinai Peninsula. On June 19, 1967 the government of Israel decided that Israel would be willing to return the occupied territories, except East Jerusalem, in exchange for full negotiated peace. For this, Israel adopted a static defense posture and built a string of fortifications, the Bar-Lev Line, along the east bank of the Suez Canal. Fire had not virtually ceased ever since, but it remained essentially sporadic. Nonetheless, with neither Egypt accepting a bilateral peace treaty nor Israel accepting a withdrawal in return for “the end of belligerency,” the political situation was a stalemate for the next two years.

In early March 1969 the Egyptian leadership decided to initiate a more intensive campaign involving concentrated and systematic use of artillery and commando operations – the War of Attrition. The aim was to force Israel to an acceptable diplomatic solution, raise the morale of the army and prepare it for the next round of military action. Initially, Israel retaliated with artillery barrages and air strikes against Egyptian troops along the canal, but this did not stop the steady increase in IDF casualties.

On January 6, 1970 the MDC approved a proposal to initiate a strategic bombing campaign to end the war through provoking the Egyptian people to revolt against Nasser. Israel’s campaign prompted the Soviet Union to send to Egypt an entire air-defense division, along with 80 MiG 21s and 4 MiG 25, all Soviet-piloted. The first battle between Soviet and

Israeli pilots took place in April 1970. Seriously concerned about a possible superpower confrontation, the United States proposed a plan for a temporary cease-fire for three months. On July 22, 1970 the Egyptian Government accepted the American plan, and Israel extended its agreement as well on July 31, 1970. The cease-fire entered into force on August 8 after a successful forward move of Egypt's air-defense missiles.

Though Egypt had the upper hand by the end of the fighting, the war outcome was a stalemate as coded by the COW Project for two reasons. First, each war participant achieved only part of its objectives. Egypt did not manage to force Israel to accept an agreement to withdraw from Sinai, but the cease-fire was only temporary. Also, the war prepared the army for the next round of military action, and ended Israel's air superiority over the Canal front. Israel on its part was successful in bringing the fighting to an end under no withdrawal commitment. But it failed either to topple the Nasser regime or to maintain its air superiority over the front (Khalidi 1973, 77-82).

Second, though an alternation of the status quo did occur, the net balance resulted in a draw. Indeed, the Egyptians ended up with having a surface-to-air missile system that prevented the IAF from undertaking missions deep inside Egypt and, more importantly, covered the Canal area which would help the Egyptians later to cross this significant water obstacle. Nonetheless, Israel remained its occupation of the Sinai while the Egyptians lacked the means to challenge the IDF's overall superiority and end this occupation by force.

Democratic Victory Theory

Selection Effects: Institutional Constraints

This mechanism does not appear to be entirely at work for the Egyptian decision to go to war. Unlike the democratic triumphalists' argument that autocrats are reckless about going to war since the populace is not empowered to punish them, Nasser was *the* advocate of a peaceful solution within the regime and repeatedly preached caution vis-à-vis the voices demanding an immediate initiation of war. Moreover, whereas the Egyptian public still lacked institutional means to change the government, the severe student demonstrations in November 1968 demanding military action to liberate the occupied territories were, at least as perceived by Nasser, a clear threat to topple the regime (ASU, Protocol of the Central Committee Meeting, 27 November, 1968).

At the same time, Nasser had continued to serve as President and was likely to be elected for another term in office had he lived to the next presidential referendum (though he had promised to resign, for his responsibility for 1967 defeat, once Sinai was liberated). This should not be surprising given that Egypt did not lose the war; and a pro-democratic victory argument can be made that he was not likely to leave office anyway. But the point of interest here is that advocates of democratic victory theory, which does not expect a non-democracy to win in the first place, have excluded draws from their analysis.

On the other hand, though Israel was the target of the war, Israel's decision to hold the waterline in a static defense had an impact both on the Egyptian decision to initiate the war and its course. The institutional constraints could only make partial claims on what happened. It might still be argued that Israel was not technically defeated and therefore its leaders were not supposed to lose office or resign, though other analysts, prominently Israeli

generals Ezer Weizman and Matetiyahu Peled, claim that Israel actually lost the war (Khalidi 1973, 80). But the institutional mechanism also expects democratic leaders to lose office in costly wars. For the casualty-hypersensitive Jewish state, this war was very costly: 400 troops were killed and 1,100 were wounded (Dupuy 1992, 369), in addition to the high financial cost: hundreds of millions of dollars spent on fortifications and replacements. No Israeli elected official, however, offered to assume responsibility for this costly war.

Selection Effects: Informational Constraints

The mechanism that democratic triumphlists suggest that it governs the behavior of non-democratic regimes hardly applies to the Egyptian case in the decision to initiate the war. True, Nasser's regime maintained strict control over the media and the press, and allowed little freedom of action for opposition groups. But these policies did not prevent Nasser from receiving accurate information (which were not always optimistic) about the costs of war and the probability of victory, as explained below.

At the same time, the Egyptian leadership was not insulated from the public opinion which played a crucial role in the decision to initiate the war. There is no reason to believe, as democratic triumphlists' logic might suggest, that the public opinion was manipulated by the government-run media because the opinion the public expressed was anti-government. In January 1968, after the military court convicted two commanders for their role in the June defeat, mass demonstrations in Cairo openly accused Nasser of using these officers as a scapegoat for his own responsibility for the defeat. Second, student demonstrations in November 1968 explicitly criticized the government for its inability to liberate Sinai and demanded a military action. These student demonstrations demanding action convinced

Nasser that the continuation of fighting, though not a general war, was necessary (ASU, Protocol of the Central Committee Meeting, 27 November, 1968). Thus, when Nasser decided to initiate war, he obviously had the public in his support.

In Israel, little public discussion appears to have been in place on the appropriate strategy to deal with the situation on the Canal front. Israeli decision makers had exclusively relied on the information presented by the Chief-of-Staff and the Chief of AMAN. Accordingly, as Dan Margalit asserts, “although the wide freedom of expression in Jerusalem and the society is really small so that all the important people of the government meet each other in professional and social settings, the government’s sources of information were very limited” (Margalit 1971, 36-37). Opposition parties played little role in enriching the discussion, not only because they were included in the national unity government and had little interest in toppling the government but primarily because the Cabinet did not make a clear-cut decision in the first place.

Threat Environment, Group Cohesion, and Decision-Making in Egypt

The Decision to Initiate War

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

The rise of threat to Egypt’s security cannot be exaggerated. First, the destruction of the air force and the army in Sinai left Egypt extremely vulnerable; the Egyptian armed forces had to be literally “re-built.” Egyptian casualties were 10,000 soldiers and 1,500 officers (another 5,000 soldiers and 500 officers were captured by the Israelis) in a matter of days. In addition to the loss of virtually the entire air force, Egypt lost 700 tanks, 400 field

guns, and about 10,000 trucks and other vehicles. President Nasser confirmed in November 23, 1967 that 80 percent of the country's military equipment has been lost (Dupuy 1992, 279). While the lost equipment could be replaced by the Soviet Union, trained soldiers and crewmen lost in battle would take long time to compensate for, not to mention the demoralization of troops following the shocking defeat.

Second, Israel's occupation of Sinai deprived Egypt from the desert barrier separating between the IDF and Egypt's population centers in the Nile Delta and Cairo – something that raised an explicit threat of invasion since Cairo was only 120 kilometer away from the Suez Canal. Another important implication of this occupation was that it significantly increased Israel's offensive capability vis-à-vis Egypt – which was later to be proved valid during the War of Attrition. For example, it had extended the range of the IAF planes (already qualitatively superior) simply by stationing them in Sinai forward airfields, and enabled Israeli commando units to fulfill missions deep inside Egypt. By contrast, the EAF could no longer reach Israel since the range of its planes was shortened by being forced to position west to the Canal, and commando units would have to pass through the entire Sinai desert to undertake operations inside Israel.

Third, the building of Bar-Lev Line further complicated Egypt's security environment; it confirmed Nasser's conviction "that Israel meant to hold all of Sinai [and] that it had no intention of ever getting out" (Korn 1992, 108). Indeed, holding the canal would provide Israel with "strategically defensible borders" (Allon 1970, 99), and Bar-Lev Line would reduce casualties from Egyptian shelling and sniping. But building fortifications on the waterline, Major Gen. Israel Tal argued, "mounted to an invitation to the Egyptians to start shooting. In fact, it made it difficult for them not to shoot" (Korn 1992, 103). Finally, Egypt could not possibly wish to rely on getting support from other Arab allies bordering

Israel, i.e., Syria and Jordan. Damascus and Amman had their armed forces equally devastated by the last war and were facing significant obstacles in any future war to liberate their own occupied territories.

Past experience was no less important. The losses of the war were of catastrophic proportions. The sudden humiliating defeat against the background of overconfidence, numerical advantage, and the triumphant propaganda shocked the Egyptians to their bones. The outcome of the war required that they would have to be extremely cautious before going to another conflict against Israel, especially when the Egyptian leadership recognized that it was its own mistakes that were largely responsible for the disaster.

As for leadership group cohesion, Egypt's decision makers constituted a relatively cohesive group before the War of Attrition. In the aftermath of June 1967, Amer, Badran, and Nasr held no longer their official posts. It was then that the President restored his leadership role. Handpicked by Nasser, the group members were the President's trustees who did not attempt to compete for power. Amin Howidy, former Deputy Chief of the GIS, became the new Minister of War (June 1967 – January 1968). Gen. Fawzi was appointed Commander-in-Chief (June 1967 – May 1971) and later Minister of War (January 1968 – May 1971). Howeidy was later to assume, in addition to his ministerial post, the position of the Chief of the GIS (August 1967 – May 1970). The new Chief-of-Staff Lt. Gen. Abdel Munim Riyad was a highly professional soldier with little interest in politics. Nevertheless, a hidden conflict existed between Howeidy and Fawzi; the former considered the latter incompetent for his post because of his role in the defeat (Howeidy 1992, 93-94).

Decision-Making

Egyptian decision-making process reflected the threat environment clearly favoring Israel. In Nasser's talk to Gen. Fawzi in mid-June 1967, he stressed that as a result of military defeat, the coordination between the government ministers and an intensification of contacts with the Soviet Union and Arab countries became a must (Fawzi 1984, 188-89). In the words of Amin Howeidy:

There had to be a change in [Nasser's] management of the conflict because the problem then transformed to be the occupation of our territory and the destruction of our armed forces ... a decision cannot be divorced from the prevailing circumstances, and Egypt's decision-making had shifted with the change of these circumstances; to make a decision when your territory is unoccupied is totally different from making a decision when your territory is occupied. Thus, Nasser was very objective in his decisions" (Howeidy 2007).

Nasser was perhaps an example *par excellence* of how leaders learn from their failures more than from successes. The bitter experience of *al-Naksa* (or setback) of June 1967 remarkably changed him. Acknowledging that the responsibility for the miscalculation in May 1967 was his own, he tended to be more realistic and aspired only to regain the lost territories (Shamir 1978, 191-92). After his unlimited trust in Field Marshal Amer resulted in a disaster, Nasser became more critical of views presented to him (Farid 1979, 20). At the same time, the focus on the Armed Forces "absorbed all of Nasser's time, effort and attention" (Farid, Stephens, and Auda 1981, 5). Howeidy used to criticize Fawzi's management of the war, especially the building of the Bar-Lev Line under no Egyptian intervention and his inaccurate reporting on the course of battles, to an extent that he suggested to Nasser replacing the military command (Howeidy 1992, 143-4 and 194-5;

Howeidy 2007). Therefore, Gen. Fawzi, in his attempt to enhance his credentials, especially in the face of Howeidy's questioning of Fawzi's credit, had probably advocating the war-initiation argument.

In the decision to initiate war, Egyptian decision-makers performed the task of surveying objectives reasonably "well." They were engaged in debating the merits of two theories: general war and limited war. Acquiescence to the status quo was completely unacceptable, especially under a humiliating military defeat, while a consideration of accepting a peaceful solution became increasingly limited. Drawing on the lessons of June 1967, they specified two preconditions for a general war: absolute military superiority over Israel and a unified Arab command. For obvious reasons, however, this approach could not be decided by Egypt alone. In a limited war, Egypt had two main political aims: to force Israel to agree to diplomatic initiatives in support of acceptable peaceful solution (withdrawal with no political settlement), and to restore confidence and combat ability in the Egyptian army (Shazly 2003, 62; El-Gamasy 1993, 107). Egypt employed a strategy of attrition taking advantage of its quantitative superiority in the front to inflict unacceptable casualties on the IDF.

Accurately estimating the relative military capabilities, Egypt's leaders realized that their strategy should work so long as Israel did not escalate the war. This, they reasoned, was unlikely because of the favorable asymmetry of interest; since Israel was less committed to defend the status quo along the Canal than Egypt was to recapture Sinai (Heikal 1969), and Israel would be deterred from escalation by Soviet involvement in Egypt. But this is a question of the extent to which the Soviet intervention was considered and effectively invoked by the Egyptian leadership. Immediately after the June 1967 defeat, and repeatedly afterwards, Nasser formally requested direct Soviet military participation in air defenses

(Farid 1979, 29-30). In May 1968, the USSR approved the deployment of 120 Soviet pilots in operational missions in Egypt, and in December 1969 it approved the deployment of limited air and air-defense units scheduled to become operational by October 1970 (Riyad 1985, 184 and 224-25; Farid 1979, 153; Fawzi 1984, 350-51). The large-scale Soviet intervention, provoked by the Israeli in-depth raids, eventually forced the Israeli escalation to a halt in mid-1970. Accordingly, the Egyptian assumption on Soviet reliability was overall valid but flawed only in the expectation that Israel would be deterred by the *possibility* of intervention which took ten months to materialize.

Egyptian decision makers made a “neutral” survey of alternatives. General war to liberate Sinai would have been the optimum. Nevertheless, it was excluded for the failure to open an “eastern front” against Israel by Syria and Jordan, and for the wide gap in military capability between Egypt and Israel, mainly in the air force but also in ground offensive weaponry and training (ASU, Protocol of the Central Committee Meeting, 11 December, 1968; Protocol of the Central Committee Meeting, 12 February, 1969). The Soviet Union refrained all along from providing Egypt of long-range bombers or more advanced fighter planes lest this would prompt Nasser to initiate another losing battle.

On the other hand, Nasser initially favored a peaceful solution, arguing that “war is not for the sake of war but it is a means for the achievement of political and strategic aims” (Farid 1979, 119). It would secure the return of Sinai and save Egypt the enormous cost in lives and money for war. By the end of 1968, however, Egypt’s leaders concluded that a peaceful solution was hopeless for the failure of all diplomatic initiatives, including the Egyptian plan at the end of 1967 to reopen the Canal, and Ambassador Gunnar Jarring’s UN mission to implement the Security Council Resolution 242. Israel rejected the maximum of concessions Egypt could offer (freedom of shipping, reciprocal demilitarized zones,

deployment of UN forces, and end of belligerency) and insisted on a contractual agreement endorsing secure and recognized borders (Farid 1979, 112). Moreover, Nasser drew on the experience of King Hussein who though adopting pro-American policies could not secure the return of the West Bank (ASU, Protocol of the Central Committee Meeting, 6 November, 1968). Thus the alternative of a limited war became increasingly attractive since it suited the current military capability, and allowed for the exploitation of Egypt's high tolerance of casualties vis-à-vis Israel's sensitivity for them. At the same time, it would not allow Israel to hold its grip over the Sinai (Bar-Siman-Tov 1980, 45-46). The disadvantage of this strategy, that is the likelihood of Israel escalation, was not examined carefully as it was thought to be countered by the possible Soviet intervention. The strategy of attrition is dependent on the capacity of the initiator to "persuade" the adversary to keep within the limits the initiator is trying to dictate by political and military pressures, including the threat to invoke a foreign intervention (Bar-Siman-Tov 1980, 3). Stein argues that it was not at all clear how Israel would refrain from escalation in the face of unacceptable casualties, and thus Egypt's leaders chose "a military strategy that would provoke the very contingency they sought to avoid" (Stein 1985, 44).

The group performance of information search was relatively "well." Military commanders and the Soviet advisors were consulted, sometimes in person by Nasser, on the extent to which the current balance of forces in the Canal front would allow the start of operations (El-Gamasy 1993, 107-13; Heikal 1975, 51-52). Both the Cabinet and the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) Central Committee were regularly briefed by General Fawzi on the progress achieved in re-building the armed forces (Farid 1979, 147-48 and 154-55). Nasser seriously studied the reports from the GIS on the capabilities of the IDF in Sinai and its estimated response to escalation (Howeidy 1992, 140-41). Intelligence reports also included

the status of the Egyptian army itself to avoid repeating the blunder of 1967 when Nasser was unable to ascertain the real capabilities of his forces (Howeidy 1992, 139-40). The Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riyad presented his analyses both to Nasser and to the Cabinet. Riyad's estimates on the possibility of a diplomatic solution went gradually pessimistic, especially after the Israeli raid on Beirut airport in December 1969 (Farid 1979, 122). At the same time, however, the decision makers did not appear to make adequate effort to involve the Foreign Ministry bureaucracy in the process. Nor did they consult others not in the immediate decision-making circle.

To secure the support from Moscow before going to war, Nasser went as far as to offer to give the command of Egypt's air-defense to the Soviet Union. Nasser wanted the Soviets to perceive Egypt's defeat as their own because this would lead to a greater Soviet aid to Egypt to offset the American support to Israel (Heikal 1975, 47). Nasser's pursuit was partially successful; though the Moscow's reluctance to deploy large number of troops in Egypt, Soviet arms that poured into Egypt compensated for much of what was lost in June 1967, and Soviet military experts were introduced into the Egyptian army down to the battalion level (Glassman 1975, 66-68). In July 1968 Nasser flew to Moscow to clarify the Soviet stand towards a renewal of fighting, and he apparently received the Soviet approval for his plans and for new arms deliveries (Glassman 1975, 69; Eran 1978, 33). Nonetheless, Nasser spent less effort to ascertain the assumption of a Soviet intervention in case of Israeli escalation.

Information processing by the Egyptian leadership was performed "poorly." Nasser demonstrated certain indications of biased information processing. Meetings of the Cabinet, the ASU Supreme Executive Committee, and the Central Committee, tended to start with the President explaining the situation and putting forward his dispositions. For example, in the

ASU Supreme Executive Committee meeting before deciding to initiate the war, Nasser put the question: “should we keep silent in the front, or start action?” Nasser then promptly answered his question by saying “I think it’s politically wrong to keep silent. Rather, we have to start military operations gradually” (Farid 1979, 157). In particular, the Israeli tendency to escalate using the air force since 1967 should have warned Nasser against the new policy he advocated.

The Decision to Accept the Cease-Fire

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

In the decision to accept the cease-fire, the gap in the balance of power has remained essentially the same; the continued occupation of Sinai and its serious implications for Egypt’s security did not change. Most of Egypt’s military equipment had been replaced, but, according to Howeidy, “[the Egyptians] were able neither to prevent the enemy from attacking deep inside Egypt nor to attack the enemy’s depth. At the same time, [the Egyptians] could not achieve air superiority over the battlefield” (Howeidy 1992, 202). Indeed, Egypt position has been improved by the Soviet intervention, but this improvement should not be overestimated. The Soviet intervention enhanced Egypt’s defenses against the IAF but it added little to Egypt’s offensive capabilities. At the same time, Syrian and Jordan could not be relied upon in any military effort against Israel since they not only continued their rivalry but also engaged in a mini-war in September 1970 after a Syrian attempt to invade Jordan.

Unlike the threat environment, a remarkable change took place in the group cohesion. In May 1970, Howeidy was relieved from his post as Chief of the GIS to be appointed a

Minister without Portfolio. He was replaced by Hafez Ismail, Egypt's former Ambassador to Paris, who had a convenient relationship with Fawzi, and thus the decision-making group turned into a cohesive group.

Decision-Making

Egyptian decision-makers performed the task of surveying objectives "well." They had one clear aim: moving the air-defense missile system eastward (Heikal 1975, 93; Farid 1979, 217). This aim, tactical as it may, had far-reaching strategic implications. It was conceived in terms of two theories: to accept the cease-fire or to reject it. Given that the Attrition was the third stage of Egypt's four-phase strategy – "Defiance," "Active Defense," "Attrition," and "Liberation" – a completion of the air-defense system had to be completed to provide a protective cover from the IAF for the Egyptian troops that would cross the Canal. A short time of quiet was needed for this, and the proposed three-month cease-fire provided precisely that. A rejection of the cease-fire would make the completion of the air-defense system unlikely not only because of the unabated Israeli air attacks, as it was the case since December 1969, but also because it could be used by Israel as a pretext to ask for more Phantoms from the United States – making the military balance even worse for Egypt.

Egypt's leaders performed "well" the task of reviewing the available alternatives. Rejecting the proposal would prevent an erosion of Moscow's regional standing, since an acceptance would imply that it was the United States that had the influence to force a settlement (Howeidy 1992, 183). But Nasser estimated that the fact that the cease-fire was proposed by the US guaranteed that Israel would abide by it (Heikal 1975, 95). Rejection would also avoid a public backfire, since the Egyptian people, whose willingness to resist was reinforced by the Israeli in-depth raids, was eager to continue fighting and might see the

cease-fire as a poor outcome of their sacrifices during the war (Howeidy 1992, 192). But Nasser believed that since the proposal brought nothing new in political terms, and that the cease-fire was temporary, it did not mean making any concessions (Farid 1979, 234). On the other hand, rejection would allow Israel to receive more Phantoms and other advanced weaponry from the United States. A greater IAF effort against the missile sites might either deter the Soviets, and then Egypt would be back to quarter number one, or lead them to a deeper intervention, which might result in uncontrolled escalation between the two superpowers on Egyptian soil (Heikal 1993, 118).

Nasser viewed the advantages of accepting the cease-fire as: getting the time needed to finish moving the missile sites, giving the army a break, and cutting civilian casualties. The disadvantage of this alternative was that the movement of missiles would constitute a violation of the cease-fire under the standstill agreement, and, if spotted, Israel would resume the air attacks. It was a risk that the Egyptian leadership accepted, correctly assuming that once the missiles moved, their destruction would be very difficult (as in fact happened in October 1973). Under the disguise that it was making sure that the message reached its outlying garrisons, the Egyptian leadership got a six-hour delay of the cease-fire, during which it got dummy missile batteries into position close to the Canal. Once the cease-fire went into force, it replaced these dummy missiles with real ones (Heikal 1975, 96).

Information search was performed “very well.” On June 20, 1970 Nasser ordered the distribution of the text of the Rogers’s plan among the members of the ASU Supreme Executive Committee and the Cabinet in order to discuss it in their subsequent meetings on July 18 and 19. Simultaneously, he requested detailed studies of the proposal from the General Staff, the GIS, the ASU, the Foreign Ministry, and the President’s Information Office. Gen. Fawzi maintained that a cease-fire might affect the army’s morale, and

recommended a deception plan to exploit the cease-fire to move the missile system eastward, so that operations could re-start after the three-month period (Fawzi 1984, 209-10). Riyadh believed that Egypt should give the proposal a chance given the suspension of the Phantom deliveries by the Nixon administration to Israel and that the Soviet intervention put the interests of the United States at stake (Riyad 1985, 254-55). However, he warned that an acceptance might also disturb Moscow, and recommended further exploration of the positions of the superpowers and negotiation of the details so that the United States would not be the party monitoring the observance of the cease-fire (Riyad 1985, 264). Amin Howeidy considered that a temporary cease-fire would not constitute concessions on Egypt's part, and would give time for a greater preparation of the armed forces during the three-month time (Howeidy 1992, 191-92).

Nasser left for consultations in Moscow on June 29, 1970, four days after he received the proposal and its interpretations. The Soviet leadership was initially reluctant to agree with accepting a proposal "with an American flag on it." However, the Soviets did not insist for long on this objection since they had an interest in bringing the fighting to an end. From their view, the Egyptian military credibility had been reestablished by the Soviet physical presence, but the continuation of fighting might involve the Soviet Union to a direct confrontation with Israel and the United States (Eran 1978, 37). Nasser stayed in Moscow for eighteen days until he got the Soviet support for his acceptance of the cease-fire. Moreover, Moscow approved new arms deliveries including air-defense electronic systems, crossing equipment, and bombers, in addition to the deployment of a Soviet-manned air-defense brigade in Aswan (Howeidy 1992, 184).

The decision-making group made a "well" done job in processing information. Performing the task was effective in that even though the cease-fire was the option preferred

by Nasser, his final decision was revised and tailored to include each of the reservations that were raised. Nasser flew to Moscow to explore the Soviet position on the proposal. He received Moscow's approval not only on accepting the cease-fire but also on new arms deliveries. Also, a plan was prepared by the Ministry of War and the GIS to secretly move the missile system forward before either the Americans or the Israelis could detect it, and implemented under direct supervision of Nasser. Nasser encouraged Howeidy to present his interpretation of the available information on the military situation, saying that "Amin would tell the truth even if it stands against him" (Howeidy 1992, 200). Howeidy questioned the reporting of military commanders on the course of the war and thought it was over-optimistic. Howeidy advised accepting the cease-fire to reassess the situation, given the heavy losses suffered by the army (Howeidy 1992, 194-95).

Likewise, in the ASU Supreme Executive Committee meeting before accepting the cease-fire, Nasser appeared to have already made his mind and started the meeting with a detailed explanation of his decision. However, the President did not limit the consideration of other alternatives. The Committee members expressed reservations on accepting the cease-fire, arguing that the Egyptian people and the Arab leaders would be surprised by, and probably reluctant to accept, this decision after Egypt had rejected many American proposals earlier (Farid 1979, 228-34).

Threat Environment, Group Cohesion, and Decision-Making in Israel

The Decision to Hold the Waterline

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

In the aftermath of the June 1967 War, Israel faced an extremely safe regional environment. Not only did the IDF defeated and substantially weakened the armies of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, but also, and perhaps more importantly, Israel reached borders from which none of the three warring Arab countries could threaten Israel proper – the so-called “secure borders.” These were “secure borders” in the sense of both being natural obstacles and of offering Israel’s the long-awaited strategic depth. The occupation of Sinai, according to Chaim Herzog, “provided an ideal buffer to guarantee Israel’s security against any recurrent threat from Egypt ... the electronic warning period given to Israel in respect of an air attack from Egypt had increased four-fold to sixteen minutes” (Herzog 1984, 195). Even in the unlikely case that the Egyptian army would amount a large-scale attack across the Canal, it would take it so much time to reach the positions it lost in June 1967 – giving the IDF sufficient time to mobilize and counterattack before any Egyptian troops could reach the international border.

In addition, the experience of the six days of war in which the combined Arab armies were defeated caused an unprecedented atmosphere of euphoria and overconfidence in the IDF capabilities to deter and, if necessary, overcome any likely military threat. Israeli decision makers were overwhelmed by their sweeping military victory. To be sure, as Rabin puts it, “the IDF was portrayed as steam-rolling its three adversaries in a breath-taking dash across desert sands and up rocky cliffs” (Rabin 1979, 93). Unsurprisingly, Dayan kept waiting for a phone call from Nasser to negotiate peace.

Israeli decision-making group suffered from a serious lack of cohesion among its members following the victory of June 1967. First there was the rivalry between Eshkol and Dayan which found its first manifestation during the June 1967 in the decision to attack Syria and occupy the Golan. The rivalry persisted with each of Eshkol and Dayan trying to score points and contain each other's power.

Decision-Making

Israel's secure threat environment was clearly reflected in the decision-making process. Israeli decision makers were overwhelmed by their sweeping military victory. As Prime Minister Eshkol put it, "It is possible to prosper, to grow, and to expand, and this is closer to the decisive reality that we are having now," as for the first time since independence, the threats from Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian fronts had been removed (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on June 11, 1967). Also, Minister H.M. Shapira insisted that: "There is no place now for discussions, as we have reached, thanks to God, with the help of Israel's soldiers such an astonishing achievement" (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on June 11, 1967).

But group cohesion also played a role. According to Israel Lior, the Military Secretary of Prime Minister Eshkol, "The hidden and clear rivalry between Eshkol and Dayan created unbearable situations ... [which] one way or another, impaired the political plans in the aftermath of fighting [of June 1967]" (Haber 1987, 292).

In the decision to hold the waterline, decision makers performed the survey of objectives task "very poorly." They deliberately made Israel's position towards the occupied territories ambiguous since specifying details would limit Israel's options in future negotiations. In the Cabinet meetings on 18 and 19 June, 1967, Dayan's view, which the

Cabinet eventually backed, was not to specify Israel's real requests for withdrawal and just to place the general condition of reaching peace, because "every detail is weakening [Israel's position]" (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on June 18, 1967). Similarly, Ministers Karmal and Allon stressed that Israel should not mention the international borders issue and hold territories even after peace (ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on June 18, 1967; ISA, Protocol of the Government Meeting on June 19, 1967). The problem is that the question on whether and to what extent to withdraw remained unresolved and was never actually decided upon. Instead, this decision evolved informally, along three stages: (1) the decision on June 19, 1967 on the willingness to return to the Arab states the occupied territories, except East Jerusalem, in exchange for formal peace agreements (Rabin 1979, 135); (2) a change in August 1967 stressing "secure and recognized borders" (Rabin 1979, 135; Whetten 1974, 50-51); and (3) sticking to literal holding of the cease-fire line along the Canal. Throughout, however, a decision process can hardly be located. Aharon Yariv, the current Chief of AMAN, writes: "The political leadership in Israel never officially made a decision to hold the Canal line, but it acted as though such a decision existed ... This was an over-attachment to the aim which was never formally defined as an aim" (Yariv 1998, 146).

Israel might have wanted to pressure the Arabs for direct negotiations. However, the link between ends and means was missing. The Chief-of-Staff Haim Bar-Lev explained to his staff early in 1968: "So long as we sit on the Suez and the Golan Heights, it is difficult to think that the current [Arab] regimes can agree on whatever reasonable settlement ... Accordingly, the opportunities of such a solution are weak" (Gai 1998, 158). The decision was left to Dayan and Bar-Lev who decided to adopt a static defense strategy, even though Dayan himself was of the opinion that the Egyptians and the Soviets could not accept the Israeli presence along the Canal (Dayan 1976, 448; Gai 1998, 172; Luttwak and Horowitz

1975, 319). This decision was influenced by the strong conviction of many cabinet members that if the IDF did not hold the waterline, the Egyptians would cross the Canal, establish a bridgehead, and, before Israel could do anything, would get a UNSC cease-fire resolution (Korn 1992, 104). Dayan expressed his view to the General Staff in November 1968 that the Soviets might then deter Israel from re-occupying the eastern shore of the Canal by bombing Tel Aviv (Bar-Joseph 2001, 46-47). This assumption, however, was unlikely since “both the Egyptians and the Soviets would have to move extremely fast, and they would have to be sure there would be no American veto or foot-dragging in the Security Council” (Korn 1992, 104).

The Israeli leadership made a “poor” survey of alternatives. As Yariv suggests, “it was possible to request a price from the Egyptians for such a withdrawal [from the waterline], that would have enabled them to open the Canal” (Yariv 1998, 146). In turn, opening the Canal would have given the Egyptians a good incentive not to open fire, but the majority of cabinet members and the General Staff in their post-June 1967 euphoria did not think that Israel should yield (Haber 1987, 342). Serious consideration of alternatives took place only on the military level between those who favored fixed positions on the Canal, and those who advocated mobile defense positions 10-15 kilometers back from the waterline (Herzog 1975, 5-7; Korn 1992, 103-04). The first course of action was the one that the General Staff finally adopted. However, negative consequences of the preferred option were not adequately considered. Indeed, holding the Canal would provide “strategically defensible borders” (Allon 1970, 99), and the Bar-Lev line would reduce casualties from Egyptian shelling and sniping. But building fortifications on the waterline, Major Gen. Israel Tal argued, “mounted to an invitation to the Egyptians to start shooting. In fact, it made it difficult for them not to shoot” (Korn 1992, 103).

The group performed “poor” search for information and assimilation of new information. Israel decision makers confined their search to AMAN which estimated in summer 1967 that Egypt was neither ready for fighting nor willing to accept the price for it. Eshkol and Dayan agreed with this estimate (Bar-Joseph 2001, 42-43). Even when Egypt initiated hostilities along the Canal in July and August 1967, they underestimated the Egyptian willingness to fight. Eshkol and Dayan perceived these hostilities as “spurred by the Soviets ... who wanted, through the Egyptians, to pressure the State of Israel to withdraw from the Suez Canal bank, to enable the re-opening of the Canal” (Haber 1987, 286). Prime Minister Eshkol appeared to have discounted the advice by Minister Sasson in April 1968 to revise Israel’s current “stalemate” policy of holding the cease-fire line because it had given the Arabs significant military and political advantages and that time was working against Israel (ISA, From E. Sasson to the Prime Minister: The Battle for Peace, April 8, 1968). On the other hand, the estimate that AMAN offered on Nov. 21, 1968 concerning Egyptian intentions to attack in 1969, though correct, was not complemented by other sources of information. Neither was this estimate discussed at the cabinet at large but rather limited to the General Staff meeting attended by the Minister of Defense. Indeed, Israel initially sought to solicit American support but Israeli decision makers apparently did not go in this effort beyond the general terms. The cabinet decision of June 19 was communicated solely to the US government (ISA, From the Foreign Office to New York, June 19 1967), which accordingly supported Israel diplomatically, in the working of the UNSCR 242, and agreed to sell Israel the Phantoms in Oct. 1967. In fact, the Cabinet ignored repeated suggestions by Secretary Rusk to withdraw few kilometers from the Canal to allow its opening (ISA, From Washington to the Foreign Office, July 7; ISA, From Washington to the Foreign Office, July 25, 1967). Later on, of the policy change in August 1967, until May 1968 “the United States

government still knew nothing” (Rabin 1979, 136). Israeli decision makers inferred from ambiguous signals from Washington that the Canal was an “important political bargaining chip” that the US position was that the IDF should build fortifications along the Canal (Margalit 1971, 39).

The Decision to Initiate In-Depth Raids

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

Israel’s previous threat environment – of military advantage, strategic depth, and an experience of triumph – persisted. But two more factors were present. The first was the beginning of a semi-alliance relationship with the United States with the amount of arms pouring into Israel in the two years of 1967-9 had by far exceeded everything Tel Aviv had received from the United States since the establishment of the State of Israel. The second factor was the increase in Israel’s offensive capability with and the arrival of the long-range Phantom F-4 aircraft from the United States by the end of 1969.

Under Golda Meir’s tenure, the Prime Minister tended to consult with a small number of cabinet members informally – the so-called “Golda’s Kitchen” – and excluded the rest, especially the Foreign Minister Eban who was perceived as an “intellectual” with less sense of the realities on the ground. Meir, protecting her seat from being taken over by Israel’s generals, competed over expressing hard positions and harsh words to cover her lack of experience in military affairs (Gai 1998, 189). At the same time, the rivalry between Dayan and Allon went on fiercely. On their relationship, Meir comments that “it was enough that we had a war with the Arabs on our hands; we could wait for that to end before we embarked on a war of the Jews” (Meir 1975, 316).

Decision-Making

In addition to the absence of threat and the experience of triumph, the semi-alliance with the United States along with Israel's absolute air superiority restricted the ability of the Cabinet to perform the procedural tasks of the decision-making process adequately. Avi Shlaim argues that "what ultimately determined the advocacy of deep-penetration bombing by Israel's military leaders was not a complex set of calculations but simply the ability to perform the operation" (Shlaim and Tanter 1978, 489). Indeed, the idea of bombing Egypt was raised only after the IAF destruction of the Egyptian Surface-to-Air-Missile (SAM) network, and the arrival of the long-range Phantom F-4 aircraft from the United States by the end of 1969 (Gai 1998, 188). The temptation was great to "turn the tables in the war of attrition" (Rabin 1979, 129) by brining the war deep inside Egypt by a method to which Nasser had no answer.

As for group cohesion, members of Golda's "political kitchen," such as Dayan and Israel Galili usually violated the Cabinet consensus (Shlaim 2003, 156). Though being aligned against Dayan, Meir was very close to him in security matters; there was an almost-certain approval by Meir of whatever the Minister of Defense and the military suggest (Shlaim 2003, 169-170). At the same time, the Foreign Minister Eban had found himself "increasingly shunted aside, ignored, and bypassed" (Korn 1992, 174). At Meir's request, "Rabin sent many of his most important cables directly to her office" (Korn 1992, 174).

Israeli decision-makers performed "poorly" the task of surveying objectives. They had two political aims: to bring the war to an end and compel Egypt to observe the cease-fire, and to topple or weaken Nasser's regime which was perceived as the main obstacle to a peaceful settlement. Carrying the war into the country, Israeli policy makers believed, would

show the price of Nasser's war to the Egyptian population which would then try to find a way out by turning against the regime (Bar-Siman-Tov 1980, 120-22). But it was never examined whether the bombing would really lead to the anticipated results. The expectation that under demonstrated military inferiority Egypt would accept an unconditional ceasefire ran against the experience of the late months of 1969 in which Egypt's strategy of attrition backfired. It was unacceptable for Egypt and the Soviet Union to agree to a cease-fire under Israeli raids since it would mean a declaration of defeat in the war that Nasser initiated. More importantly, the assumption that the in-depth raids would bring the fall of Nasser ran against three indicators: (1) historical evidence on the counterproductive effects of aerial bombing (Shlaim and Tanter 1978, 492); (2) Nasser's confirmed popular standing even after the defeat of June 1967 (Bar-Siman-Tov 1980, 123); and (3) the high probability, as realized by Dayan, that Moscow would not allow the Nasser regime to collapse.

The group performed the task of surveying alternatives in a "neutral" manner. The IDF had proposed three alternatives: (1) a large-scale ground operation to capture the west bank of the Canal from Qantara to Ismailia; (2) a limited ground operation to capture the shore between Qantara and Port Said; and (3) initiating air raids enlarged both in scale and depth. The first two alternatives were ruled out on the following grounds: (a) political constraints by the superpowers; (b) lack of crossing equipment; (c) high casualty estimates; and (d) uncertainty that the operation would achieve its objectives. The third alternative was perceived to be less escalatory, militarily possible, and of low casualty estimate (Bar-Siman-Tov 1980, 118-19). The likelihood of Soviet intervention, however, remained the key point of contention. Allon maintained that the USSR would fear a superpower confrontation, that it had limited technical capability for intervention, and that there was no precedent of Soviet intervention in a state with which it had no territorial connection. Conversely, Dayan argued

that the Soviet investment in Egypt was too large to allow the fall of Nasser, that a state like the USSR would not find a technical problem if it made a political decision to intervene, and that the absence of historical precedents of intervention was not sufficient evidence (Margalit 1971, 52-56; Adamsky 2006, 72-77). In the end, paradoxically, Dayan went along with the decision probably reasoning that: (1) the introduction of the less-vulnerable Phantoms would prevent air attrition which had prompted his refusal to unleash the IAF in May 1969 (Shlaim and Tanter 1978, 491); and (2) escalation would not cause the Soviet intervention – it might only accelerate it – and thus the raids should avoid targeting factories and power stations and be implemented “empirically, step by step” (Margalit 1971, 57).

The decision-making group made a “poor” performance in searching for information. The government exclusively relied on AMAN which estimated that the deep raids, if successful, would bring about the end of the War of Attrition (Adamsky 2006, 63-64). It was also AMAN which confirmed that a Soviet intervention as a result of the raids was a low probability (Adamsky and Bar-Joseph 2006). Indeed, Israel’s inability to anticipate the Soviet intervention resulted partly from an intelligence failure and partly from the inadequate information search by the decision makers. The Minister Menachem Begin suggested consulting experts other than the military commanders, but this suggestion was never materialized (Margalit 1971, 37).

The cabinet apparently did not extend its deliberations on this decision to either the Mossad or to the Foreign Ministry. A Nov. 17, 1969 memorandum prepared by Yohanan Cohen, Director of Europe 3 Department in the Foreign Ministry, which explicitly predicted a Soviet intervention, went unnoticed (Adamsky and Bar-Joseph 2006, 7). Israel’s Ambassador in Washington Rabin sent many cables starting from mid-1969 urging escalation on the grounds that the Nixon administration would not oppose the raids because

they would serve the interests of the United States which was losing its status in the Middle East vis-à-vis the Soviet Union (Rabin 1979, 148 and 157). More specifically, Rabin wrote in a cable to the Foreign Ministry on September 19, 1969:

A man would have to be blind, deaf, and dumb not to sense how much the administration favors our military operations, and there is a growing likelihood that the United States would be interested in an escalation of our military activity with the aim of undermining Nasser's standing. ... Thus the willingness to supply us with additional arms depends more on stepping up our military activity against Egypt than on reducing it (Rabin 1979, 157).

Eban, who knew Washington well, resisted Rabin's appraisal since there was "no evidence ... that the United States ever wanted to escalate the war" (Eban 1977, 465). But Rabin lobbied heavily during his visit to Israel in December 1969 for escalation and convinced those who counted in the cabinet, including Dayan (Parker 1993, 140). Minister of Health Israel Barziali and H. M. Shapira had reservations on Rabin's analysis and asked to confirm the American position. However, they were told that in the US-Israel relationship there was no space for formalities; tacit signals would suffice (Margalit 1971, 39-40). Rabin relied on his self-serving interpretations of the talks he made with contacts in the American establishment, particularly the White House, who would, in informal settings, not mind if Israel delivered a sharp blow to Nasser, but that was *not* the US policy (Parker 1993, 140). The Foreign Ministry knew better from its sources in the State Department: the United States would oppose the war escalation which would risk a superpower confrontation (Adamsky 2006, 69). Nonetheless, it was not consulted but too late. Eban met with the Ministry's senior officials on Jan. 7 – after the decision had been made – to explain that it was a compromise between what the extremists and the moderates wanted. After the meeting, a senior official

expressed the view that “Israel had passed the point of no return ... the Russians are coming, the Russians are coming” (Margalit 1971, 44).

In processing information, the Israeli leadership performed “very poorly.” It did not show signs of reviewing its choice in light of new discrepant information. Kosygin’s note to President Nixon on Jan. 31, 1970, warned that if Israel continued its bombing, “the Soviet Union will be forced to see to it that the Arab States have means at their disposal, with the help of which a due rebuff to the arrogant aggressor could be made” (ISA, Message of USSR Prime Minister Kosygin to the US President, Jan. 31, 1970). However, Israel did not take the Soviet warning seriously. According to a senior diplomat in Israel’s Embassy in Washington, “the Israelis thought that the Soviet note showed the raids were having an effect and the Soviets were worried” (Parker 1993, 146). In mid-February, Foreign Minister Eban received an assessment of Kosygin’s note by the US National Security Agency, according to which Moscow would restore to the “deployment of Soviet personnel” (Adamsky and Bar-Joseph 2006, 11). Eban regarded this assessment as “sufficiently disturbing to demand that Prime Minister Meir re-open a discussion of the issue in the government” (Adamsky and Bar-Joseph 2006, 11). However, the cabinet went along with AMAN estimate that President Nixon’s response would deter Moscow. Israeli decision makers also failed to comprehend the nature of other signals received from Soviet diplomats in Washington and London, and also by King Hussein of Jordan challenging the no-intervention assumption (Adamsky and Bar-Joseph 2006, 13-14). On the other hand, the announcement by President Nixon on Jan. 29 that he would make a decision on the aircraft sale to Israel within 30 days – an indication of the US disapproval of the raids – were perceived by the concerned ministers as achieving Israel’s two aims of receiving the advanced arms and doing so in public – reasoning that had

the President intended to reject the Israeli request, he would not have announced that he would make his decision in thirty days (Margalit 1971, 49-50).

The Decision to Accept the Cease-Fire

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

Israel's threat environment at this stage was a mix. There was a rise in the threat to Israel, but it was accompanied by two other factors: (1) the occupied territories still offered Israel an extended strategic depth; and (2) the fact that the United States after the "six-day war" turned to be a full ally, though not formal, of Israel. At the same time, evidence suggests that Israeli decision-makers would take the risk of a confrontation with Moscow. The IDF General Staff, with the approval of the government, set up an aerial ambush on July 30, 1970 (one day before the official acceptance of the cease-fire) in which twelve IAF Mirages and Phantom shot down five of sixteen Soviet-piloted MiGs with no losses (Dupuy 1992, 367; Pollack 2004, 94). As for the leadership group, lack of cohesion persisted, but it was relatively suppressed by the concern with a greater Soviet intervention or a loss of US support.

Decision-Making

These conditions, the rise of threat and the simultaneous semi-alliance with the United States were well expressed by Israeli leaders. Prime Minister Meir's appealed to President Nixon on April 27, 1970 stating:

Israel does not intend to be put into the posture of helplessness; we shall defend ourselves as a people defends itself when its back is to the wall ... I venture to urge you, Mr. President, to ... [announce] the intention of the

United States to honor its statement of March 25 in which it pledged itself not to let Israel's security be put in jeopardy to act promptly to correct the arms balance whenever new developments made this necessary, to ensure that Israel's margin of security is preserved (ISA, From the Foreign Office to Washington, April 27, 1970).

Also, Eban made clear to the US Ambassador in Tel Aviv, Walworth Barbour, on April 28 that the consensus among Israeli policy makers was: "If the United States did not make a clear and firm response after the publication [of the Soviet intervention], there will be disastrous consequences" (ISA, From the Foreign Office to Washington, April 28, 1970). In turn, the decision-making process was a direct reflection of this situation; while the possibility of Soviet intervention might have pushed the decision-makers to pay greater heed to their information-processing tasks, the overall balance of power favoring them eventually led them not to care much. At times, Israel's leaders looked to be working together perfectly, while at others, some of them would monopolize the process.

Israel's leaders had demonstrated a mixed performance of the decision-making tasks in this period. The group's survey of objectives was performed in a "neutral" manner. Israel essentially pursued two aims: to maintain the alliance relations with the United States, and to preserve military superiority in the Canal area (Brecher 1974, 466). Israeli decision makers calculated that rejecting the Rogers's plan would endanger arms supplies to Israel and probably the entire US support to Israel, while an acceptance would enhance the alliance relationship. On the other hand, preserving Israeli superiority required maintaining the military status quo. A precondition for the latter, that is monitoring the cease-fire lines, however, failed to materialize because of Dayan's decision to reject flying U-2 reconnaissance missions by the United States for that purpose (Feer 1998, 429-45). Israel

insisted on accepting no supervision of the cease-fire “stand still” other than that of the parties themselves, i.e., Egypt and Israel (ISA, From Washington to the Foreign Office, July 25, 1970). A plausible explanation is that Israel might have been preparing the ground for its own violations of the cease-fire. The letter that Prime Minister Meir sent to President Nixon on July 27, 1970, requesting clarifications on the US position, stated that violations of the cease-fire along the Syrian and Jordanian cease-fire line “shall not serve as a pretext or justification for the resumption of Egyptian hostilities along the Egyptian-Israeli cease-fire line” (ISA, Aide Memoire: the Prime Minister’s Clarifications, July 27, 1970). Also, Lt. Gen. Saad Shazly recalls that the IDF never observed the cease-fire of August 1970 and it persisted in sending reconnaissance flights over Egyptian positions (Shazly 2003, 18).

Israeli decision makers made a careful survey of the limited options they faced, and thus this task was performed “well.” To reject the American proposal, in the words of Eban, “would mean the continuation of savage war with Egypt, the prospect of involvement with the Soviet Union, and diminishing American fidelity to Israel” (Eban 1977, 467). But rejecting the plan would enable Israel to prevent Egypt from setting up preparations for the war of Sinai liberation (Bar-Siman-Tov 1980, 178). Allon, Dayan, and Eban saw the advantages of accepting the plan as avoiding confrontation with the Soviet Union, ending the war, and obtaining military and economic aid from the United States (Brecher 1974, 468-470). Of special importance was Nixon’s dispatch to Golda Meir on July 24 in which he gave assurances that the US acknowledged that Israel’s borders would not be the same as those of pre-June 1967, and that no Israeli troops would withdraw from the cease-fire lines until a contractual peace agreement was signed (Brecher 1974, 493). Nevertheless, the proposal was considered disadvantageous in that it provided for “withdrawal” instead of “secure and agreed borders.” Thus, Israel decision makers sought to make the acceptance

“qualified” through securing American assurances that more Phantoms and new Shrike rockets would be provided to Israel and that Nixon’s dispatch constituted the US Government policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict (Brecher 1974, 493).

Israel decision makers did a slightly better job in their information search, and their performance of this was “neutral.” In June-July 1970 Lt. Gen. Bar-Lev initiated discussions in the Southern Command on the IDF readiness in Sinai. Maj. Gen. Sharon, the current GOC of the Command, raised the concern that moving the Egyptian missile system forward to the Canal which would limit the IAF freedom of action, and suggested his earlier idea for mobile defense positions 10-15 kilometer back from the waterline. Bar-Lev rejected Sharon’s idea and recommended instead an air effort to prevent the installation of SAM missiles and intensify the attacks on the current system (Gai 1998, 191). Also, the Foreign Office and the Embassy in Washington appear to have been sufficiently engaged in the consultations. However, when the US Ambassador presented the Rogers’s plan to Meir on June 19, she immediately rejected it and told him that she was sure that the government would reject these proposals. In the words of Begin, “the American proposals were actually rejected even before the discussion at the Cabinet meeting” (Brecher 1974, 490). Moreover, Dayan eventually decided on his own to reject U-2 flights over the Canal Zone and even threatened to shot the aircraft down if it made the flight (Feer 1998, 437).

Information processing was performed in a “neutral” manner. After the initial, but informal, rejection of the plan by Meir, Egyptian air defenses shot down several Phantoms between June 30 and July 5. This raised the prospect of air attrition, and for Israel “it seemed that American assistance might be needed very quickly” (Korn 1992, 256). Recognizing the crucial importance of the alliance with the United States, Israeli decision makers quickly absorbed the significance of the American request for a cease-fire. Ambassador Rabin halted

the delivery of the initial Israeli rejection of the plan to the White House not only for he objected to its tone but primarily for the connection that Rogers made between the US arms supplies and Israel's positive response (Rabin 1979, 177-78). Moreover, while President Nixon's dispatch on July 24 reassured the US commitment to Israel's security, Meir sought to clarify any ambiguities concerning the US position. They sought assurances that:

(1) more Phantoms and new Shrike rockets would be provided to Tzahal [IDF]; (2) Nixon's dispatch constituted US Government policy towards Israel and the Arab-Israel conflict; (3) Rogers Plan 'A' would be withdrawn; and (4) the US would veto any anti-Israel resolution concerning the terms or procedures for a settlement which would be otherwise approved by the Security Council (Brecher 1974, 495-96).

Even though President Nixon confirmed his acceptance of the first two points only (ISA, From Washington to the Foreign Office, July 27, 1970), Israel's decision makers were satisfied with the level of American support. Nevertheless, Israel's decision makers chose a path that contradicted what they had learned from their information search. The government ignored the intelligence warnings that Egypt would exploit the cease-fire to bring the air-defense missile system eastward. Similar warnings by Sharon and Bar-Lev's recommendation to intensify the IAF effort against the SAM missile system were offset by Dayan who insisted on consulting with the Americans before further escalation (Gai 1998, 191). Despite Israel's struggle to reach an agreement with the US to define the nature of violation indicates that it was aware of the possibility of violation (Bar-Joseph 2001, 63), Meir rejected the US proposition for a supervision of the cease-fire by UN observers (ISA, From the Foreign Office to Washington, 25 July 1970), and then Dayan rejected the U-2 missions obviously against the will of the Americans whom he initially wanted to consult.

The Quality of the Decision-Making Process and War Outcome

Alternative Explanations

Scholars have advanced two approaches to explain the war outcome. On the one hand, Cordesman attributes Israel's failure to its lack of balanced combined arms. The IDF emphasized air-to-air combat over air-to-ground weapons and techniques, especially its SAM electronic countermeasure effort (ECM), artillery and anti-tank weapons, and it never came into grips with fixed or positioned defenses (Cordesman 1987, 33-34). This approach therefore assumes that had the IDF been more effective in suppressing Egyptian SAM and artillery fire on the west bank, Israel would have won the war. But Israel had virtually destroyed the Egyptian air-defense system by December 1969 using its current weaponry (Shazly 2003, 62-63; Dupuy 1992, 364-65; Herzog 1984, 213). The IAF was operating freely in Egypt's skies when the government decided in January 1970 to launch the in-depth raids which eventually resulted in the Soviet intervention. Similarly, though Israel could not meet the Egyptian artillery fire, the IDF commando and air attacks convinced the Egyptians twice to stop the bombardments, though artillery harassment never virtually stopped. Following the Naj Hammadi raid of October 1968 raid, the Egyptians stopped the bombing for five months. They stopped it once again after the IAF ten-day attack against artillery positions of July 1969 for two months (Dupuy 1992, 358 and 363). In short, Israel failed *despite* its military superiority not because the lack of it.

Also, had it been the case that the IDF employed balanced combined arms and managed to defeat Egypt's Soviet-backed SAM system and to shot more Soviet-piloted aircraft down by July 1970, there is good rationale to predict that this would have only led the Kremlin to embark on a greater and more direct intervention in the fighting. At the same

time, the antecedent that Cordesman suggests of Israel's operational failure is the overconfidence following its sweeping victory in June 1967 (Cordesman 1987, 31-32); in other words, the result of the severe imbalance of power that existed in the Middle East at the time which this study proposes. Indeed, the static defense posture on the Bar-Lev Line negated Israel's qualitative superiority in mobile warfare (Dupuy 1992, 362). But holding the waterline was not a decision for the military to make. It was the political leadership that allowed this informal decision to evolve and left it to the military which received no clear directions from the political leadership.

On the other hand, Pollack explains the mixed outcome of the war by a combination of two factors: (1) poor performance of Egyptian units, especially in commando operations and air-to-air combat but also in ground-based air defense, which is attributed to Arab social and cultural pathologies; and (2) effective (though not flawless) war strategy articulated by Egypt's top generals, reasonably exploiting Israel's vulnerabilities and Egyptian strengths (Pollack 2004, 94-98). Indeed, Pollack's argument on the poor performance of Egyptian units is not far from reality. Howeidy, the current Chief of the GIS, had warned Nasser during the war against these failings, and Nasser once endorsed his view saying that "they [the commanders] are not able" (Howeidy 1992, 195).

However, this explanation remains partial because the Egyptian strategy of a limited war had been tailored for the constraints under which the Egyptian military had to operate, including the gap in human capital. In other words, unless the Egyptian forces succeeded in securing air superiority early in battle (unlikely given the gap both in training and equipment) to provide cover for the crossing forces, the outcome would not have been different. Also, Pollack mistakenly blames the General Staff for the flaw in the Egyptian war strategy, i.e., the failure to anticipate the Israeli escalation (Pollack 2004, 97), while the

General Staff responsibility for this flaw is only secondary to the political leadership and its decision-making process.

Counterfactuals

Counterfactual 1: Egyptian decision-makers decide to initiate the war of attrition in March 1969 after securing Soviet support in Egypt's air defense.

How could "securing Soviet support" have changed the war outcome?

Securing Soviet support in Egypt's air defense before initiating the war was very likely to wear the IDF down and significantly reduce its ability to retaliate. Given that the war of attrition was essentially an exchange of fire between the Egyptian artillery and the Israeli air force, a Soviet air-defense support would have enabled Egypt to start the war with the same capabilities it had by the end of it. At the same time, it could not in itself have enabled Egyptian troops to cross the Canal by 1969 because the plans, training and equipment for the crossing were ready only by 1973.

It might be argued that even if this had been the case, the IDF would have sooner or later found a solution to the SAM system and suppressed it through successful use of breakthrough and exploitation strategy, as it did in the later stages of the October 1973 War. But such an approach should be cautious not to overlook the crucial differences in the balance of power and the Soviet attitude; in other words, even if Israel could defeat the SAM system in 1969, this would have only invited a greater Soviet intervention to prevent the fall of Nasser's regime, while in 1973 the Egyptian military achievements in the early stages of

the war and Sadat's detachment from Moscow discouraged Moscow from direct intervention.

Similarly, a Soviet air-defense support might not have offered a full cover for Egypt's vast territory (approximately one million kilometer square), and, accordingly, Israel could probably still initiate its daring commando raids deep inside Egypt. But such raids would then have to risk greater casualties because the IAF could no longer act freely in Egypt's skies. It is true that most of the Israeli raids inside Egypt succeeded because of slow reaction of Egyptian commanders. But a severe constraint on Egypt's reaction was the poor record of its air force in dogfights against the IAF; thus, if the Soviet air-defense division had arrived to Egypt by 1969, the Egyptian command could have sent its air force and/or provide air cover for troops to attack any infiltrating Israeli commando inside Egypt.

Why would "securing Soviet support" have been possible?

This counterfactual was possible for two reasons. First, Nasser was aware of Egypt's air vulnerability and recognized that the sole solution to it (at least until the Egyptian armed forces were rebuilt) was a Soviet air-defense support. Immediately after the June 1967 defeat, and repeatedly afterwards, Nasser formally requested direct Soviet military participation in air defenses (Farid 1979, 29-30).

Second, there was no disagreement between Cairo and Moscow on the principle of Soviet military intervention; the only difference was the nature of such intervention. In May 1968, the USSR approved the deployment of 120 Soviet pilots in operational missions in Egypt, and in December 1969 it approved the deployment of limited air and air-defense units scheduled to become operational by October 1970 (Riyad 1985, 184 and 224-25; Farid 1979, 153; Fawzi 1984, 350-51). At the same time, declassified Soviet documents have revealed

that preparations for intervention, either in the Soviet Union by training the crews or in Egypt by building the SA-3 sites of the T-shape have actually started by the end of 1969 (Adamski 2006). Howeidy explains that it was natural for the Soviet Union as a superpower to have contingency plans (Howeidy 2007). Thus, it is quite reasonable to assume that it might have only taken a little more time to convince the Soviet leadership to send air-defense units to Egypt.

What could have made “securing Soviet support” possible?

A better performance of the decision-making tasks could have made this counterfactual possible. An improved survey of objectives would probably have led the Egyptian leadership to examine more thoroughly the assumption of the Soviet deterrence of Israeli escalation, and to pay greater attention to that Israel was not deterred in the past by the possibility of such an intervention – the Suez War, for example. This examination of the partly-flawed assumption could have, in turn, alarmed the Egyptian leadership to the disadvantage of the attrition alternative, i.e., the likelihood of Israeli escalation to which Egypt would not have an answer. Nasser’s survey of alternatives was overall reasonable – exhausting diplomatic means, then excluding the general war option, to reach the attrition strategy – but had he been attentive to that he could not actually “persuade” Israel to keep within the limits he was trying to dictate, he would almost certainly secured Soviet air-defense support before initiating hostilities along the Canal.

At the same time, a more rigorous information search would have led the Egyptian leadership either to insist on the Soviet air-defense support or to delay initiating action until it was in place. Instead of relying on the implicit assumption that the Soviets would come to Egypt’s aid in case of Israeli escalation, a greater effort by the Egyptian leadership to

ascertain the Soviet position – as he did later upon the cease-fire proposal when he stayed in Moscow for eighteen days until he got the Soviet support for his acceptance of the cease-fire proposal in 1970 – would have secured the Soviet support, especially if we now know that Moscow had already started preparations for that matter early in 1969. Finally, less biased information processing by Nasser would have exposed his views to opinions investigating the Egyptian readiness for an Israeli retaliation with the air force.

Counterfactual 2: The Israeli government decides in January 1970 to continue the low-intensity conflict along the Canal.

How could “continuing the low-intensity conflict” have changed the war outcome?

Continuing the low-intensity conflict along the Canal front would have deprived Egypt from any significant military achievement in the war. Indeed, the continuation of the IAF retaliations limited to the Canal area along with the commando raids that the IDF committed deep inside Egypt would not, of course, end the fighting or impose a cease-fire, but it was very likely to prolong the status quo favoring Israel. Had the fire ceased when Egypt made no improvement in the military situation on the Canal front, the War of Attrition would have been a clear Israeli victory.

It might be argued that had Israel kept its retaliations limited in proportion to the Egyptian artillery fire, this would have actually proved the success of the Egyptian war strategy to keep Israel within the limits it was trying to dictate. This might be true, but even this would not have guaranteed an Egyptian victory for two reasons. In retrospect, before the Israeli escalation in January 1970, that is when it was maintained the war limited, Egypt could not still achieve any of its objectives (Shlaim and Tanter 1978, 487). Instead, the IDF commando and air retaliation attacks convinced the Egyptians twice to stop the

bombardments. Second, the persistence of the low-intensity conflict on the Canal front might have convinced Moscow to delay its intervention in the war as long as Israel's aim did not exceed preventing an Egyptian crossing of the Suez to toppling Nasser's regime. With no Soviet air-defense intervention – which was a direct result of Israel's air escalation – the Egyptians were very unlikely to challenge the IAF aerial superiority.

Why would “continuing the low-intensity conflict” have been possible?

This counterfactual was possible for two reasons. First, it was raised as an alternative out of fear of a Soviet intervention. The main opponent of escalation and advocate of the current policy was Israel's “super” Minister of Defense Dayan who reasonably argued that the Soviet investment in Egypt was too large to allow the fall of Nasser, that a state like the USSR would not find a technical problem if it made a decision to intervene, and that the absence of historical precedents of intervention was not sufficient evidence (Margalit 1971, 52-6; Adamsky 2006, 72-77).

Second, it was feasible for Israel's decision-makers to persist in the current strategy of retaliation and “lower their terms for political settlements, secure in the knowledge that the IDF had won the Canal War and retained military superiority” (Shlaim and Tanter 1978, 487). Third, this option – linking the current strategy of retaliation and a peaceful settlement – would have satisfied the public demands to bring the war to an end without threatening any of Israel's basic values that were at stake – these are restoring deterrence, weakening the Egyptian military, and maintaining aerial superiority over the Canal Zone.

What could have made “continuing the low-intensity conflict” possible?

A better performance of the decision-making tasks could have been made this counterfactual possible. A more rigorous survey of objectives would have convinced Israel's

leaders that the assumption that the in-depth raids would topple Nasser was an oversimplification, and consequently led them to restore to their current strategy of retaliation that might have not toppled Nasser either but would have denied him achieving any of his war aims. Also, had decision-makers paid greater attention to the advantages and disadvantages of their alternatives, they would probably have chosen not to stick with the current retaliation strategy. In particular, Dayan's reasons for objecting escalation – that the Soviet would not allow the fall of Nasser and they were certainly able to intervene – did not change throughout and it is still mysterious why he changed his mind. It might be argued that a better survey of alternatives would have led Israeli government to opt for either of the other two options discussed by the General Staff: (1) a large-scale ground operation to capture the west bank of the Canal from Qantara to Ismailia; or (2) a limited ground operation to capture the shore between Qantara and Port Said (Bar-Siman-Tov 1980, 118-19). But this would not have constituted a good choice either, not only because of the operational difficulties but mainly because the scale of either operation entailed the risk of Soviet intervention.

That the Prime Minister shunned other sources of information which explicitly predicted a large-scale Soviet intervention as a reaction, along with her uncritical support of the views of Dayan, Rabin, and the military, played a key role. A better information search would have led to opt for continuing the low-intensity conflict. It is not unrealistic to argue that if the Foreign Minister Eban was integrated into Meir's trusted group, and his views on the probability of American support were taken into account – vis-à-vis Rabin's inaccurate reporting on the American support for the in-depth raids – Israel would not have probably rushed into the in-depth raids the way it did. A more thorough information processing would have led Israel's leaders to draw the obvious conclusion from the accumulating evidence – the United States is against escalation and that the Soviet Union is ready to intervene –

before it was too late. The only feasible option then was to continue the low-intensity strategy that Israel adopted in 1967-69.

Counterfactual 3: The Israeli government decides in July 1970 to accept the Rogers's plan for a cease-fire with full US supervision.

How could "accepting US supervision" have changed the war outcome?

Accepting a US supervision of the cease-fire would have significantly, though not entirely, changed the war outcome. US supervision would have compelled the Soviets and the Egyptians either to give up the idea of moving the SAM system forward or to make a stark and recorded violation of the cease-fire arrangement which provided for the prohibition of military works of any kind within a 50 kilometer area stretching along both sides of the Canal. The latter option seemed unlikely because it amounted to a rejection of the cease-fire; the Egyptians would not have probably violated the arrangement this way for the same reasons they did not choose to reject the cease-fire, i.e., it could be used by Israel as a pretext to either ask for more Phantoms from the United States – making the military balance even worse for Egypt. Or it could have led to a greater IAF effort against the missile sites, and then Egypt would be back to quarter number one, or lead the Soviets to a deeper intervention, which might result in uncontrolled escalation between the two superpowers on Egyptian soil (Heikal 1993, 118).

Had the Egyptians had given up the idea of moving up the SAM system forward and maintain it at the 50 kilometer limit, this would not obviously have changed the fact that the IAF was no longer operating freely in Egypt's skies, or that the Egyptian army had restored confidence and combat ability. Nonetheless, keeping the SAM system at the 50 kilometer limit would have two important consequences denying Egypt a victory: (1) the status quo in

the Canal zone would have essentially remained the same favoring Israel; and (2) the IAF would have maintained its superiority over the Canal Zone, making it extremely difficult for the Egyptians to cross.

Why would “accepting US supervision” have been possible?

This counterfactual was possible for three reasons. First, it was natural for Israel to accept the supervision of the United States, not only because it trusted the commitment of its closest ally, but also because it could have relied on this supervision to support its demands for political and military aid. Indeed, what was unusual that Israel rejected it. Second, accepting a US supervision of the cease-fire arrangement was quite consistent with Israel’s awareness of the possibility of violations, as testified by Israel’s struggle to reach an agreement with the US to define the nature of violation (Bar-Joseph 2001, 63), and the warnings by AMAN and other military commanders that Egypt would exploit the time span to move the SAM system forward to the Canal. Third, in its past wars with the Arabs, Israel had indeed accepted an international supervision of the cease-fire lines; on the Egyptian front in particular, Israel had agreed in July 1967 to establish United Nations observation posts on both sides of the Canal to monitor the cease-fire (Herzog 1984, 197).

What could have made “accepting US supervision” possible?

A better performance of the decision-making tasks could have been made this counterfactual possible. An improved survey of objectives would have been likely to lead the Israeli government to accept the US supervision instead of vehemently rejecting it. Israel’s leaders were correct in assuming that rejecting the Rogers’s proposal would jeopardize the alliance relationship with the United States with which they have declined to fully engage in their first two decisions. But they obviously failed to offer an answer to the second aim,

maintaining the military superiority over the Canal area, by ignoring a strict observance of the cease-fire which allowed the Egyptians to move their missile defense forward. This examination of the link between aims and means could have, in turn, alarmed the Israeli leadership to the disadvantage of their decision, i.e., the great likelihood of Egypt getting away with the movement of the SAM system.

Survey of alternatives by Israel's decision-makers was overall reasonable in that they recognized the advantages of accepting the plan as avoiding confrontation with the Soviet Union, ending the war, and obtaining military and economic aid from the United States (Brecher 1974, 468-70). Nevertheless, the information search and processing were not so. Had the Cabinet been fully involved in the decision-making and Dayan had not monopolized over the U-2 reconnaissance issue, the members were likely to be informed of the risks involved in the cease-fire and, accordingly, were likely to stress US guarantees of its implementation. Equally, the situation would have been different had the government paid greater attention and was capable of revising its position in light of new, though discrepant, evidence. It would very likely have accepted U-2 reconnaissance missions to monitor the military standstill prior to the cease-fire, given the AMAN and military commanders' warning that the Egyptians were almost certainly going to violate the arrangement to advance their SAM system.

Conclusion

The quality of the decision-making processes by both Egypt and Israel in the War of Attrition is better accounted for by the threat environment and group cohesion perspectives than by the "selection-effects" argument. Nasser was the advocate of caution instead of going recklessly to war, and though he maintained a strict control over power, student

demonstrations in November 1968 threatened to topple him. Nasser remained in power because though the war ended in a draw, Egypt had the upper hand. Israel was the target of the war, but its decision to hold the waterline in a static defense had an impact both on the Egyptian decision to initiate the war and its course. The enormous human and financial cost of the war, however, did not force Israeli leaders to lose office.

I have argued that upon making the decision to initiate war it was the threat environment against Egypt's favor, but a less than average group cohesion, that caused the mixed quality of the decision-making process; Egyptian performance of the decision procedural tasks ranges from "well" to "poorly." However, upon the decision to accept cease-fire, threat environment conditions persisted while the group restored cohesion, and then the Egyptian performance of the decision procedural tasks ranged from "well" to "very well." On the other hand, Israel had a safe threat environment, but even less cohesive group of policy makers than that Egypt had, and thus it engaged in a low-quality decision-making process. In the decision to hold the waterline, Israel's performance of the decision procedural tasks were all "poorly" and in the decision to initiate the in-depth raids, the performances ranged from "neutral," "poorly," to "very poorly." In the decision to accept the cease-fire, the threat environment was a mix, and that is why Israel's performance of the decision procedural tasks averaged on "neutral."

Tracing the effects that the performances of decision-making procedural tasks had demonstrates that the mixed outcome of the war was a reflection of the mixed quality of the decision-making processes on both sides. Alternative explanations, i.e., the IDF failure in combined arms operations and the Egypt's mixed performances on tactical and strategic levels, are either partial or contingent on political decisions. At the same time, the military balance that was in Israel's favor throughout in air and armor, even after the Soviet

intervention, played an important role in bringing the war to this outcome. Finally, the analysis of three counterfactual scenarios – Egypt initiates war after securing Soviet air-defense support; Israel decides in January 1970 to continue the low-intensity conflict; and Israel decides in July 1970 to accept the cease-fire with full US supervision – has demonstrated that had decision-makers performed their procedural tasks differently, they probably would have made other choices, and the war could have ended either with Egyptian or Israeli victory accordingly.

Chapter Six

The October 1973 War

Case Outline

In mid-February 1973 the Egyptian and Syrian leaderships decided that they would launch a limited war against Israel. The Egyptian aim was to occupy a strip along the Suez Canal to force Israel into peace negotiations on acceptable terms while the Syrian aim was to liberate the Golan Heights. However, it was not until Sept. 30, 1973 that the Egyptian leadership made its final decision for the war. In Oct. 3-6, 1973 the Israeli Cabinet decided neither to mobilize nor to preempt to confront the mounting Arab preparations for war. In one of the most brilliant operations in military history, two Egyptian field armies (the Second and Third armies) crossed the Suez Canal, destroyed the Bar-Lev Line and defeated the IDF counterattack, ending up on October 9 with occupying a 12-15 kilometer-wide strip along the eastern bank of the Canal (figure 5). At the same time, the Syrian army launched a large-scale offensive across the Golan and seized almost the entire plateau. Reacting to the outbreak of war on two fronts, Israel focused action on the northern front (Syria). The IDF counterattack succeeded in stopping the Syrians and went on the offensive (figure 7).

On October 12, President Sadat decided to advance the Egyptian offensive eastward to reach the Sinai Passes, leaving the west bank of the Canal thinly defended. After the failure of the Egyptian offensive on Oct. 14, the Israeli Cabinet decided to authorize IDF crossing to the west bank of the Canal. The Israeli bridgehead managed to virtually encircle Egypt's Third Army and posed a serious challenge to Sadat's war strategy, though the Egyptian forces were nowhere close to collapse. On October 20, Sadat rejected the proposal

by the Chief-of-Staff to pull back four armored brigades from the east bank to confront the Israeli forces west of the Canal, and decided to accept the cease-fire proposal. Israel decided to accept the cease-fire on October 21-24 (figure 6). Having no other alternative, but with much reluctance, the Syrian leadership followed suit on October 28.

The COW Project assigns victory for Israel in the October 1973 War. I dispute this coding and re-code this war outcome as a stalemate. The conventional argument in this approach relies on the attainment of political aims: President Sadat opted for the initiation of a limited war to restore the pride lost in the June 1967 defeat, and to use the war politically to generate international pressure for negotiations over the occupied territories: two aims he did successfully achieve. But I rather focus on the military situation which has received lesser attention.

First, to argue that Israel won the war since the IDF troops were 100 kilometer away from Cairo makes little sense. What matters is whether these forces were able to carry on their advance. For instance, by the end of Palestine War 1948 Arab forces were much closer to Tel Aviv or West Jerusalem than they were before the war, but this by no means constituted military victory because they faced formidable Israeli forces ahead. A similar situation existed on the Egyptian front by the time on October 26 – when organized fighting ended even though the cease-fire formally entered into force on October 24. True, Egypt's Third Army was virtually encircled by the IDF troops seizing a large territory in the west bank of the Suez Canal, but these troops were themselves encircled (except for a narrow corridor) by Egyptian forces which engaged the Israelis in a mini-attrition war.

Second, it might be true that the Israeli government made a political decision not to attack the Third Army under pressure from the United States for the prospects of

negotiations (Yariv 1998, 144-45). However, this line of thinking would involve counterfactual scenarios that might as well include the planned attack by Egyptian forces west of the canal to destroy the Israeli bridgehead – Operation *Shammal* (Comprehensive) (Hammad 2002, 732-43). Third, limited Egyptian troops in Suez and Ismailia, assisted by artillery barrages from the Third Army, repeatedly repulsed the IDF attempts to occupy the two cities. Finally, the IDF failed to force a retreat on any of Egyptian troops in the east bank (two field armies). These final positions of forces indicate a military stalemate permitting both sides to claim victory (Dupuy 1978, 603; Aker 1985, 126-30; Gawrych 2000, 232). Other scholars go as far as to code Egypt the victor (Galbraith, Priest, and Purcell 2007, 435).

On the northern front, Syrian forces overran much of the Golan, but they were pushed back by the IDF counterattack. However, this did not constitute an unmitigated defeat for the Syrians for three reasons. First, Israel had indeed crossed the June 1967 cease-fire lines, but “the Syrian army had fought its way forward and now [October 13] as stubbornly fought its way back. The army was neither broken nor defeated. Israel had not destroyed it as a fighting force” (Seale 1988, 211). Second, Syrian forces, reinforced by Iraqi and Jordanian troops, not only counterattacked and prevented any further Israeli gains (Schiff 1974, 211), but also prepared for a massive counter-attack of seven divisions scheduled for October 23, after their tank losses of the first weeks of the fighting were replaced by the Soviets. Third, Syrian forces engaged the IDF in an attrition war for 80 days from January to May 1974 involving artillery bombardment, tank fire, and patrol activities that resulted in heavy casualties on both sides (Dupuy 1992, 579-81). Combined, these factors explain why the Israeli-Syrian disengagement of forces agreement of May 1974 provided for Israeli withdrawals from the Saassaa salient occupied in October 1973 and also

from Qunaytra, occupied in 1967 to a new line about 300m from the city, though it left almost all the heights under Israeli control (Dupuy 1992, 582-83).

Democratic Victory Theory

Selection Effects: Institutional Constraints

This mechanism does not appear to be at work for the Egyptian decision to go to war. Sadat's policy is counterevidence to the democratic triumphlists' argument that autocrats are reckless about going to war since the populace is not empowered to punish them. Against the voices demanding an immediate initiation of war, "President Sadat did not want war, and was extremely cautious to its military risks and, consequently, political implications on his presidency ... [saying] 'If something wrong happens, the people would not ask me to stay as happened with Gamal [abdel Nasser]'" (Heikal 1993, 298).

The Egyptian public still lacked institutional means to change the government. However, in the aftermath of Sadat's expulsion of Soviet units stationed in Egypt in July 1972, severe student demonstrations demanding military action to liberate Sinai attacked the President in person and accused him of defeatism. Also, Sadat feared that if he did not decide on action, the army would move against him (Heikal 1993, 299). Nonetheless, Sadat's war decision cannot be taken as "diversionary conflict" since it was the people's, not his, willingness to go to war. The situation was not much different in Syria. For example, upon negotiating the disengagement of forces in 1973-4, US Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger "recognized an authentic need on the part of Assad to satisfy Syrian public opinion, secure its support, and convince it of the correctness of his chosen path" (Zisser 1998, 31).

At the same time, Sadat had remained to serve as President and was re-elected for a second term in the presidential referendum of 1976 until he was assassinated in October 1981. Hafez al-Assad also remained in office until his death in 2000. This should not be

surprising given that Egyptian and Syrian armies were not defeated in the field; and a pro-democratic victory argument can be made that either of them was not likely to leave office anyway. But the point of interest here is that advocates of democratic victory theory, which does not expect non-democracies to win in the first place, have excluded draws from their analysis. At the same time, attention should also be paid to the psychological aspect of the war. The final outcome notwithstanding, the mere fact that Arab armies were able to initiate war, mount a successful offensive, and fight steadfastly (and thus restoring the honor lost in 1967) helped reinforce the legitimacy of both Sadat and Assad.

Selection Effects: Informational Constraints

The mechanism that democratic triumphlists suggest that it governs the behavior of non-democratic regimes hardly applies to the Arabs' case in the decision to initiate the war. True, both Egyptian and Syrian regimes maintained strict control over the media and the press, and allowed little freedom of action for opposition groups. Nonetheless, these policies prevented neither Sadat nor Assad from receiving accurate information (which were not always optimistic) about the costs of war and the probability of victory, as explained below.

At the same time, the Egyptian leadership was not insulated from the public opinion which played a crucial role in the decision to initiate the war. There is no reason to believe, as democratic triumphlists' logic suggests, that the public opinion was manipulated by the government-run media because the opinion the public expressed was anti-government. Massive student demonstrations in July 1972 openly criticized the government for its inability to liberate Sinai and demanded a military action. These demonstrations convinced

Sadat that the continuation of fighting, though not a general war, was necessary. Thus, when Sadat decided to initiate war, he obviously had the public in his support.

Threat Environment, Group Cohesion, and Decision-Making in Arab States

The Decisions to Initiate War

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

By the end of the War of Attrition in 1970, Egypt had restored confidence and combat ability in the army and denied Israel air superiority over the Canal Zone. Nevertheless, the threat to Egypt's security remained high for two reasons. First, the gap in military capability between Egypt and Israel was widening in the latter's favor due to the disadvantageous balance of alliance. The Soviet Union had repeatedly declined to provide Egypt with a means to deter Israel from attacking deep inside Egypt. In the years preceding 1973, the United States was spending \$1.5 billion in military aid to Israel: an amount that far exceeded the Soviet capabilities; the gap in skilled labor to operate the high-tech weapons, especially in the air force and electronic-warfare units; the Soviet weapons at the Arabs' disposal were a generation behind the US weapons at Israel's disposal (Shazly 2003, 183-84).

Second, there was the unfavorable political status quo for the prolonged occupation of Sinai. There was a huge pressure on the Egyptian and Syrian leaderships to do something. After years of occupation, even a complete restoration of Sinai by peaceful means was an anathema for the Egyptians: there should be a war to restore the land *and* honor. The dilemma that the Egyptian leadership was facing was that while it recognized that there

should be a war, it also knew that it lacked the means for a general liberation war. Finally, past experience played a key role. The tragic memories of the June 1967 defeat were still present in the minds of Arab masses and leaders, who understood that it was their own mistakes, more than Israel's advantages, which made this defeat happen. Though the War of Attrition gained Egypt some successes, they remained partial and the outcome was inconclusive, while the IAF deep-raids and the heavy casualties (though still relatively tolerable) were reminders of Israel's military superiority and of the defeat in the Sinai desert in June.

Egyptian decision-making group suffered from a rivalry between the Minister of War and Commander-in-Chief General Ahmed Ismail Ali and the Chief-of-Staff Lt. General Saad ad-Din Shazly: in the words of Shazly, they "were two completely different personalities which cannot come to an agreement" (Shazly 2003, 136). The rivalry dated back to an old clash in 1960, when Brigadier Ismail Ali commanded the UAR military mission in Congo and Colonel Shazly commanded the UAR battalion in the UN peacekeeping force in Congo (ONUC), over seniority and authority. When Ismail Ali was appointed Chief-of-Staff in March 1969, Shazly was promised by Nasser himself that Ismail Ali would not interfere in his work as commander of the Special Forces; in the six months of Ismail Ali's tenure as Chief-of-Staff, he did not even put a foot in Shazly's HQ (Shazly 2003, 136-37). On his part, President Sadat mostly took Ismail Ali's side. Asked why did Sadat appointed him as Chief-of-Staff since they had no close relationship and given the known rivalry between him and Ismail Ali, Shazly replied that "the President was in need of a *professional* soldier to plan for the war" (Shazly 2007).

Inter-Arab group cohesion was impaired by the complex relationship between political leaders of both countries. Different explanations of this relationship exist. Seale stressed the differences in the two leaders' personal characteristics:

The Asad of these early years of power appears to have been outclassed in deviousness by Sadat and [King] Husayn, both of them more experienced in the rough game of Arab politics. Against his two years as president of Syria, Husayn had by 1973 already clocked up two decades on his exposed throne while Sadat has served as long at Nasser's side (Seale 1988, 201).

Murhaf Jouejati attributes their differences to distinct perceptions of Egypt and Syria: "Sadat conceived the role of his state as the defender of Egyptian rights, and therefore sought to advance Egypt's national interests; on the other hand, Assad conceived the role of his state as the champion of Arab rights, and therefore sought to defend Arab, as well as Syrian interests" (Jouejati 1998, 118). At the same time, Sadat and Egyptian elite in general did not appear to have trusted the Syrian leadership. Mistrust of the Syrian Ba'th party dated back to the Egyptian-Syrian moribund union (1958-61), when the Ba'th participated in the separatist coup in September 1961. But a milestone in this relation was the experience of May-June 1967 when the Syrian leadership appeared to have entrapped Nasser in the crisis and the tragic defeat that followed. For example, in May 1971 a secret memorandum on the Egyptian armed forces opinion survey showed that the military commanders not only mistrusted Syria, but had the view that it was directly working against Egypt (Heikal 1993, 161-63).

Decision-Making

In the decision to initiate war, Arab decision-making process reflected the clear imbalance of power favoring Israel. Hafez Ismail recalls that in the years 1972-73, "Sadat

was under tremendous internal and external pressures, added to that we were all ‘prisoners’ of the 1967 defeat, which constituted a strong motivation for his continual and restless effort” (Ismail 1987, 184). In the words of Foreign Minister Riyad: “I felt it was necessary to express my opinion in the broad lines of the military action ... the separation between the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of War in 1967 was a great mistake that we should avoid in the future” (Riyad 1992, 384). President Sadat had summarized the situation to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) meeting on Oct. 24, 1972 as a “to be or not to be” question (Shazly 2003, 130). At this meeting, President Sadat thoroughly discussed with his commanders the military strategy; in his view, the June 1967 defeat should never be repeated (Sadat 1978, 320-21). Similarly, it was the increasing Israeli threat added to the burden of occupation that were behind Assad’s efforts to intensify his effort in securing allies in Egypt and the Soviet Union (Seale 1988, 185-89).

The severity of the crisis the Arabs had – the Israeli occupation combined with the memories of the June 1967 tragedy – allowed the threat environment effect to suppress the group incohesion to a great extent. The rivalry between Ismail Ali and Shazly remained hidden and did not have much effect on the decision to go to war. Both men knew that they had more serious matters to care about, and tried their best to avoid conflict (Shazly 2003, 144). However, this was not exactly the case with Egyptian and Syrian presidents. Assad had probably dealt honestly with Sadat, because his “experience as defense minister during and after the June 1967 debacle taught him that the *Clauswitzian* combination of power, coordination, and surprise was essential for ensuring victory” (Jouejati 1998, 119). On his part, Sadat *had* to cooperate with Assad to secure coordination at minimum and participation in the coming war at maximum because he knew that the next war was a “life-or-death” matter for Egypt and for him. Nevertheless, his mistrust of Assad and “Egypt first” policy

led him to be honest only as long as this cooperation did not threaten his grand strategy in going to war to enforce a political settlement according to which Egypt would restore Sinai.

Decision-making in Egypt

Evidence suggests that Egyptian decision-makers performed the tasks of surveying objectives “very well.” They were engaged in debating the merits of two theories: general war and limited war. The preconditions for a general war, parity in military capability particularly in the air with Israel and a unified Arab command, remained unattainable except for an alliance with Syria. In a limited war, Egypt had the political aim of forcing Israel to agree on acceptable peaceful solution through challenging its “secure borders” doctrine. Egyptian assumptions and predictions were deliberately written down in a “political directive,” dated October 1, 1973, from President Sadat to Gen. Ismail Ali (Sadat 1978, 436-43). Accurately estimating the relative military capabilities, Egypt’s leaders decided to limit the operation to the maximum line that could be covered by the air-defense missile system. Drawing on the lessons of the War of Attrition, Egypt thus made sure that Israel would not be able to use its air force either to escalate by raids in Egypt’s main land or to destroy the attacking forces on the ground in the fighting area east of the Canal. On Sadat’s assumptions, Kissinger wrote: “Rare is the statesman who at the beginning of a war has so clear a perception of its political objective” (Kissinger 1982, 460).

Egyptian decision-making group also performed its survey of alternatives “very well.” They excluded general war to liberate Sinai for the wide gap in military capability between Egypt and Israel, particularly in the air force (Hammad 2002, 61). The Soviet Union repeatedly declined Egyptian requests in 1971-2 to supply long-range bombers, advanced fighter planes, and more mobile air-defense units out of fear of escalating the conflict to a

global confrontation with the United States (Ismail 1987, 190-214). On the other hand, Sadat initially favored a diplomatic solution. On Feb. 4, 1971, Sadat launched a peace initiative according to which Israel would withdraw from the waterline and then Egypt would open the Canal, as preliminary to the implementation of UNSCR 242. For its part, Israel accepted on the conditions that the cease-fire would be unlimited, no Egyptian forces would cross the Canal, and the Egyptian forces west of the Canal be thinned out (ISA, Draft of Israel's proposals for a Partial Settlement as presented to the Ambassador of the United States by the Prime Minister, April 19, 1971). For Egypt, these conditions meant that Israel was not interested in a political settlement (Ismail 1978, 192). Egyptian decision-makers then approached the US through backdoor channels with Dr. Kissinger to pressure Israel, but his reply was that since Egypt was defeated, it should not hope for a victor's gains (Ghorbal 2004, 78-79). By mid-1973, accordingly, Sadat concluded that "neither the United States nor any other power would help us unless we make a military action" (Sadat 1978, 323).

The limited war plan, code-named Operation *al-Maazen al-'Aalia* (High Minarets) had as its objective a 10-15 kilometers thrust into Sinai and establishing a bridgehead there (the maximum range of the air-defense missile system). Egyptian decision-makers cautiously debated the advantages and disadvantages of this alternative. The focus on Israel's weaknesses, i.e., prolonged mobilization and high casualties, would serve the ultimate political aim and restore Egypt's pride lost in June 1967, and it was planned around the current military limits (Shazly 2003, 15-18). On the other hand, the Minister of War argued that such a limited war might only move Egypt's defenses to a vulnerable line east of the Canal with no substantial political gains, while leaving Israel in control of most of Sinai (Shazly 2003, 20). Eventually, Sadat accepted the limitedness of political objectives, and challenged the military leadership to plan a military strategy to compensate for the IDF

superiority. For that purpose, the General Staff developed an elaborate and imaginative deception plan aiming at achieving strategic surprise, and planned the deployment of two armored divisions in reserve west of the Canal to destroy potential Israeli penetrations (Shazly 2003, 264-65).

Egyptian decision makers performed “well” on the task of information search. The General Staff was consulted regularly through the SCAF meetings whose reports suggested that Egypt could only wage a general war if it received offensive aircraft superior to those of Israel. Otherwise, the armed forces could carry out a limited operation with the current capabilities. In the SCAF meeting on Oct. 1, 1973, Sadat received thorough reporting confirming the readiness of forces. The Cabinet was briefed regularly by the Minister of War on the readiness level of the forces and the likely scale of operations. The Foreign Minister Dr. Mohamed Hasan al-Zayyat, the Charge-de-Affairs in Washington Ashraf Ghorbal and Egypt’s Ambassador to the UN Dr. Esmat Abdul Majid were frequently asked to present their evaluations on the prospects for a diplomatic solution (Ghorbal 2004, 69-77; Abdul Majid 1999, 122-23). Their estimates on the possibility of a diplomatic solution went gradually pessimistic, concluding that Egypt had “to use force to open the door for a political solution” (Ismail 1987, 268). It was in the Cabinet meeting on April 5, 1973 that President Sadat requested from Gen. Ismail Ali to prepare a study on breaking the cease-fire. At that meeting in which Sadat presented his preferences for war, Sadat asked the ministers to “express their opinions clearly and frankly, and that no one should present something he is not convinced of” (Ismail 1987, 268). The President also used to hold informal deliberations with his senior assistants which “were not meant to reach particular decisions [but] to recognize different points of view” (Ismail 1987, 234). At the same time, for security considerations, the decision makers did not consult others not in the immediate decision-

making circle. President Sadat persisted in his visits to Moscow in October 1971 and Feb. 1972 on the possession of long-range fighter/bomber aircraft and armored vehicles as prerequisite to initiating a full-scale war. Decision-makers also informed Moscow beforehand on the start of operations. On Oct. 1, 1973, the Director of Military Intelligence informed the Soviet liaison officer and on Oct. 3 President Sadat informed the Soviet Ambassador in person (Shazly 2003, 173; Sadat 1978, 331).

Nevertheless, Sadat's dealing with his ally, Assad, was a story of "a friend's betrayal" (Shazly 2007). To encourage Damascus to participate in the surprise attack, the Egyptian leadership deliberately deceived the Syrians by offering them fake war plans on the advancement of Egyptian forces to the Passes line, while knowing that the Egyptian offensive would stop 10-15 kilometers east of the Canal. In Assad's words, the Egyptian failure to fulfill the pre-war promises "was the worst disappointment of the war" (Seale 1988, 208).

The group performed also "well" on the task of information processing. To enhance policy coordination, Sadat established in 1971 the National Security Council (NSC), chaired by the President, whose mission was to survey policy alternatives, develop working plans and follow up their implementation (Ismail 1987, 183). The NSC made a final review of available information on Sept. 30, 1973 which highlighted the time factor (the gap in military capability was widening in Israel's favor while inaction would discourage Arab financial support) and war limits (the operation should not turn into a general war). Accordingly, the NSC conditioned initiating war with achieving strategic surprise and simultaneously pursuing a political solution for not turning the limited war into another war of attrition (Ghorbal 2004, 92-106). Information processing was efficient in that when the policymakers received information challenging the prevailing assumptions – to make 1971

“the year of decision” and later to invoke an American-brokered solution – they revised their position and accordingly their estimates of the probability of success. The NSC convened on Dec. 19, 1971 and decided to postpone any military action after the first half of 1972 given the delay in Soviet arms supplies as a result of the Indo-Pakistani war (Ismail 1987, 194). Similarly, when Sadat received Hafez Ismail’s estimates of his talks with Kissinger in Feb. 1973, Sadat changed his predispositions and ordered planning a crossing of the Canal since diplomacy proved to be insufficient in convincing the United States to pressure Israel (Ismail 1987, 266).

Following repeated Soviet failures to deliver, the Egyptian leadership requested in July 1972 that Soviet troops stationed in Egypt be withdrawn. Sadat calculated that this demonstration of Egypt’s bargaining power would shock Moscow and lead it to speed up arms deliveries in order to preserve its gains from the strategic relationship with Egypt, particularly the naval facilities in the Mediterranean (Heikal 1993, 249-50; Ismail 1987, 218-19). The arms deal signed in March 1973, based on an understanding with Prime Minister Aziz Sidqi in October 1972, included MiG-23, Sukhoi-20, SCUD missiles brigade, 200 BMP armored vehicles, and 50 anti-tank missile systems (Shazly 2003, 171). It still was not sufficient to bridge the gap in air capability between Egypt and Israel but it was the biggest since 1970. Politically, the Soviet Union became more tolerant toward Egyptian war plans with the absence of a massive Soviet presence in Egypt (Eran 1978, 42). Egypt and Syria maintained a high-level coordination prior to the war which produced the establishment of the Supreme Military Council (SMC) comprising the senior military commanders of both sides and the Joint Command headed by Gen. Ismail Ali. But the responsibility of the Joint Command was confined to three spheres: ensuring secrecy, deception, and coordination of

the timing of the offensive, but with no authority to exercise operational and strategic policy (Palit 2002, 35).

Decision-making in Syria

The Syrian leadership performed “very well” the task of surveying objectives. It was engaged in debating the merits of two theories: general war and limited war to restore the Golan Heights. Prerequisites for a general war, parity in military capability particularly in the air with Israel and a unified Arab command, including Iraq and Jordan, remained unattainable except for an alliance with Egypt (Jouejati 1998, 118-19). In such a limited war, in which the Golan and part of Sinai could be restored, Syria had the political aim of forcing Israel to give up in post-war negotiations the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Seale 1988, 199). Acknowledging the military gap with Israel, Syria’s leaders decided to limit the campaign to the narrow Golan Plateau (20-25 kilometer-wide) which can be covered by a network by air-defense missiles as that existed in Egypt. Drawing on the experience of Israel in June 1967, Assad assumed that he could ask the Soviet Union to get a UNSCR cease-fire after forty-eight hours – the time needed to occupy the Plateau. This assumption, however, was unlikely since it overestimated the Soviet ability to impose a cease-fire and underestimated the probability of an American veto or foot-dragging in the UN Security Council (Parker 2001, 103 and 120).

The task of surveying alternatives was performed “very well” by the Syrian leadership. Syria initially favored a peaceful resolution. First, the Ba’th Party’s 11th National Congress in 1971 approved the scaling down of Syria’s objectives vis-à-vis Israel – abandoning for the first time its aim to overthrow the Zionist government of Israel (Parker 2001, 102). Second, in March 1972, Assad stated that UNSCR 242 Resolution would be

acceptable as a framework for total Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 borders and the restoration of the Palestinian people's rights, mainly the refugee problem (Sela 2000, 51). However, partly considering the failure of the international community to enforce UNSCR 242 and partly drawing on the experience of Sadat whose contacts also failed, Syria's leaders concluded that diplomatic efforts were fruitless and that a solution would necessitate a combination of military and diplomatic means (Tlas 2002, 578-79). The limited war plan had as its objective a 20-25 kilometers thrust to recapture the Golan Plateau. A disadvantage of this plan was raised within the Syrian military Ba'th Party echelons in that it meant being dragged behind Egypt as a secondary actor, arguing that the war should be delayed to Spring 1974 to enable Syria to receive more Soviet arms deliveries. Nevertheless, Egypt made clear that it would go to war with or without Syria and thus the Syrian leadership made its choice for participating in the war (Sela 2000, 56).

The performance of the information search task by the Syrian leadership is coded "neutral." As far as relations with the Soviet Union were concerned, President Assad persisted in his effort to get the indispensable Soviet weapons and political backing before going to war. On the one hand, on May 2, 1973 Assad visited Moscow to clarify the Soviet position on a possible renewal of fighting. He apparently got the approval for his plans, nonetheless with some reservations and new arms deliveries enabling an entire air-defense system to be installed and a considerable number of T-62 tanks. In May 10-14, Marshal Grechko visited Damascus and signed an agreement for further military assistance (O'Balance 1978, 36). Finally, in July the Minister of Defense Gen. Mustafa Tlas met with his Soviet counterpart Marshal Grechko to discuss the Syrian war plans. On the other hand, President Assad made sure to coordinate on the political level with Moscow and, accordingly, on Oct. 4 he informed the Soviet Ambassador in person on the timing of the

attack and asked for Soviet support for a cease-fire within forty-eight hours of the start of operations before Israel could recover the heights (Parker 2001, 104). Also, Syria's leaders did not isolate themselves from others not in the immediate decision-making circle. In particular, Gen. Tlas asked the advice of Gen. Giap of Vietnam and of Marshal Grechko on the Syrian war plans (Tlas 2002, 618 and 625). Nonetheless, Syria appears to have been suffering from insufficient coordination with the Egyptian ally. In particular, it did not invest enough effort in exploring how exactly the Egyptians were going to overcome the superior IAF beyond the SAM network to reach the Passes line. I assign no coding for the information processing task of the Syrian leadership for the lack of sufficient information.

Wartime Decisions

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

Threat environment by October 10 had significantly changed in the Arabs' favor. Despite the IDF superiority in many aspects, several other "constants" were no longer the same. Not only did two Egyptian field armies (five armor-reinforced infantry divisions) cross the Canal with minor casualties, destroy the Bar-Lev Line, and establish strong bridgeheads on the eastern bank of the Canal, but also the IAF was held back by the operation of the SAM missile system. Moreover, for the first time in the history of Arab-Israeli wars, Egyptian forces defeated the IDF in major battles; the legend of the IDF as the invincible army was in shatters. In his speech to the People's Assembly (the parliament) on Oct. 16, President Sadat ensured that the Egyptian nation had restored its honor, and it is time for her to feel secure. Indeed, Lt. Gen. Shazly attributes the wartime ill-fated decisions to the "euphoria" that took Sadat following the Egyptian initial successes (Shazly 2007). This

euphoria of making the miracle happen affected Sadat's decision-making in that from this point onwards, he started to isolate himself from his advisors; for example, he ordered Hafez Ismail, his National Security Advisor, to move to another working place in Cairo because he (Sadat) "did not want to get a crowd around" (Heikal 1993, 356).

In addition, when total victory appeared to be at hand, disagreements among members of the decision-making group surfaced to affect the process. It was Ismail Ali's rivalry with Shazly that prevented him from fully integrating the Chief-of-Staff in the process. Ismail Ali kept Shazly in the dark in regards with his deliberations with Sadat, and presented him only with orders to fulfill (Shazly 2003, 260-61). On the other hand, Sadat did not feel the need to maintain a close cooperation with Assad any more. When he learned about the Syrian tank losses on Oct. 8, Sadat complained to his confidant Mohamed Heikal saying: "Have you seen what my Mussolini had done to me!" – comparing Syria's position to Italy's as a strategic liability of its allies in World War II (Heikal 1993, 387).

Decision-Making

In the decision to advance the offensive eastward, the Egyptian decision-making group "very poorly" performed the task of surveying objectives. The group missed the link between the employed means and the aims they intended to achieve. The apparent aim was to relieve pressure on the Syrians (Sadat 1978, 346; Ismail 1987, 327). Howeidy proposes that this decision meant to increase pressure for an Israeli commitment of withdrawal since Washington continued to insist on a politically-unconditioned cease-fire (Howeidy 1992, 412-13). In either case, this advance breached Egypt's self-defined war limit: never go beyond the air-defense coverage, and it was not clear how predictions of a stabilized Syrian front or an increased pressure on Israel would materialize from a weakened military position.

Decision-makers made a “poor” survey of alternatives. A common argument suggests that had the offensive been launched two or three days earlier, when the Israelis would have been much less prepared, it would have destroyed the defending IDF forces and reach a well-defensible line along the Passes (El-Gamasy 1989, 383-84; Ali 1994, 324-25). Nonetheless, this argument is not based on evidence or accurate knowledge of Egyptian war plans. An advance earlier in time was not an alternative in the first place since Operation *al-Maazen al-Aaliya* did not conceive an advance beyond the missile range. Gen. Ismail Ali’s position was that: “we had begun the operations under the protection of the famous missile network. If I had to advance beyond that line, I would have to wait ... until I made sure that my forces had adequate protection” (Heikal 1974, 252). Maj. Gen. Mohamed el-Gamasy, Chief-of-Operations, recalls that Ismail Ali insisted on this position during the deliberations they held on Oct. 9 as a “firm position from which he would not deviate.” Paradoxically, however, Ismail Ali went along with Sadat’s decision on Oct. 12, probably reasoning that such an advance, notwithstanding exposing troops beyond the SAM coverage, would force Israel to divert air and ground forces from the Golan to the Canal front (Heikal 1974, 253). But probable consequences of the IAF diversion of effort to the Egyptian front – i.e., the likely failure of advance and the later conversion of forces to the Syrian front – have not apparently been considered (Howeidy 1992, 439-40). The obvious alternative was to stick to the pre-prepared offensive plan, and count on its advantages to wear the IDF down. Another alternative was for the Joint Command to plan and execute a coordinated thrust by the Iraqi and Jordanian forces to bring the Israeli counter-attack to a halt and regain the initiative.

The group also performed “poorly” the information search task. Neither the Cabinet nor the NSC was involved. President Sadat does not appear to have consulted but Gen. Ismail Ali. Indeed, once the fighting started, coordination with the Soviets was confined,

under President Sadat's instructions, to routine briefings by the Military Intelligence to the Soviet liaison officer (Shazly 2003, 174). President Sadat declined Soviet demands to work for a cease-fire throughout Oct. 7-12, and he even threatened to ask China to veto any UNSCR on a cease-fire. This was probably caused by a series of mutual misunderstandings. Moscow's evacuation of Soviet experts working in Egypt and their families on October 4-5 was interpreted by Sadat as telling him: "your battle is doomed to failure" (Sadat 1978, 332). Also, in the afternoon of Oct. 6, the Soviet Ambassador informed Sadat that President Assad asked Moscow to work for a cease-fire once the fighting started – a claim that Assad later denied to Sadat (Sadat 1978, 338-39; Ismail 1987, 315).

Information processing was "very poorly" performed. Field commanders vehemently objected the decision, arguing that the advance would be exposed to the superior IAF. Maj. Gen. Abdel Munim Wassel, GOC of the Third Army, was about to resign in protest, and Maj. Gen. Saad Ma'moun, GOC of the Second Army, even precisely predicted that this advance is doomed to failure which would lead to an Israel penetration in the west bank of the Canal, but in vain (Hammad 2002, 748; Abu Hussein 1993, 46-47). But the principal opponent was the Chief-of-Staff Shazly who reasonably argued that (1) the Syrian front had already been stabilized since Oct. 12 because of the Arab superiority in armor (thirteen brigades confronting six Israeli brigades); (2) the proposed Egyptian advance had no chance of success given the absolute Israeli superiority beyond the missile range in air force and armor (four brigades confronting eight Israeli brigades) since Oct. 8; and (3) advancing the armored reserves would expose the rear west of the Canal to Israeli penetration (as in fact happened shortly later). Lt. Gen. Shazly reminded Ismail Ali of the obliteration of Egypt's 1st Infantry Brigade by the IAF on Oct. 10 once it went by mistake outside the missile range in daylight. But his advice was simply ignored. Meanwhile, Egyptian-Syrian coordination was

minimized to routine exchange of information on the daily events on each front (Shazly 2007).

In the decision to accept the cease-fire, the balance of power turned against the Arabs. Two Israeli armored divisions had already crossed to west of the Canal, and they achieved rapid successes since the defending Egyptian forces were largely air-defense and administrative units which were not equipped to defend against armor. By time, the IDF was able to occupy a large area of territory and, more importantly, open a gap in the Egyptian SAM network, allowing the IAF to offer support to its ground forces in the Canal Zone (Shazly 2003, 277). At the same time, the IDF had by that time pushed back the attacking Syrian forces and crossed the Purple Line – the June 1967 cease-fire line in the Golan.

Though this was supposedly a good reason for Egyptian leaders to perform the decision-making tasks adequately, the decision-making process was one of these cases where the group incohesion assumed primacy. Sadat and Ismail Ali probably recognized how much they were wrong in the decision to advance the offensive eastward on Oct. 14; an advance whose failure obviously allowed the IDF penetration west of the Canal – as Shazly anticipated. As the military historian Gamal Hammad writes, “this deep-seated reciprocal hatred between the two men had undoubtedly affected the work atmosphere” (Hammad 2002, 584-85). Thus, this rivalry prevented the President and his Minister of War from sufficiently consulting the Chief-of-Staff and other senior military commanders who adopted the Shazly’s views. At the same time, mistrust between Sadat and Assad reached its peak by then. The earlier report to Sadat by the Soviet Ambassador that Assad had requested a cease-fire had probably raised Sadat’s suspicions that Assad was playing his own game (Hammad 2004, 239-40), and accordingly, he was not supposed to abide by an already-broken alliance.

Egyptian leaders performed the task of surveying alternatives “poorly.” They aimed at preventing deeper Israeli penetration west of the Canal. Sadat believed that a continuation of fighting under the current circumstances, i.e., the presence of large IDF forces west of the Canal combined with Egypt’s inability to advance any further in the east, would run the risk of deeper Israeli penetration threatening the initial military successes and allow a greater US intervention which meant a second destruction of the armed forces (Sadat 1978, 348).

Nevertheless, the decision was based on two flawed assumptions: (1) maneuverability of forces was seen as “retreat” that would weaken Egypt’s position in the postwar negotiations (Sadat 1978, 348; Hammad 2002, 603-04), even though the insufficiency of Egypt’s forces west of the canal would obviously allow a deeper Israeli penetration; and (2) Israel would abide by the cease-fire, even though this was doubted by Sadat himself (Sadat 1978, 352).

The performance of Egypt’s decision-makers on the survey of alternative courses of action was “poor.” The General Staff proposal was to pull back four armored brigades to counter the penetrating Israeli forces west of the canal – a mission on which these brigades were adequately trained beforehand. This option would not have affected Egyptian defenses in the east (five reinforced infantry divisions) but instead would allow the encirclement and destruction of the Israeli bridgehead west of the canal – ultimately serving the aims of imposing on Israel a prolonged mobilization and high casualties. But the over-cautious Sadat and Ismail Ali rejected this alternative for two reasons: (1) any pull-back orders would turn into panic and result in chaotic retreat as happened in June 1967; and (2) such a pull-back would damage defenses in the east of and weaken Egypt’s post-war negotiating position. This reasoning was not justified since these brigades were pulled back to face the IDF west of the canal two days later, but it was too late (Hammad 2002, 606-07).

Sadat and Ismail Ali viewed the advantages of a cease-fire as stabilizing the current situation to prevent further Israeli penetrations west of the canal. This situation, preserving the initial military success east of the canal, would permit to start negotiations for Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders. Nevertheless, disadvantages of this option were not adequately examined. This option would undermine Egypt's alliance with Syria which did not accept the cease-fire and insisted on continuing the fighting in light of the Arab support. Second, there was no arrangement agreed upon to observe the cease-fire which meant that the superior IDF could violate the cease-fire unmonitored in an attempt to complete the encirclement of Egypt's Third Army (which in fact happened).

Egyptian decision-makers performed the task of searching for information in a "poor" manner. Not the Cabinet, the NSC, nor the Foreign Ministry was involved in the decision. Hafez Ismail writes that President Sadat "chose to face the situation alone ... [even though] I thought that it was for circumstances like these that the National Security Council was established" (Ismail 1987, 360). In fact, in deciding to accept the cease-fire, the President almost shunned his close advisors, including his Military Secretary and the Minister of Presidential Affairs (Heikal 1993, 527). In the meeting Sadat held with his advisors on Oct. 21, he was in fact informing them of rather than discussing the decision to accept the cease-fire. When Mohamed Heikal raised the necessity to demand the UN Secretary General to send observers force to monitor the cease-fire, Sadat replied: "This is not the time for this. I have agreed on the timing of the cease fire and it's over" (Heikal 1993, 525). Coordination with the USSR was nevertheless restored. The Soviets restored their influence with the military airlift and the visit of Premier Kosygin to Cairo for three days, starting on Oct. 16. During this visit, Kosygin showed President Sadat satellite images

of the front demonstrating the Israeli breakthrough west of the Canal, and both leaders agreed on a document outlining their joint efforts for a new UNSCR (Ismail 1987, 337).

“Poor” information processing was performed. Though the military command was consulted, the political leadership rejected its advice when it did not support its preferred course of action. The General Staff was divided over how to deal with the Israeli penetration. Lt. Gen. Shazly estimated that despite Egypt’s quantitative superiority in both banks of the Canal, the deployment of forces was clearly unbalanced (Shazly 2003, 278-79). Accordingly, his proposal was to pull back four armoured brigades to the west of the Canal since this would not affect defenses in the east but rather allow the destruction of the bulk of the IDF troops in the west. Indeed, an adoption of this alternative would have proved the political leadership mistaken not only in its earlier rejection on Oct. 16 to redeploy the two armoured divisions west of the canal but also in its decision to advance the offensive eastward on Oct. 14 in the first place. When Hafez Ismail attempted to examine the foundations of accepting the cease-fire, Sadat shouted at him saying that as a military man he should have known better (Heikal 1993, 524).

Threat Environment, Group Cohesion, and Decision-Making in Israel

The Decision Not to Preempt

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

Before the war, Israel had a safe security environment. First, the United States was not only a more powerful, but also a more committed ally than the Soviet Union – the Arabs’ ally. Moreover, the declaration by the two superpowers on a military relaxation in the

Middle East obviously offered Israel good reasons to feel secure. Second, the political/military status quo favored Israel: the occupied Arab territories in Sinai and the Golan offered the Jewish state a strategic depth and “secure borders”: even if war broke out, the existence of Israel would not be at risk. Finally, it had a clear military advantage over its adversaries provided by its superior air force and mobilization system.

Israeli decision-making group was not sufficiently cohesive. The group members remained the same as they were in the War of Attrition (1969-1970); the practice of “Golda’s Kitchen” persisted. She continued to consult with the few “cooks” such as Dayan and the Minister without Portfolio Israel Galili, who used to violate the Cabinet consensus (Shlaim 2003, 156), and to ignore the rest. There was an almost-certain approval by Meir of whatever the Minister of Defense and the military suggested (Shlaim 2003, 169-70). Meir, protecting her seat from being taken over by Israel’s generals, competed over expressing hard positions and harsh words to cover her lack of experience in military affairs (Gai 1998, 189). Among “the rest” was the Foreign Minister Eban who had found himself “increasingly shunted aside, ignored, and bypassed” (Korn 1992, 174).

Decision-Making

The decision-making process reflected the clear imbalance of power favoring Israel. Israel’s leaders were in a position that necessitated no worries. On July 17, 1973, the Minister of Defense Dayan spoke to the personnel of security services and elaborated on the latter point. He said:

In the present time we have an advantage of forces, not that we have more planes than they have or more tanks than they have; [rather] we have less planes and tanks than theirs, [the balance] today it is approximately 1:3. If we combine not only the means but also the components, that is the strength of the army according to its quality and according to the lines we

have now, then we have an advantage of forces. That is, if they start a war, they are going to be beaten and defeated (ISA, Speech of the Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan to Officials in the Security Establishment, July 17, 1973)

In his speech to the Israeli Staff College on August 10, 1973, Dayan repeated his ideas. He told the College: “The balance of forces is so much in our favor that it neutralizes the Arab considerations and motives for the immediate renewal of hostilities” (Shlaim 1976, 363).

Later on, the Prime Minister did not permit a detailed discussion of the preemption alternative because, as she describes the situation in her memoirs, she had already made her mind. She told the Chief-of-Staff: “‘Dado’ ... I know the arguments in favour of a pre-emptive strike, but I am against it” (Meir 1975, 359). Naming Israel’s shock of the Egyptian crossing the “ego earthquake,” Zeev Schiff depicted Israel’s decision-making process on the eve of war:

The Government of Israel’s decision-making process [was] basically faulty ... The Cabinet, as a body, was not informed of tension on the borders, of enemy concentrations, of an IDF alert and of the possibility of war – until the very last minutes. Even before the alert, there was an accumulation of important data which should have been brought to the notice of the Cabinet (Schiff 1974, 96).

It is plausible that the favorable balance of power, combined with the lack of group cohesion prevented Israel’s leaders from performing the decision-making tasks adequately. Because Israel was extremely confident of its military power, Meir and her close advisors did not feel the need to invest more in consultations and revisions; there was also no need to involve “the rest” in a security matter that only the experts – Dayan, Galili, Peres, Bar-Lev, Elazar and Zeira – could discuss and resolve.

In the decision not to preempt, the performance of the Israeli decision-making group on the task of surveying objectives was “very poor.” It went through two sets of flawed assumptions, the “conception” and “the aggressor’s image,” connected by a third: “sufficient advance warning.” The former dominated the assessments of Israeli decision-makers as far as Oct. 3; and from then on it overlapped with the latter until the outbreak of war. The “conception” rested on two assumptions: (1) Egypt would not launch a full-scale war against Israel until she had fighter aircraft able to challenge the IAF superiority; and (2) Syria would not go to war without Egypt in the struggle too (Shlaim 1976, 352). This could be attributed to a successful misinformation campaign by Egypt emphasizing skepticism on its capacity to mount a general attack under air inferiority long after the turn to a limited-war strategy in 1972 (Stein 1982, 51-52). Nevertheless, it contradicted a fact which Israeli policy makers recognized ever since 1970 – the existence of the air-defense system which enabled Egypt to launch a full-scale war across the Canal though limited to the SAM coverage area. Receiving information on Oct. 3 on Egyptian and Syrian war preparations, Israeli decision makers, relying on the premise that AMAN would give sufficient advance warning of any Arab attack to permit the orderly mobilization of reserves, rejected a proposal to mobilize. A promise by AMAN to this effect, however, did not actually exist (Zeira 1993). The “warning” issue will be discussed in greater detail below.

In the morning of October 6, recognizing that war was imminent, decision-makers moved to the third set of flawed assumptions: the “aggressor image.” The Cabinet rejected both a proposal for general mobilization, reasoning that it would give the world an excuse to call Israel the aggressor, and another for a pre-emptive strike because it would deprive Israel from receiving US military aid (Meir 1975, 358-60). The Cabinet also decided to appeal to the United States to warn the Arabs not to open fire, under “the assumption ... that the Arabs

may be deterred at the last moment when they realize that their plans are known” (Schiff 1974, 42). In this decision, Israel had the aim of preserving the status quo. However, it was not at all clear how the employed means would achieve that. According to Eban, there was no precedent in which a precautionary IDF mobilization had adverse international effects or opposed by the Foreign Minister on such grounds (Eban 1977, 509). Also, a failure to mobilize or to preempt meant that Israel chose to accept the first strike. At the same time, this decision contradicted both Israel’s security doctrine to mobilize when the enemy forces deployment poses a threat (Zeira 1993, 26), and its historical experience in preemption in 1956 and 1967 (Schiff 1974, 40).

Israeli decision-makers made a “poor” survey of alternatives. The ministerial meeting held on Oct. 3 discussed the reinforcements and massive deployments of the armies of Egypt and Syria. But no courses of actions, particularly mobilization, were raised before the meeting other than the one the Chief-of-Staff Lt. Gen. David Elazar proposed: to depend on the recently-reinforced local defenses in the Golan, given the sufficiency of the IAF deterrent capability (Bartov 2002, 423; Zeira 1993, 132; Meir 1975, 354-55; Dayan 1976, 471). On Oct. 5, the ministerial meeting reviewed the recent developments, particularly the emergency status of enemy armies and the rushed departure of Soviet families from the Egypt and Syria. Again, no alternatives were raised before the meeting other than the one put by Elazar: to stick to localized defense and raise the IDF alert level, which had already been ordered. The mobilization option was not discussed but rather unilaterally rejected by the Chief-of-Staff, on the grounds that measures by the standing army would suffice (Bartov 2002, 335-36; Zeira 1993, 153-55). The meeting only decided that, if necessary, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense be authorized to approve the mobilization of reserves by themselves (Meir 1975, 357; Dayan 1976, 473).

It was not until the Cabinet meeting on Oct. 6, when news of the imminent Egyptian-Syrian attack arrived, that serious alternatives were raised: partial mobilization, general mobilization, and pre-emptive strike. General mobilization and pre-emptive strike were ruled out because they would make Israel look as the aggressor with the possible prevention of US arms deliveries. The chosen option, partial mobilization, it was thought, would suffice to absorb the first wave of Arab offensive before a fully-mobilized IDF could launch a counterattack restoring the *status quo ante* (Meir 1975, 358; Dayan 1976, 461). But a balanced consideration of their positive and negative consequences did not take place. General mobilization and/or preemptive strike, even though they were not likely to lead the Arabs to cancel the planned attack, would have caused great casualties on their side, and bring forward the Israeli counterattacks on both fronts by several days (Schiff 1974, 99-100 and 209-10). On the other hand, partial mobilization was opted for, paradoxically, on Yom Kippur, “the one day of the year that even [Israel’s] legendary ability to mobilize rapidly partly failed” (Meir 1975, 359). At the same time, even if partial mobilization had worked, it would not have been sufficient to withstand the predicted massive Arab attack.

Israeli decision-makers also made a “poor” information search. They almost exclusively confined their information search to AMAN which repeatedly estimated between Oct. 3 to 6 that despite the apparent war preparations in both Egypt and Syria, the probability of a coordinated attack against Israel was “extremely low.” Indeed, Israel’s inability to anticipate the Arab offensive resulted partly from an intelligence failure and partly from inadequate information search by the decision makers. The Mossad, which held more pessimistic views, was excluded from the deliberations, partly because AMAN was the country’s sole center for evaluating military intelligence (Schiff 1974, 23; Shlaim 1976, 368). At the same time, on Oct. 3, 5, and 6, the Prime Minister invited only few ministers to

participate in the meetings which were dominated by military commanders. In the meeting of Oct. 3 only two other ministers apart from the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense were present. Those present decided not to mention the topic at the next Cabinet session and, upon Dayan's recommendation, "not to tell other ministers in detail about Israel's difficulties in getting modern weapons from the US" (Schiff 1974, 19). In the meeting of Oct. 5, only five ministers took part.

Decision makers made little effort to explore the US position. First, contacts were limited to inter-agency exchange of information – which supported the existing perception mainly because the US intelligence community, according to the State Department Intelligence Chief Ray Cline, was "brainwashed by the Israelis who brainwashed themselves" (U.S. National Security Archive 2003, under "Secretary's Staff Meeting")

Second, when Prime Minister Meir found it necessary to talk to the US Ambassador in the morning of Oct. 6, it was too late to be effective. By that time, the US Embassy staff had already reported to Washington that they expected to be informed by the Israeli government shortly of its intention to preempt massively; "thus, for several hours after the outbreak of war, the U.S. was not certain who attacked whom" (Brecher and Geist 1980, 201).

Information processing was performed "very poorly" by decision-makers. It was manifest in the repeated failure to revise their positions when they received information challenging their prevailing assumptions. First, though its "low probability" estimates, AMAN emphasized on Oct. 3 that the deployment of Syrian and Egyptian forces would enable them to launch an attack at any time (Zeira 1993, 128-9). On Oct. 5, Maj. Gen. Eli Zeira, Chief of AMAN warned that the enemy reinforcement were "absolutely significant" and that they had a defensive deployment from which it was possible to move to the offensive (Zeira 1993, 152). Assessment of the enemy's intentions was not only "by its very

nature ... laced with uncertainty and ambiguity” (Stein 1982, 49), but also was not expected by Israel’s leadership to indicate a “warning.” When the Prime Minister asked the Chief of AMAN on April 18, 1973 on what would constitute a “warning” of an Arab attack, his answer was “knowledge about preparations;” the word “intentions” was not even mentioned in their conversation (Zeira 1993, 80). Nonetheless, Israel’s leaders did not consider mobilizing. Nothing could be more illustrative on the poor information processing than the failure to decide in the morning of Oct. 6 on general mobilization and/or preemption even after the Mossad provided authoritative information of the impending Arab attack on that day. Second, the Prime Minister Meir met with the “source,” King Hussein, on Sept. 25, 1973 and she listened to an explicit and unprecedented warning of an imminent attack by Egypt and Syria (Parker 2001, 122-23; Zeira 1993, 126). But she ignored the warning. Similarly, in the early days of October the Chief of Mossad “expressed his skepticism of the estimate of a low probability of war to the Prime Minister, who in turn asked him to convey his doubts to the Minister of Defense” (Stein 1982, 47).

Wartime Decisions

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

In just three days of fighting, the IDF was defeated twice in failed counterattacks on the Egyptian front – the largest was on Oct. 9. That the Egyptians looked unstoppable caused Dayan to suggest a retreat of the IDF troops to a second defense line deep into Sinai. On the northern front, Israel almost lost the Golan to the advancing Syrian army which could have started artillery shelling of Israel’s population centers in the north if it was able to continue its advance and hold the heights. In terms of losses, the IDF lost hundreds of soldiers, 49

planes and 500 tanks (more than one quarter of all tanks at Israel's disposal) on both fronts (U.S. National Security Archive 2003, under "Memorandum of Conversation between Ambassador Simcha Dinitz of Israel and Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State"). That came at a time when the war seemed no close to an end, and the Arab meticulous plan of attack looked as if they had prepared themselves for a long war even in case of heavy casualties of their side.

By then, the Israelis had already got their own experience of defeat. The attack on October 6, 1973 took the Israelis by complete surprise, both strategic and tactical. It was the first ever war that the Arabs took such an initiative and start the war when the IDF was neither mobilized nor prepared. In the intervention of Arab armies in Palestine in 1948 and Nasser's escalation of fighting along the Canal into a war of attrition in 1969 the Arabs initiated action but did not surprise Israel. On the tactical level, Israeli leaders were surprised by the competence and steadfastness of Arab soldiers which only retreated before the IDF in 1956 and 1967. As for the leadership group cohesion, the outbreak of war and the following defeats of the IDF in battle worked as a turning point after which disagreements among the group members were suppressed, though not removed, for the critical security situation that Israel had to face.

Decision-Making

Israeli decision-making process reflected the threat environment clearly favoring the Arabs. As Zeev Schiff put it: "Till the war the Government did not operate as a brains trust, but as a feudal system. When war was inevitable, the Prime Minister tried to share responsibility with all her ministers" (Schiff 1974, 98). In the wartime decisions to authorize the IDF crossing, Prime Minister Meir made sure that decisions were taken collectively by

the entire Cabinet. Also, before deciding on the cease-fire, the Foreign Minister was summoned from the United States to participate in the Cabinet's consultations (Eban 1977, 523-24). Nevertheless, Meir relied in fact on her confident Simcha Dinitz, Israel's Ambassador to Washington, and her intentions were not entirely benign. Shmuel Tzabag writes:

The reason why Meir called Eban back to Israel urgently related to internal politics. The prime minister saw Eban as the dominant figure who had urged the acceptance of Resolution 242 in 1967. Meir feared that Eban's presence in the US would make it difficult for her to keep an eye on him. According to Meir, he 'would cause less damage here than if he would be in the US'. In this manner, Meir neutralized Eban (Tzabag 2007, 152).

Similarly, Meir's tendency to uncritically accept the advice of the military, as was the case during the War of Attrition, persisted and "became evident" (Shlaim 2003, 169).

In the decision to authorize the crossing, the decision-making group performed the survey of objectives task "well." It identified its objective clearly through appropriate means, and it aimed at bringing the war to an end as quickly as possible to save lives and equipment. On Oct. 12, Elazar stated: "Every day after the next 48 hours will not work in our favor and, accordingly, the pressure on the enemy should be heavy and accelerated, so that they will hasten to ask for a cease-fire" (Bartov 2002, 539). The Israeli leadership correctly assumed that there would no cease-fire so long as the Egyptians were in an advantageous position (Schiff 1974, 190-91). This aim had priority over evening the score up with the Egyptians (Dayan 1976, 516), for three reasons: (1) decision-makers had an earlier consensus on Oct. 12 to accept a cease-fire "in place" (Eban 1977, 515; Tzabag 2007, 147-50); (2) they were

anxious of having troops entrapped in Egyptian lines (Meir 1975, 362); and (3) they were willing, when the crossing underwent difficulties, to cancel the operation.

Israeli decision-makers made a thorough survey of alternatives; the task was performed “very well.” There were two alternatives: the first, advocated by Dayan, was to continue fighting along the existing lines east of the Canal and pursue a cease-fire “in place.” This would stabilize the front and not risk entrapment in Egyptian lines. Elazar and Bar-Lev, however, argued that this would mean a renewal of the war of attrition causing force erosion, under full mobilization of the IDF for an indefinite period of time. A more plausible alternative, Elazar and his Deputy Maj. Gen. Israel Tal argued, was to cross the canal and establish a bridgehead in the rear of Egyptian troops, because this would inflict defeat on the Egyptians and force Sadat to accept an immediate cease-fire. Dayan and Tal, nonetheless, highlighted the disadvantages of such crossing: it would result in high casualties with no guarantee of collapse on Egypt’s side which would fight fiercely as the Syrians did, and might as well call forces from Jordan, Iraq and Morocco. The IDF was very likely to face massive counterattacks by the fresh and first-class Egyptian armored divisions stationed west of the Canal. On Oct. 12, the decision was delayed until the position of the Egyptian armor west of the canal was ascertained. When these forces crossed to the east and the Egyptian offensive failed on Oct. 14, then the advantages of the crossing exceeded its disadvantages and it was decided on by the Cabinet.

Israeli decision-makers searched for information “very well.” In general, measures were taken to ensure a steady flow of information to decision-makers. Dayan, Elazar, and Bar-Lev, the then Minister of Commerce who assumed de facto command of the southern front, shuttled between the Cabinet meetings and the battlefields in order to supply Tel Aviv with firsthand information on the rapidly changing developments (Brecher and Geist 1980,

235). On the other hand, three parallel channels of information exchange with the United States were established: (1) with the Presidency (Meir-Dinitz) or the State Department (Meir-Gazit-Dinitz-Kissinger, or Meir-Kissinger); (2) with the US Embassy in Tel Aviv (Allon or Gazit-Keating, Veliotis); and (3) with the Department of Defense (Allon-Gur-Pentagon) (Brecher and Geist 1980, 236)

The General Staff was the central forum in which the alternatives were discussed and the crossing plan was designed. The field commanders, to which the crossing was assigned, Ariel Sharon and Avraham Adan, were the original advocates of the crossing and were sufficiently consulted throughout (Adan 1979, 163-67). Allon insisted that he “cannot take a stand on the question before going to the front and talking with commanders” (Schiff 1974, 192). The Chief of Mossad, Zvi Zamir, participated in the Cabinet meeting of Oct. 12 and it was through him that the ministers received information on the Egyptian plan to advance the offensive eastward employing their armor west of the Canal (Bartov 2002, 550). At the same time, AMAN provided exact timing for both the crossing of the Egyptian armor and their subsequent attack eastward on Oct. 14 (Zeira 1993, 166). In their meeting with Dr. Kissinger on Oct. 9, Amb. Dinitz and Maj. Gen. Mordechai Gur, Military Attaché in Washington, discussed the concentration of IDF action on the Syrian front (Kissinger 1982, 492-93).

At this meeting of Oct. 9, Dinitz and Gur also discussed the possibility of penetrating Egyptian lines to the west bank, and asked openly for intelligence information. Kissinger immediately directed his assistant, Brent Scowcroft: “Call Colby [CIA Director] and tell him to give them every bit of intelligence we have” (U.S. National Security Archive 2003, under “Memorandum of Conversation between Ambassador Simcha Dinitz of Israel and Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State”). Israel had reportedly received the photographs taken by the US SR-71-A reconnaissance aircraft that flew over the Canal front on Oct. 13 which should

have accurately revealed the Egyptian force deployments east and west of the Canal (Shazly 2003, 265). Decision-makers also persisted on their requests for arms re-supplies from the United States for which Israel's decision to cross the Canal was pending. Amb. Dinitz told Kissinger on Oct. 12: "Our decision to start a new offensive or not depends on our power. We thought that by now in Israel the implements to do it – the bombs, the missiles, etc" (Kissinger 1982, 512).

Information processing was performed "well." Decision-makers were able to rapidly change their initial preference (to pursue a cease-fire) relying on new evidence. First, Meir received on Oct. 13 the long-awaited reply to her urgent request for arms: President Nixon's approval of a massive US airlift to Israel (Brecher and Geist 1980, 216). Second, though the ministers and military commanders were enthusiastic about the Suez crossing, they abstained from approving the operation given the reservation expressed by Gen. Tal and waited until they made sure, on Oct. 14, that the threat posed by the Egyptian armor west of the Canal was removed.

In the decision to accept the cease-fire, the decision-making group performed the task of surveying Israel's objectives "well." Israel pursued two aims: to maintain the alliance relations with the United States, and to ensure military superiority in the Canal area (Meir 1975, 372; Dayan 1976, 535). On Oct. 21, these two aims were at odds because to keep the US support, Israel was required to abide by the cease-fire at a time the IDF did not make a significant military achievement for which it made the Suez crossing. However, Israeli decision-makers managed to reconcile the two aims when they found that the IDF would be able to continue fighting to improve its position, despite the cease-fire, with no expectation of hindrance to the flow of US arms. Reasons for this reconciliation were: (1) omission in the draft UNSCR 338 of any mechanism of supervision (Eban 1977, 530); and (2) Kissinger's

green light for Israeli violation of the cease-fire to achieve military victory (US National Security Archive 2003, under “U.S. Embassy Soviet Union Cable 13148 to Department of State,” and “Memorandum of Conversation Between Prime Minister Golda Meir and Dr. Henry Kissinger”).

Decision-makers performed the task of surveying alternatives “well.” To reject the cease-fire and continue fighting in the west bank would endanger the US arms deliveries to Israel. As Prime Minister Meir summed it up: “There is only one country to which we can turn and sometimes we have to give in to it – even when we know we shouldn’t. But it is the only real friend we have, and a very powerful one” (Meir 1975, 372). Rejecting the plan might enable Israel to complete the encirclement of Egypt’s two armies east of the Canal, but it would risk Soviet intervention (Eban 1977, 529-30). Thus decision-makers were very likely to accept the American proposal of a cease-fire even when the IDF was not in a superior position; in fact, no proposal for rejecting the cease-fire was raised in the Cabinet (Eban 1977, 530). This would not allow an Israeli victory but *only if* Israel observed the cease-fire. Knowing that Israel would have American backing of its violation of the cease-fire to make a significant military achievement, a “nominal” acceptance of a cease-fire appeared to have combined the advantages of both alternatives.

Information search was performed “well.” Indeed, the entire Cabinet debated the issue. The General Staff recommended a continuation of fighting until favorable military positions were reached (Bartov 2002, 669). But the bureaucracy was apparently insufficiently consulted. At the same time, the constant contact with the US officials was temporarily cut when Dr. Kissinger was negotiating the cease-fire terms in Moscow for “technical problems.” This caused outrage in the Israeli Cabinet fearing the set up of a precedent in which the United States, instead of coordinating its moves with Israel, would

present a final draft on a “take it or leave it” basis (Eban 1977, 528). Nonetheless, US-Israeli close coordination was very shortly re-established during the visit of Dr. Kissinger to Israel before returning to Washington on Oct. 22 upon urging requests from Prime Minister Meir (Eban 1977, 531).

Processing of new information was performed equally “well” by the Israeli leadership. Decision-makers were able to reexamine their preference in light of new evidence. After the initial, but informal, rejection of the proposal by Meir, decision-makers received a combination of pressures and reassurances by the United States. They considered the message of President Nixon in which he urged the government to accept without delay the cease-fire “in place” proposal as a straight pressure (Brecher and Geist 1980, 222n). In the words of Dayan, “President Nixon had requested us to accept. The Cabinet convened at midnight and decided to respond to the president’s request” (Dayan 1976, 535). At the same time, in his message to Israel’s Ambassador in Washington, Dr. Kissinger stated that when the cease-fire would enter into force, the US “would accept Israel’s taking slightly longer [for military dispositions]” (U.S. National Security Archive 2003, under “U.S. Embassy Soviet Union Cable 13148 to Department of State”). In his subsequent meeting with Meir, Kissinger did not only promise her not to get protests from Washington if Israel violated the cease-fire, but also encouraged her not to stop fire “even if they [the Egyptians] do” (U.S. National Security Archive 2003, under “Memorandum of Conversation Between Prime Minister Golda Meir and Dr. Henry Kissinger”).

The Quality of the Decision-Making Process and War Outcome

Alternative Explanations

The war outcome was a mix. Therefore, a good explanation of this outcome should tell us why at the initial stage of the war the Arabs had such an outstanding success and Israel failed miserably, and why the tide was turned at the later stage. Unfortunately, most of existing explanations focus on one side only, either the Arabs or Israel. Two explanations make claims on the performance of both sides at the initial stage of the war. The first is Israel's intelligence failure; AMAN failed to evaluate and disseminate, though it succeeded to gather accurate information on Egyptian and Syrian preparations of war. This was partly due to the "conception" dominance, but mainly to the Arabs' vast and highly sophisticated deception plan (Shazly 2003, 229-32). Because AMAN failed to deliver its promise of an early warning of an Arab attack, the IDF was yet to be mobilized when the war broke out, and Egyptian and Syrian armies caught the IDF by complete strategic surprise.

It is true that because Israel did not make the initiative, and because the IDF could not mobilize before the beginning of combat, the IDF had suffered defeat at the initial stage of the war, with heavy casualties, and the war took longer time than the Israeli economy could afford. But it is arguable whether AMAN was the prime responsible for this. Instead, four reasons suggest that surprise resulted partly from an intelligence failure and mainly from poor performance of the decision-making tasks by political leaders:

- a) Decision makers held a belief that AMAN promised to give sufficient advance warning of any Arab attack to permit the orderly mobilization of reserves. A promise by AMAN to this effect, however, did not indeed exist (Zeira 1993).

- b) Though AMAN was mistaken in the assessment that the probability of war was “low,” it provided decision-makers with sufficient information indicating otherwise. AMAN emphasized on Oct. 3 that the deployment of Egyptian and Syrian forces would enable them to launch an attack at any time (Zeira 1993, 128-29). On Oct. 5 Zeira warned that the enemy reinforcement was “absolutely significant” and that they had a defensive deployment from which it was possible to go to the offensive (Zeira 1993, 152). Why then did decision-makers, especially those of a military background, not question the intelligence estimate?
- c) Decision-makers received discrepant information from at least two sources other than AMAN but still made no change of their view. Prime Minister Meir met King Hussein on Sept. 25, 1973 and listened to an explicit and unprecedented warning of an imminent attack by Egypt and Syria (Parker 2001, 122-23; Zeira 1993, 126; Shlaim 2008, 365-70). Also, in the early days of October, Zamir “expressed his skepticism of the estimate of a low probability of war to the Prime Minister, who in turn asked him to convey his doubts to the Minister of Defense” (Stein 1982, 47).
- d) Even when the government became certain that war would break out after the Mossad provided authoritative information of the impending Arab attack on Oct. 6, general mobilization and pre-emptive strike were ruled out because they would make Israel look as the aggressor with the possible prevention of US arms deliveries.

The second explanation is the improvement of civil-military relations in Egypt. Risa Brooks (2001) argues that in autocracies the balance of civil-military power, factored by the military’s social position, political leaders’ social position and military leaders’ unity, affects military effectiveness. When the balance of power favors the political leader, the state performs better in strategic assessment, command and control, and leadership. In 1973, Sadat

dominated because of declined social support for the military, enhanced presidential legitimacy, and divided military elite. Therefore, the clarity of the structure of authority helped Sadat make a sound strategic assessment, the clear chain of command enabled him to carry out a firm command and control, and his ability to appoint commanders of his choice enabled him to select qualified leaders.

In fairness to Brooks, the argument she makes on the effect of strategic assessment, command and control, and leadership on military effectiveness looks convincing.

Remarkably, however, this concept is similar to my argument on the decision-making process. The difference is that the causes she proposes for the balance of civil-military power cannot account for the variation in the Egyptian performance during the war, but the causes of the quality of the decision-making process can. While the three factors identified by Brooks as affecting Egypt's civil-military relations remained the same throughout, the balance of power and group cohesion did change between the decision to initiate war on the one hand, and the decisions to advance the offensive, and to accept the cease-fire on the other. True, Brooks makes a note of Sadat's political interventions in the decisions to advance the offensive and to refuse recalling forces from the east bank to counter the Israeli penetration (Brooks 2001, 423), but she is silent on the significant impact of those decisions on the course of the war.

Another set of explanations make claims on the performance of the two sides at the later stage of the war. The first is that it was American "intervention" that made Israel's successes at the later stage of the war possible. On Oct. 13 the Egyptians spotted an aircraft, flying at very high altitude which was beyond the range of their SAM missiles, over the battlefield and the Nile Delta. They assumed that it was the American SR-71A aircraft on a reconnaissance mission. According to this explanation, images taken by the SR-71A and the

US satellites offered evidence of the Egyptian offensive next day, and thus the IDF was ready for it. Also, the US airlift rapidly replaced Israel's losses in tanks and aircraft and provided sophisticated weaponry and in great quantities (Sadat 1978, 346-48; Ali 1994, 307-12).

The US support to Israel was indeed massive, but it alone cannot explain why the tide was reversed by the end of the war for two reasons. First, the Oct. 14 offensive failed mainly because the Egyptian political decision violated the principal limit of the campaign: not to move forces beyond the SAM network (Shazly 2003, 260); in other words, US satellite images would not have helped Israel much had the Egyptians refrained from advancing the offensive. Second, this argument overlooks that the Arab war effort was heavily supported by Moscow: Soviet satellite images were provided to the Egyptian command before and during the war (Shazly 2003, 182), and a Soviet airlift, on a scale comparable with that of the United States to Israel, was flown to Egypt and Syria (Dupuy 1992, 566-72; Shazly 2003, 179-80).

The second explanation is Arab culture. Pollack explains the mixed outcome of the war by a combination of two factors: (1) competent strategic planning by Egypt's top generals, as proved in the almost flawless canal-crossing operation or the push to consolidate the bridgeheads, plus impressive performance in engineering, logistics, and unit-cohesion; and (2) overall poor performance of Egyptian units, especially in combined-arms operations, bad reporting and tactical rigidity, which is attributed to Arab social and cultural pathologies (Pollack 2004, 116-17 and 126-30).

Pollack's critical view of the Egyptian tactical performance might be plausible, but to attribute Egyptian failures to this factor is an overstatement. First, Pollack's argument has a

difficult time accounting for this puzzle: while Egypt did not experience a major cultural or social change in 1967-1973, its strategic planning and individual soldiering showed exceptional effectiveness at the initial stage of the war. Second, it ignores that the move to advance the offensive eastward on Oct. 14 was a “political decision” (El-Gamasy 1989, 270). In the words of Shazly, “there might have been exaggerations in the reporting, but the main fault was in the decision to advance the offensive itself and the imbalance of forces” (Shazly 2007). Had this decision and the decision to accept the cease-fire been avoided, as the General Staff recommended, the army would not have to encounter the IDF under unfavorable conditions in Oct. 15-22.

Finally, there is the force employment explanation. Cordesman asserted that Israel succeeded because “it had a superior overall balance of operational capabilities throughout its force structure and because virtually all its force elements could operate and innovate effectively without cohesive central direction” (Cordesman 1987, 43). This is partly true, but one has a difficulty in conciliating this argument with Cordesman’s own assessment of the “central command structure” problem that Israel had on the eve of the war; in his words, “It lacked the ability to manage the overall conduct of war and to force coordination between its independent and feuding major combat unit commanders in the field” (Cordesman 1987, 34). On the other hand, here is his account of the Arabs’ failures:

The Arabs, in turn, failed because Syria lacked Egypt’s balance in setting clear and limited objectives, and Syria’s forces were far less well trained and ready than those of Egypt. They failed because Egypt could not conduct an effective armored attack on mobilized Israeli forces, or compensate for its inferiority in the air once it moved away from its sheltering ground-based air defense system. They failed because Egypt’s command structure was slow reacting and incapable of dealing with bad news (Cordesman 1987, 43-44).

Again, there is some truth to Cordesman's argument on the performance of Egyptian and Syrian units, but on closer inspection it does not appear to have the explanatory power it claims. Syria could not possibly set more limited objectives than those it already had because the Golan Plateau was in fact 20-25 kilometer-wide (Shazly 2007). Also, a major factor that helped the IDF push the Syrians back on the Golan was the Egyptian abandonment of their ally: an abandonment that lied in the political decision-making by Sadat. Cordesman's assessments of the Egyptian performance are plausible, but they were the result rather than the effect since the Oct. 14 offensive and the Egyptian handling of the Israeli penetration west of the Canal Oct. 16-20 were both the result of mistaken political decisions, as explained earlier.

Counterfactuals

Counterfactual 1: The Israeli government decides on October 3-6 on general mobilization and on a preemptive strike against the amassed Egyptian and Syrian forces.

How could "general mobilization and preemption" have changed the war outcome?

Had either the IDF reserves been mobilized sufficiently before the Egyptian and Syrian armies opened fire or the IDF preempted, Israel would have deprived the Arabs from the advantage of surprise. This might not have prevented the Arabs from opening fire if they were indeed resolved to change the status quo, especially after so long preparations. But given what we now know of the mistrust between Sadat and Assad, this might have discouraged either Egypt or Syria from going to war, assuming that it would better to wait for a better opportunity, and thus relieved Israel from fighting a two-front war.

Indeed, the fact that the Arabs took pains in implementing draconian security measures, vast misinformation campaign, and actions designed to create false impressions on both strategic and tactical levels (Dupuy 1992, 391-93), only tells how crucial the element of surprise was to Egyptian and Syrian campaigns. Israeli military analyst Zeev Schiff has offered a reasonable “what if” scenario on the possibility of an earlier general mobilization:

The Egyptians would have in any case opened their offensive and succeeded in crossing the Suez Canal, though not on such a large scale. Their bridgeheads would have been smaller, and there would have been a reasonable chance of dislodging them. The reserves would have gone into battle earlier. The IDF crossing would have taken place on the third or fourth day ... In other words, war could have been shorter, and the losses incomparably smaller. Other Arab armies, such as the Iraqi, wouldn't have reached the point of intervention (Schiff 1974, 209-10).

On the Syrian front, it is not unreasonable to assume that had the IDF been mobilized earlier to October 6, and given that the latter was compelled to stop even before the IDF was fully mobilized, the Syrian offensive would have been repelled at the gate, with much lesser IDF casualties. This, in turn, could have relieved more forces to be transferred to the Egyptian front, and therefore allowing an earlier canal crossing by the IDF.

A preemptive strike by the IAF against Egypt and Syria would have offered Israel the initiative and allowed the IAF to significantly disturb the Arabs' war effort. Based on how the war actually developed, it can be assumed that had the IAF been permitted to preempt few days before the Arab attack, it could have neutralized the Syrian front and start focusing on the Egyptian one when the IDF was fully mobilized. It took the IAF three days of systematic effort, Oct. 8-11, to seriously damage the Syrian SAM network before returning to more effective close support missions (Dupuy 1992, 465). Absent an effective SAM

system, Syria would have either chosen not to go to war and abandon Egypt, or risk an almost suicidal offensive on the Golan.

Why would “general mobilization and preemption” have been possible?

This counterfactual was possible for three reasons. First, this option was actually raised by the Chief-of-Staff. Elazar recommended general mobilization on Oct. 5 and an air preemptive strike in the early morning of Oct. 6. Even the dovish Foreign Minister would have supported such logic had he been present in the pre-war ministerial discussions. Eban recalls that there was no precedent in which a precautionary IDF mobilization had adverse international effects or opposed by the Foreign Minister on such grounds (Eban 1977, 509). Second, a decision of either mobilization or preemptive strike would have been consistent both with Israel’s security doctrine to mobilize when the enemy forces deployment poses a threat (Zeira 1993, 26), and its historical experience in preemption in 1956 and 1967 (Schiff 1974, 40). Third, it is quite unusual for a state to learn about an imminent enemy attack and then decide to wait and get the first strike; a more logical course of action is to preempt such an enemy attack or at least take precautionary measures in the form of mobilization of reserves.

What could have made “general mobilization and preemption” possible?

A better performance of the decision-making tasks could have been made this counterfactual possible. An improved survey of objectives, specifying explicitly Israel’s aim as preserving the status quo, would probably have led the Israeli government to relieve itself from the three flawed assumptions – the “conception,” “the aggressor’s image,” and “sufficient advance warning” – that dominated their pre-war calculations. Had this been the case, Israel’s decision-makers would have been likely to understand that their

overoptimistic/overcautious policy had little chance of success since it could not achieve the state's objective. Similarly, had the decision-makers canvassed the range of alternative courses of action that they faced on Oct. 3-6, and discussed the costs and advantages of each, they would not have probably persisted to rule out mobilization and preemption until the last moment; and even if "aggressor's image" were valid, this by no means would have prevented them from mobilizing without opening fire.

A more thorough information search could have made things different. Had the Mossad been integrated in the discussions, and its pessimistic estimates were delivered to the Cabinet; had the ministers spent more effort investigating the scale of Egyptian and Syrian preparations and the posture of their forces; or had more ministers were invited to the discussions, the government would probably have been convinced of the utility of taking action, either mobilization or preemption. Israeli decision-makers could have seized one of the several opportunities to strike first had they been showing a tendency to accept new information and revise their estimates accordingly. Discrepant information indicating an imminent Arab attack were presented to the Israeli leadership on four occasions and from three different sources before the outbreak of war: on Sept. 25 (by King Hussein), in the beginning of October (by the Chief of Mossad), on Oct. 3 and Oct. 5 (by AMAN), and on Oct. 6 in the morning (by the Chief of Mossad). Had Israel's decision-makers carefully revisited their preferred alternative against the new (and accumulating) evidence, they would have almost certainly decided at least to mobilize.

Counterfactual 2: The Egyptian leadership decides on October 11-12 to stick to its pre-prepared offensive plans, despite the Syrian plea to advance the offensive towards the Passes.

How could “sticking to prepared offensive plans” have changed the war outcome?

The basic concept of Operation *al-Maazen al-‘Aalia* was to cross the Canal, destroy the Bar-Lev Line, and occupy a narrow strip of land 10-15 kilometer east of the Canal. The halt at the 10-15 kilometer line was deliberate because this was the maximum range of the SAM air-defense coverage. Some analysts argued that the failure of the Egyptian offensive on Oct. 14 was due to wrong timing and wrong planning. In their view, the offensive should have come earlier (on Oct. 9-10) when the IDF concentrated its effort on the Syrian front, and it should have concentrated a major armored force, instead of the spread-out effort the Egyptians mounted, in order to have a good chance of success (Hammad 2004, 238-42 and 276-80; Heikal 1993, 392-94; Ali 1994, 324-5; Herzog 1984, 261). However, Lt. Gen. Shazly rejects this argument and asserts that the advance was doomed to failure regardless of different timing or planning for three good reasons: (1) the IAF was not weaker on Oct. 9-10 than it was on Oct. 13-4; (2) the IDF maintained the same force (eight armored brigades) on the Egyptian front starting from Oct. 8; and (3) the Egyptian army's limited number of SAM-6 mobile air-defense batteries was not sufficient to cover the Egyptian advance (Abu Hussein 1993, 31). GOC of Egypt's two field armies, Maj. Gen. Saad Ma'moun and Maj. Gen. Abdel Munim Wassel, concur with Shazly (Abu Hussein 1993, 46-47).

Carrying out the pre-prepared offensive plan would have had two important implications. First, Israel would have had to pick either of two bitter options: to continue frontal attacks against the Egyptian massive force east of the canal, which would result in

heavy IDF casualties, or to keep the standstill on the front with continued mobilization which the Israeli economy cannot endure (Shazly 2003, 345). Second, the IDF penetration west of the Canal – the major Israeli military achievement in the war – would not have occurred. Meir and Dayan remained reluctant to authorize a canal-crossing; they were convinced of the arguments made by Gen. Tal that such an operation was almost impracticable since the crossing force would have to encounter Egypt's 21st and 4th fresh and well-trained armored divisions west of the canal. On Oct. 12, Israeli decision-makers authorized the operation *only* after they received information that the two Egyptian divisions were to cross to the east the next day (Bartov 2002, 540-550; Herzog 1984, 257-58). This evidence that Israel reversed course with the change in Egyptian plans provides strong support for the argument that the Egyptian advance of the offensive was a necessary condition for the IDF canal-crossing operation on Oct. 15.

Why would “sticking to prepared offensive plans” have been possible?

This counterfactual was a real possibility for three reasons. First, this option was actually recommended by the Chief-of-Staff Lt. Gen. Shazly and the two field army commanders for the above-noted reasons. Second, it was consistent with the original plan designed by the General Staff. Third, this option would have been accepted by the government and the public because to keep the forces within the 10-15 kilometer line, would not have threatened Egypt's aim of the war – that is, forcing Israel to agree on acceptable peaceful solution through challenging its “secure borders” doctrine – since Israel agreed to this solution under conditions even worse for Egypt, and another value which was at stake, honor, because it had already been restored by crossing the Canal and defeating the IDF in battle.

What could have made “sticking to prepared offensive plans” possible?

A better performance of the decision-making tasks could have made this counterfactual possible. An improved survey of objectives, that is making explicit assumptions and defining a clear link between ends and means, would have probably convinced the Egyptian leadership that to advance the offensive eastward under the current conditions would neither relieve pressure on the Syrian front nor force Israel to make a commitment of withdrawal. This latter aim in particular could have been achieved had the Egyptians maintained their forces within the 10-15 kilometer line, and thus imposing a prolonged war on Israel under much worse conditions than those of the War of Attrition. Also, had Sadat and Ismail Ali weighted with greater care the positive and negative consequences of the two major alternatives that they faced upon making their decision – either to advance the offensive or to stick to the pre-prepared offensive plan – they would probably have chosen otherwise. At a minimum, a better survey of alternatives should have convinced them not to advance any force beyond the SAM network coverage before providing sufficient mobile air-defense units, since the absence of air-defense coverage and a superior air force was the major disadvantage of their decision.

If the Egyptian leadership conducted a more rigorous information search, there is a great probability that it would have got a fuller picture of the situation, because the decision to advance the offensive was objected by virtually everyone except Sadat and Ismail Ali. Had the Cabinet, the NSC, and the Soviet advisers been involved in the consultations, Sadat would have obtained available information necessary for critically evaluating his preferred course of action and other alternatives. Having done so, the Egyptian leadership needed one more factor to reach the decision to stick to the pre-prepared offensive plans and not to advance the offensive eastward. This factor was the ability to accept new information even

when it does not support the preferred alternative. Had this been the case, i.e., Sadat and Ismail Ali pondered the arguments put by Shazly and the GOC of the two field armies and the incident of the 1st Infantry Brigade which was obliterated by the IAF on Oct. 10 once it went by mistake outside the missile range in daylight, they probably would have stuck to their plans until sufficient air-defense was provided.

Counterfactual 3: The Egyptian leadership decides on October 16-20 to pull back four armored brigades to counter the penetrating Israeli forces west of the Canal.

How could “pulling armored brigades back” have changed the war outcome?

Had Egyptian forces west of the Canal been supported by sufficient armor, that was supposed to be pulled back from the east, they could have destroyed the IDF penetration. Armored brigades in Sinai (that were assigned to the offensive of Oct. 14.) were fit for the task by training and familiarity with the terrain. Before the war, the Egyptian General Staff anticipated a breakthrough by the IDF against the over-extended line of Egyptian deployment east of the Canal. Therefore, the General Staff identified three possible locations for such a breakthrough (including Deversoir where the Israeli breakthrough actually occurred), and assigned two armored divisions and trained them for that particular mission (Shazly 2003, 265; Hammad 2002, 232-33).

Second, Egyptian forces would have had a quantitative superiority. If the armored brigades were pulled back, the balance of forces would have been as follows: on Oct. 15-16, Egypt’s five armored brigades and two infantry brigades vs. Israel’s one infantry brigade and one armored battalion; on Oct. 20, Egypt’s seven armored brigades and two infantry brigades vs. Israel’s five armored brigades and one infantry brigade. Egypt could have also pulled

back some of its eighteen infantry brigades east of the Canal which were confronting six IDF brigades (Shazly 2003, 266-279).

That the possibility of encountering Egyptian armor in the west had so much disturbed the Israeli leadership before its decision on the canal-crossing is illustrative of the great likelihood that the Egyptian armored brigades would have destroyed the IDF penetration force there. This had also been the case afterwards. On Oct. 14, Elazar estimated a good chance of success of the canal-crossing operation; “only if they [the Egyptians] send the armor back to the west bank, they are likely to pose a threat to the crossing forces” (Bartov 2002, 584).

Destroying the IDF penetration force west of the Canal would have far-reaching implications. It would have annulled the major Israeli military achievement in the war, and thus restoring the status quo that dominated the front before Oct. 14 which meant a clear Egyptian victory, though Egyptian troops would have remained unable to advance afterwards, as long as the IAF superiority persisted. More importantly, by destroying the bulk of Israel’s main armored force, Egypt could have indeed relieved pressure on the Syrian front, because in case of a renewed Syrian offensive – after the IDF had exhausted its potential on the Golan – and the destruction of Israeli armor west of the Canal, Israel would not have been able to re-shift forces to the other front.

Why would “pulling armored brigades back” have been possible?

This counterfactual was possible for three reasons. First, this option was repeatedly invoked by the Chief-of-Staff for three times for the above noted reasons: on Oct. 15, Shazly called for pulling back the 21st and 4th armored divisions to the west after the failure of the offensive; on Oct. 16, he called for pulling back the 4th armored division and the 25th

armored brigades to the west; and on Oct. 20, he called for pulling back four armored brigades from the east to the west of the Canal (Shazly 2003, 280). Once again, Shazly's argument had the support of the GOCs of Egypt's two field armies on the front. Second, pulling back the armored brigades was the natural course of events. As I explained earlier, these armored brigades were not supposed to be east of the Canal in the first place; now that the offensive had failed, it was fairly reasonable to pull them back to fulfill their original mission. Third, these brigades were indeed pulled back to face the IDF west of the canal forty-eight hours later, but it was too late (Shazly 2003, 271-72; Hammad 2002, 606-07).

What could have made "pulling armored brigades back" possible?

A better performance of the decision-making tasks could have been made this counterfactual possible. An improved survey of objectives would probably have replaced the flawed assumptions held by the Egyptian leadership with more realistic ones – that maneuverability with forces is an acceptable option, and that Israel would not abide by the cease-fire. Bearing in mind the objective (preventing deeper Israeli penetration west of the Canal), the Egyptian leadership would have found a better match between ends and means. If this was the case, the Egyptian leadership would have recognized that this objective was well within reach provided pulling back the armor from the east and committing it in the west. A more careful survey of alternatives, in turn, would have revealed the clear advantages vis-à-vis the dangers entailed in accepting the cease-fire under the current circumstances.

Indeed, Sadat had done a fairly good job at this stage as far as coordination with the Soviet Union and consultation with the military were concerned. However, a more thorough information search could have made things different. A careful investigation of the military situation and the inclusion of the Cabinet, the GIS, and the NSC and other advisors

especially those of a military background such as Hafez Ismail, fully in the process, would have probably convinced Sadat of the dangers entailed in accepting a cease-fire under these conditions, and of the available opportunity of destroying the Israeli force in the west. Sadat and Ismail Ali could have also reviewed the developing situation after receiving the multi-source discrepant information showing that accepting a cease-fire under the current conditions would by no means achieve the desired objective, and their own acknowledgment of this logic when some forces were pulled back from the east to reinforce defenses in the west. By so doing, they might have opted for pulling back the four armored brigades in the west to put an end to the growing Israeli penetration.

Conclusion

The threat environment and group cohesion perspectives explain the quality of the decision-making processes by both Egypt and Israel in the October 1973 War better than the “selection-effects” argument. Sadat did not rush into war, but he was rather the advocate of peaceful solution, and though he maintained a strict control over power, student demonstrations in 1972 demanding action were a serious threat to the regime. Similarly, Assad was genuinely trying to satisfy the Syrian public and obtain its support. Both Sadat and Assad remained in office because though the war ended in a draw, because their armies had challenged the myth of IDF invincibility with such a brilliant operation. On the other hand, as far as informational constraints are concerned, Arab leaders enjoyed public support throughout and were fed by their institutional settings of accurate information.

I have argued that upon making the decisions to initiate war it was the threat environment against the Arabs’ favor, and group cohesion (inconsistencies existed but were

checked by the serious threat environment) that caused the high-quality level of the decision-making processes; Arab performance of the decision procedural tasks ranges from “very well” to “well.” However, the military successes in the first days of the war had drastically reversed the threat environment and allowed the group incohesion to surface. Egypt’s performances of the decision-making procedural tasks in the decision to advance the offensive ranged from “very poor” to “poor.” In the decision to accept the cease-fire, the threat level had risen, but also group incohesion did, and Egypt’s performances of the decision-making procedural tasks ranged from “neutral” to “poor.” On the other hand, Israel had a safe threat environment, but even less cohesive group of policy makers, and thus it engaged in a low-quality decision-making process. In the decision not to mobilize or to preempt, Israel’s performance of the decision procedural tasks was either “very poor” or “poor.” When the security situation changed after the war breakout, the quality of the decision-making process changed accordingly. In the decision to authorize the crossing, Israel’s performances of the decision-making procedural tasks ranged from “very well” to “well,” and in the decision to accept the cease-fire, they were all “well.”

The way the course of the war fluctuated with different performances of the decision-making procedural tasks substantiates the claim that the quality of the decision-making process is an important factor in determining war outcomes. Indeed, the mixed outcome of the war was a reflection of the mixed quality of the decision making processes on both sides. Alternative explanations, these are Israel’s intelligence failure, improved civil-military relations in Egypt, US airlift to Israel, disparity in combined-arms operations, and Arab social and cultural attitudes, all have merit, but still partial. In most cases, these factors would not have had their described effect but for the decisions made at the political/strategic levels. Finally, the

analysis of three counterfactual scenarios – Israel decides on October 3-6 on general mobilization or on preemption, Egypt decides on Oct. 11-12 to stick to its pre-prepared offensive plans, and Egypt decides on Oct. 16-20 to pull back four armored brigades to counter the Israeli bridgehead west of the Canal – has demonstrated that if decision-makers performed their procedural tasks differently, they probably would have made different choices, and the war could have ended either with an Arab or Israeli victory accordingly.

Chapter Seven

The July 2006 War

Case Outline

In May 2000 Israel withdrew its forces from south Lebanon after twenty eight years of occupation. This was a great success for Hezbollah – or “the Party of God,” the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon – which fought the IDF to force it out of the country ever since 1982. However, Hezbollah considered this withdrawal incomplete, citing Israel’s occupation of the Shebaa farms and its incarceration of Lebanese prisoners to continue attacks against the IDF (figure 8). In the morning of July 12, 2006, Hezbollah fighters made an ambush for an Israeli convoy (figure 9). Three IDF soldiers were killed and two were captured and taken into Lebanon. Five more soldiers were killed in a failed Israeli rescue attempt. Israel decided to respond with massive aerial attacks against Hezbollah missile sites, headquarters, and Lebanese infrastructure. IDF ground operations were limited to commando raids and specific incursions. Though Hezbollah’s arsenal of long- and medium-range missiles are reported to have been destroyed in the IAF campaign, the short-range missiles (mainly Katyusha) were not and continued to hit cities north of Israel. The Israeli government decided on August 9 to approve a large-scale ground operation to destroy the Katyusha sites, but the operation was not finalized as the cease-fire entered into force five days later (figure 10). Hezbollah continued to shell Israeli cities with missiles until the very last moment of fighting.

Though both sides claim to be the winner, an application of the COW Project criterion on war outcomes, that is the extent to which the war objectives are achieved directly through military means, would assign victory for Hezbollah. On the one hand,

Hezbollah had one major objective – a prisoner exchange – and a second objective, developed as the war broke out, which was to deny Israel any significant achievement (Saad-Ghorayeb 2006, 3; Exum 2006, 8; Hatit 2007, 147). The bodies of the two Israeli captives have been delivered to Israel on July 16, 2008 in exchange for five Lebanese prisoners and the bodies of hundreds of Lebanese and Arab fighters, through indirect UN mediation. Hezbollah has also managed to sustain a lethal missile campaign throughout the war. In the words of Uri Rubin, “this marked a clear victory for Hizbullah and its arms, and by implication ... a clear defeat to Israel’s armed forces and military doctrine” (Rubin 2007, 3-4). On the other hand, Israel achieved none of its stated objectives: it failed in returning the two captured soldiers by force, compelling the Lebanese government to act against the organization, destroying Hezbollah’s military infrastructure, not to mention securing its disarmament under UNSCR 1559.

The deployment of 15,000 troops of the Lebanese army, and another 15,000 of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in south Lebanon has led some scholars to argue that Israel managed to limit Hezbollah’s freedom of action (Krishnappa 2007). In practice, however, the prospect that either of these forces will constrain Hezbollah-initiated military activities should not be overestimated. Hezbollah has not been disarmed, but instead it is rearming. According to the Head of the Research Division at AMAN, “Hezbollah is building up more firepower than it had before the war” (*Haaretz* 2007). Moreover, whereas Hezbollah has abandoned its outposts along the southern border, in practice it maintains its fighters living in the villages there. Hezbollah’s understanding with the Lebanese government was only to ban armed fighters from appearing in public, in what Augustus Richard Norton calls their “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy (Norton 2007, 141). Also, UNIFIL is unlikely to confront Hezbollah militarily in order to disarm it. When the United States and

France proposed the first draft UNSCR to authorize an emboldened UNIFIL to work under Chapter VII with unlimited territorial mandate for its operation in Lebanon, it was Hezbollah's threat to resist such a mission with force that rendered these conditions changed. Also, countries that contributed to UNIFIL have unofficially asked for and received Hezbollah's guarantees that their personnel would not be targeted (Nasrallah 2007). These two instances only demonstrate the unwillingness of the force contributors to risk a confrontation with the well-trained militia. Finally, it is worth noting that the UNIFIL force (though of a smaller size) deployed in south Lebanon since 1978 was not able to engage the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) forces to stop their attacks against Israel until the 1982 invasion.

On the other hand, knowing that Hezbollah and its allies eventually prevailed in internal Lebanese political conflict, UNSCR 1701 enforcement is questionable. The Doha Agreement of May 2008, ending the country's two-year political stalemate, ensured that Hezbollah would both have a veto power on cabinet decisions and maintain its arsenal. In October 2006, Giora Eiland, the former head of Israel's National Security Council asserted:

If in a year from now Hezbollah will return to be in its previous position, not only militarily, but what is more important, if it will continue to enjoy the political status that will enable this organization to continue and to fight against us whenever they feel and no one in the government will stop them, if this is going to be the final result, then we will be able to say that we totally lost this war (Eiland 2006).

This is precisely how the situation developed after two years of the war: militarily, Hezbollah's arsenal is intact and improved; politically, Hezbollah, after only participating in the pre-war government coalition, turned into a veto-power holder in the Cabinet.

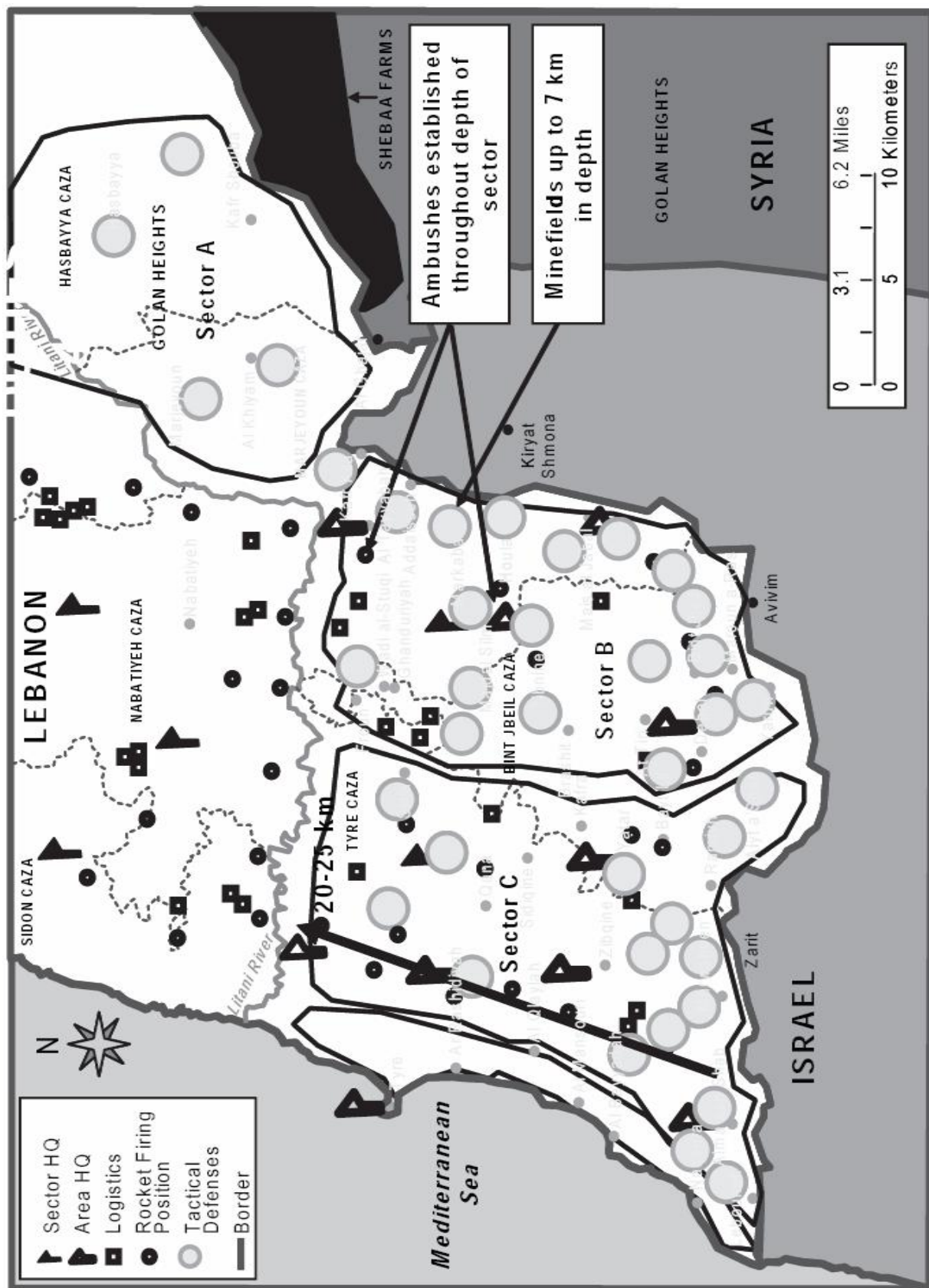


Figure 8. Hezbollah's Defensive System in Southern Lebanon
 Source: Matt M. Matthews, "We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War," *The Long War Series Occasional Paper 26* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: CSI Press, 2008)

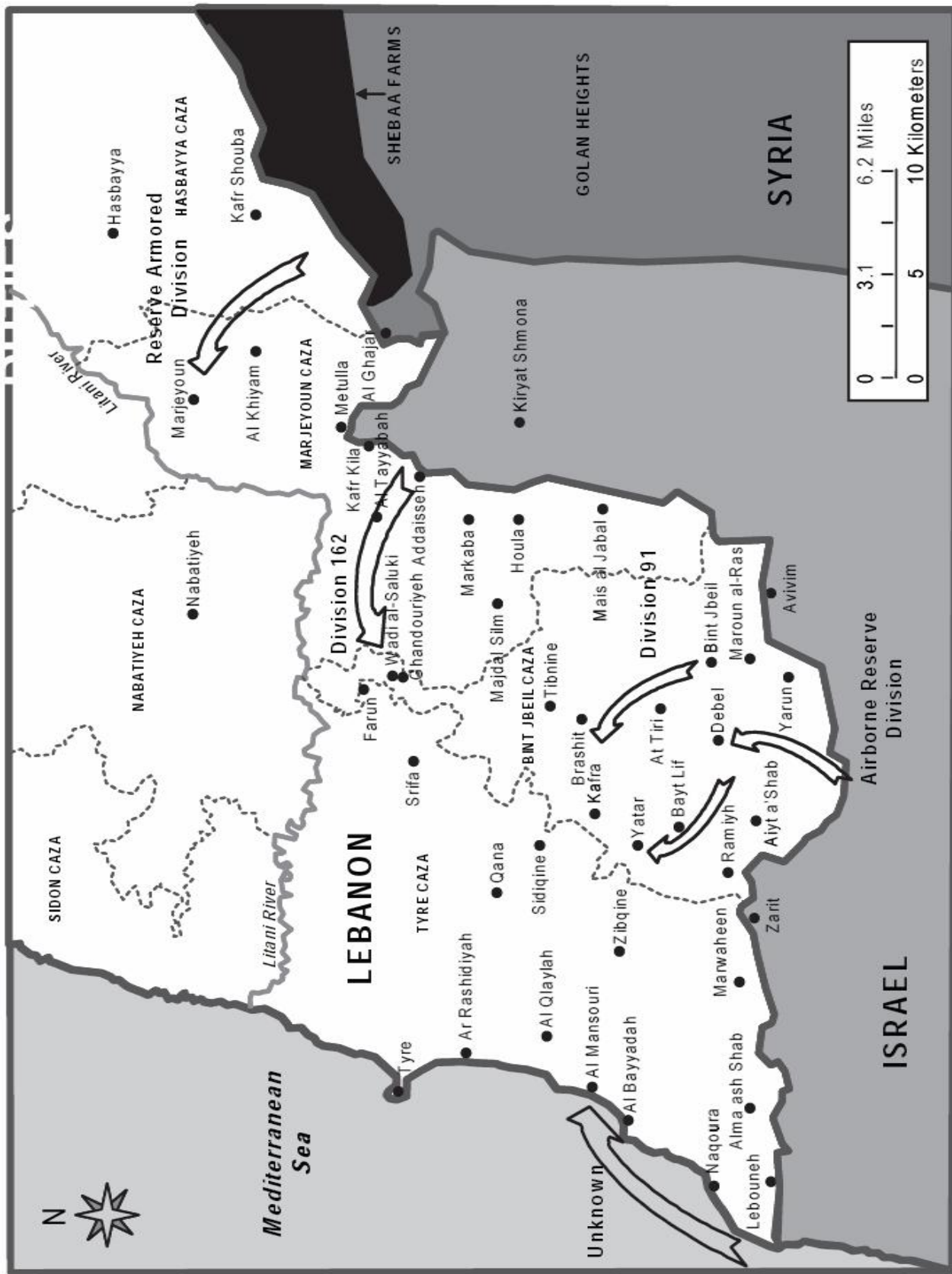


Figure 10. Israeli Drive to the Litani River, 9-14 August, 2006
 Source: Matt M. Matthews, "We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War," *The Long War Series Occasional Paper 26* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: CSI Press, 2008)

Democratic Victory Theory

Selection Effects: Institutional Constraints

The selection effects mechanism does not appear to function as democratic victory theory predicts. The leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, has remained to serve as Secretary-General of the party and is likely to be elected for another term in office. This should not be surprising given that Hezbollah won the war; and a pro-democratic victory argument can be made that he was not likely to leave office anyway. But the point of interest here is that though democratic victory theory does not expect a non-democracy to win in the first place, we still observe that “institutional constraints” mechanism – that is leaders who lead the nation to victory are more likely to be re-elected – is at work even in non-democratic regimes. At the same time, in response to calls from Lebanon holding him responsible for the massive war casualties and destruction, Nasrallah has invited the League of Arab States to establish a commission of inquiry, assuring that he would accept accountability if the commission faults his organization.

In Israel, the institutional constraints could only make partial claims on what happened. Indeed, the Minister of Defense and the Chief-of-Staff resigned over the war probe initiated by the government. However, this was not the case with the rest of Israel's leaders. Prime Minister Olmert was told by his Vice, Shimon Peres, on August 6 after Hezbollah's fatal Katyusha attack against Kfar Giladi in northern Israel: “one more week with Katyushas and ten more victims and you are no longer a Prime Minister” (Shelah and Limor 2007, 303). In fact, more than a week with Katyushas passed and more than ten Israelis were killed afterwards, but Olmert did not lose office. A poll conducted by the Dahaf Institute by the end of August 2006 showed “a total loss of public confidence in the

government and in the political and military leadership” – 74 percent of Israel’s Jewish population were not satisfied with Olmert performance and only 11 percent of viewed him as fit to be Prime Minister (Ben Meir 2007, 95-96). Nonetheless, Olmert and other key decision-makers, including the Foreign Minister Livni and Minister of Transportation Mofaz, remained in office after more than two years after the conclusion of the war. By May 2007, the Olmert government had already survived three no-confidence votes in the Knesset, and the Prime Minister had rejected repeated calls from the opposition to accept responsibility and resign. Olmert eventually resigned in late 2008 but not over the war failure but for accusations of corruption that were raised against him. In the 2009 general elections, Livni led the Kadima Party to win the largest number of seats in the Knesset, even though the primeministership eventually went to the Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu. Finally, the Vice Prime Minister during the war, Shimon Peres, not only accepted no responsibility for the war failure but was elected President of the State of Israel in July 2007.

Selection Effects: Informational Constraints

Hezbollah had obviously no control over the Lebanese media, which is considered to be one of the most free in the Arab world.* Nor did Hezbollah have any power to restrain the activities of the Lebanese parties opposing it. At the same time, the Hezbollah leadership was largely kept being fed by its institutional settings of accurate information about the costs and probabilities of war (A. Mustafa 2007, 49; Zeevi 2007, 79). Also, Hezbollah leadership was not insulated from the public opinion which played a crucial role in its calculations. The Lebanese population, and Arab and Muslim peoples in general, had strongly given their

* POLITY IV Project DEMOC indicator, including freedom of the press, is 8/10 for Lebanon in 2006.

backing to earlier attacks against the IDF throughout. A poll conducted by Beirut Center for Research and Information in February 2006, showed a clear majority support for Hezbollah's policy – of all Lebanese, 70.9 percent supported Hezbollah's policy to capture IDF soldiers in order to release Lebanese prisoners retained in Israeli prisons, and 68.5 percent supported the continuation of armed resistance until Shebaa farms are liberated (BCIR 2006).

On the other hand, Israel's leaders enjoyed accurate information which should have enabled them to make better estimates of victory. The sources, however, were the bureaucracy and the military not the free press and the marketplace of ideas in society. Opposition parties committed themselves to support the government policy once the fighting started (Ben Meir 2007, 90). Even the leftist Meretz Party was divided between those who were convinced of the government's argument on Hezbollah's threat and those who might not be so but had to endorse the policy anyway "because the Left would not be able to support further withdrawals if it ignores attacks from territories which were evacuated [by the IDF]" (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 157-8). The Israeli public opinion indeed supported the government in the decision to make a massive response to Hezbollah operation, since the IDF was seen as the victim of an unprovoked attack; polls showed high and steady support for the Olmert government decision until two weeks into the war (Ben Meir 2007, 91). But this is precisely why the information constraints mechanism would not work, because this is a clear example of "rallying 'round the flag" phenomenon.

Threat Environment, Group Cohesion, and Decision-Making in

Hezbollah

The Decision to Abduct IDF Soldiers

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

International as well as domestic Lebanese developments prior to July 2006 exposed Hezbollah to a high-level threat environment. On the one hand, at least since 2004, the United States has been involved in serious efforts to disarm Hezbollah, either through making UNSCR 1559 – calling for the “disbanding and disarmament” of all militias – or influencing the pro-Western political forces and the Lebanese army to disarm the organization (Nasrallah 2006). Hezbollah’s military standing was also affected by the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in April 2005 (Nasrallah, 2005; Evron 2007, 39). In addition to Israel's clear military superiority, Hezbollah learned early in 2006 about plans for an IDF surprise attack against its leadership, command posts, and missile sites, to be implemented in September/October, with the aim of eliminating Hezbollah as a threat (Nasrallah 2006; N. al-Mussawi 2008). This was verified by recent IDF maneuvers prior to the war. Hezbollah was also concerned with “dangerous Israeli attempts to mobilize renewed muscle power against Hizbullah” (Leenders 2006, 40), verified by the assassination of a senior Islamic Jihad official, Mahmoud Majzub (purportedly the liaison person with Hezbollah) in May 2006 in Sidon, and the subsequent uncovering of a network of Lebanese agents responsible for this assassination who were also reportedly planning to guide Israeli warplanes to new targets.

Majlis al-Shura, the highest decision-making authority in Hezbollah, was composed of seven members. These were: Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah, Deputy Secretary-

General Naim Qassem, Hashim Safiy ad-Din, Muhammad Yazbak, Ibrahim al-Amin al-Sayed, Hussein Khalil, and the late Emad Mughnieh (Saad-Ghorayeb 2008). Available evidence suggests that these decision makers constituted a cohesive group. First, the party's strict stress on ideological commitment leaves little space for someone not sharing Hezbollah's world view to join the party's membership, not to mention ascending the party's hierarchy. In general, according to Walid Sharara, there might have been two trends among the group, one giving the priority to domestic issues and the other giving priority to the conflict with Israel, but "under the current Hezbollah's situation, one cannot speak of intellectual/political trends [within the leadership] that interact and differ on major policy issues" (Sharara 2008). Second, members of the Council were long-term colleagues and comrades-in-arms who held similar positions. Nasrallah, Qasim, al-Khalil, Yazbak, and al-Sayed were among the officials who collectively split the Shiite Lebanese AMAL movement in 1982 for what was perceived as the participation of AMAL leadership in an American-orchestrated plan (Saad-Ghorayeb 2002, 15). In 1985, Nasrallah and al-Sayed moved together to Beirut to serve as the party's senior leadership, while Qasim has been serving as Nasrallah's deputy since 1993. The late Emad Moghniyeh, though not a cleric, had worked closely with Nasrallah's leadership for fifteen years – serving as Hezbollah's top military commander and chief of security since 1991 (Abu Toameh 2006).

Decision-Making

In the decision to undertake the abduction operation,* Hezbollah leadership made a "very well" survey of objectives. It agreed that its main objective was a prisoner exchange,

* Due to the strict secrecy Hezbollah maintains regarding its military activities, knowledge about the *Majlis al-Shura* decision-making process remains limited. I have attempted to bridge this gap through conducting interviews with Hezbollah officials and specialists, but given the party's security considerations, there were limits to what can be known. It is possible still to arrive at satisfactory coding of the decision-making process in this case, though it is less well supported by detailed data than other case studies.

but another objective, that is to deny Israel any significant achievement, was also considered (Saad-Ghorayeb 2006, 3; Exum 2006, 8; Hatit 2007, 147). The group realized that releasing Lebanese prisoners was both strategically and symbolically crucial to Hezbollah. Liberating Lebanese prisoners in Israel was one issue for which the discussion over Hezbollah's arms was pending, along with the liberation of the Shebaa farms and the agreement on a national defense strategy (Kfoury 2008, 83). The party has also reiterated publicly its pledge to bring prisoners home. To back down, after having raised such public expectations, would have invited a political backlash that would question Hezbollah's credibility in Lebanon and in the Arab world. The group further realized that if this objective was to be secured, Hezbollah should prevent Israel from making any significant achievement in its expected retaliation. For these objectives, *Majlis al-Shura* elected a strategy of a limited abduction operation, while alerting the party's military units. Accurately estimating the relative military capabilities, Hezbollah's chose a limited operation so that Israel would not escalate the situation. Israeli escalation, they reasoned, was unlikely because Israel would be deterred from escalation by Hezbollah's missile arsenal (al-Amin 2008).

The group performed "very well" the task of surveying alternatives. Hezbollah leadership initially favored a diplomatic solution, but the Israeli government declined to release the four Lebanese prisoners, violating an earlier promise to do so after the prisoner exchange of 2004. Hezbollah has approached the United Nations, the Red Cross, and the German intelligence service (which brokered the 2004 prisoner exchange) to pressure the Israeli government to release the prisoners as it had promised, but in vain. Israel insisted on obtaining more accurate information about the IAF navigator Ron Arad who has been missing since 1986 when his plane was shot down over Lebanon, which Hezbollah denied it had. From Hezbollah's perspective, "even a peaceful resolution to the Lebanese prisoners'

problem would have achieved some kind of credibility [to Hezbollah], as happened in the last exchange of body parts of Hezbollah's soldiers and an Israeli settler" (Saad-Ghorayeb 2008). According to Nawaf al-Mussawi, Hezbollah's International Relations Officer, no abduction operations would have been authorized if the international efforts were successful in bringing the Lebanese prisoners home (N. al-Mussawi 2008).

By the summer of 2005, Hezbollah reached the conclusion that diplomatic means have been exhausted, and started considering military options (N. al-Mussawi 2008). Hezbollah leadership contemplated initiating a large-scale attack, involving raids, launching missiles, and abductions, that would force Israel to release the prisoners. This option would have forced the IDF to fight in two fronts simultaneously, as it was engaged in fierce fighting against Palestinian militants in 2005, but this option was excluded for consideration of the domestic Lebanese politics, since Israel would be then more likely to retaliate with massive aerial strike (or even ground operations) and thus threaten the consensus on Hezbollah's arsenal (Sharara 2008).

A limited operation, code-named Operation *al-Wa'd al-Sadiq* (Faithful Promise) had as its objective to capture as many as Israeli soldiers in an attack on a border patrol in south Lebanon. Hezbollah decision-makers cautiously debated the advantages and disadvantages of this alternative. There was a high probability that an abduction operation would lead to a prisoner exchange negotiations. Based on its earlier experience, Hezbollah understood that "nothing leads to negotiations unless you seize Israeli soldiers" (N. al-Mussawi 2008). In October 2000, when Hezbollah kidnapped three Israeli soldiers patrolling the border, the IDF responded only at the local level. The bodies of these three soldiers (and another Israeli intelligence officer) were exchanged in 2004 for hundreds of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners in Israel. Thus, "the abductions did not constitute a paradigm shift in [Hezbollah's]

military strategy,” (Saad-Ghorayeb 2006, 1) nor did they completely break the rules of the game (Evron 2007, 39). Israel’s response to the abduction was expected to be commensurate to the scope of the limited operation itself. Hezbollah leadership also considered that such an operation would only provoke a limited Israeli reaction for two other reasons: (1) timing; the month of June marks the start of the summer tourist season in Israel and it appeared unlikely that the Olmert government would risk the stability in the north and the large tourism revenues by initiating a war against Hezbollah (N. al-Mussawi 2008); (2) deterrence; Israel would be deterred from undertaking a large-scale offensive due to the almost-certain retaliation of Hezbollah by launching rockets deep into Israel (I. al-Mussawi 2008). This was consistent with the unwritten “understandings” that brought the IDF Operation *Anvei Za’am* (Grapes of Wrath) to an end in 1996 in which “Hizbullah pledged to refrain from rocket attacks on Israeli territory as long as Israel refrained from attacking Lebanese towns and villages” (Rubin 2007, 2). At the same time, that Israel might nonetheless opt for a large-scale offensive was not missed in Hezbollah’s calculations as a possible scenario. According to Muhammed Fneish, a senior Hezbollah official and Lebanon’s Minister of Energy, the party based this decision on the worst possible outcome, and made sure to be ready for it (Saad-Ghorayeb 2006, 2). Thus, because “the party had long been undertaking enormous measures in the expectation that a general war would occur one day ... it implemented a group of ready plans” (al-Amin 2008). The contingency plans that Hezbollah leadership authorized included the evacuation of the advanced posts, alerting the missile units, and giving the Jihad Council further authorization in case a war occurs (al-Amin 2008).

Hezbollah leadership performed the task of information search “well.” Indeed, Hezbollah military units were supported by “an accurate and advanced intelligence system that was significantly upgraded in 2004-5 and provided the organization with a sharp

intelligence picture of the IDF and its designs” (Zeevi 2007, 79). For months before the abduction operation on July 12, Hezbollah intelligence elements were instructed to follow the IDF movements (Mustafa 2007, 49). Intelligence estimates that the party’s security apparatus provided *Majlis al-Shura* on Israel’s intentions and preparations before the war proved to be wide and correct. Emad Moghniyeh, the head of the Jihad Council is reported to have played a major role in this decision (Abu Toameh 2006).

Though the exact details of operations, i.e., timing, location and tactics, were kept secret except to a very small elite that even some of *Majlis al-Shura* members were not informed of such details (Leenders 2006, 41; Saad-Ghorayeb 2008), the strategy of abduction operations were thoroughly discussed and voted for by the political and military leadership that combines members of *Majlis al-Shura*, the Political Council, and the Jihad Council – composed of about 15 members (Nasrallah 2006). Hezbollah leadership maintained intense consultation with its major allies, Iran and Syria; two parallel channels of information exchange with Iran were established: with the Supreme Leader (Muhammad Yazbak-Ayatollah Khamenei’s Office) and with the Revolutionary Guard (Moghniyeh-Rahim Safawi) (Magnus Ranstrop, Counterterrorism Blog 2006, comment posted July 14, 2006). The liaison with Syria was conducted through Hassan Khalil, the political adviser to Nasrallah, who was in contact with Syria’s Military Intelligence (Magnus Ranstrop, Counterterrorism Blog 2006, comment posted July 14, 2006). Nawaf al-Mussawi asserts that the party “informed all the Arab sides that we [were] about to undertake an abduction operation,” (N. al-Mussawi 2008) even those which were not allies of Hezbollah, in the hope that they might help with a diplomatic resolution of the Lebanese prisoners’ issue.

Hezbollah leadership performed the task of information processing also “well.” It was efficient in that when the decision makers received information challenging the

prevailing assumptions, they revised their position and accordingly their estimates of the probability of success. Based mainly on the deterrence that Hezbollah believed it had achieved vis-à-vis Israel, the prevailing assumption was that Israel would respond to another operation as it did in the last six years, that is in a local and contained manner. Hezbollah leadership was further reassured when in reaction to the attempt by its units in November 2005 to capture several Israeli soldiers in the border village of Ghajar, the IDF reaction was mild. Hezbollah had also drawn similar lessons from the repercussions of abducting Corporal Gilad Shalit by Palestinian militants in Gaza just nineteen days earlier on June 25. The IDF operation in retaliation to Shalit's abduction modified the prevailing assumption in the following way: Israel's reaction would be more aggressive, exceeding attacks on the border posts to include attacks on the party's headquarters in Beirut. The retaliation to Shalit's abduction was yet to completely change Hezbollah's assumption because Israel did not invade Gaza nor did it engage in strategic aerial bombing to eradicate the Islamic Resistance Movement–HAMAS (Nasrallah 2006; N. al-Mussawi 2008). However, Hezbollah finally revised its assumption and started preparing for a general war for two factors. First, according to the deputy-head of the party's Politburo, Mahmoud Qomati, the leadership recognized that the deadlock in Lebanon's National Dialogue, in which the stress was put on disarming Hezbollah, meant "that the United States would try to implement Resolution 1559 by means of an Israeli military assault on Hizbollah. In effect, Hizbollah prepared but not for the timing of the operation" (Saad-Ghorayeb 2006, 2). The second factor was the reports on the IDF maneuvers in the north, indicating preparations for a military action that might not be actually related to abduction operations (Nasrallah 2006).

Threat Environment, Group Cohesion, and Decision-Making in

Israel

The Decision to Initiate the Air-Bombing Campaign

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

The political conditions under which the Olmert government worked in July 2006 are important to understand the decision-making prior to and during the war. First, Israel did not fear a military coalition against her: it had stable peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan with effective security arrangements, and it deterred Syria through a clear military advantage. Equally important was the US strong military presence in Iraq since 2003 which inhibited any Arab state willingness to wage war against Israel (Zeevi 2005; Evron 2008, 36-37). Second, Israel faced the July 2006 crisis with full US support. The third condition was that Israel had significant military advantage vis-à-vis Lebanon, and faced few restraints on operating there after the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in 2005 (Romm 2007, 51). This was reinforced by the recent experience of success against Palestinian militants in the second *Intifada*, combined with the fact that the plight of the Palestinians did not factor in Arab states' deliberations to counter Israel militarily (Eiland 2007, 30).

In November 2005, the Chief of AMAN, Maj. Gen. Aharon (Farkash) Zeevi (2005) wrote: "the contemporary strategic environment in the region is increasingly comfortable for Israel ... it seems to me that it is the decision-makers who must take advantage of the positive processes we are witnessing." After the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, Zeevi reported to Prime Minister Sharon that: "*an essential change in the balance of power on the northern front [is identified]. After this [change] the components of the old system on the northern front had, in practice, fallen down*" (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 106, emphasis

added). Similarly, the Chief-of-Staff Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz expressed his opinion in January 2006 that Israel's strategic position was "relatively very good" (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 126).

Israeli decision-making group was impaired by consistent divisions over party factions and personal rivalries. Group incohesiveness was manifested at two levels: divisions between members contesting over the prime ministership, and the division between these PM contenders on the one hand and the rest of the group members on the other. At the former level, Amir Peretz, the Labor Party leader who has never held a ministerial position, was keen to accept the defense portfolio in the belief that this would enhance his prospects as a qualified leader and pave his way to the prime ministership (Shelah and Limor 2007, 65; Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 133). Another contender was the rising Kadima Party politician Tzipi Livni. After Prime Minister Sharon went into coma in January 2006, Livni agreed to step aside so that her Kadima mate Olmert could take over under the promise that he would involve her in all the government's major decisions (Cohen 2007; Pfeffer 2007). Livni, while still serving as the Foreign Minister and second-in-command in Kadima, went openly to demand Olmert to resign two days after the publication of the Winograd Commission Preliminary Report in April 2007, knowing that she was his potential successor.

One method Olmert used to inhibit Peretz's and Livni's ambitions was not to involve them well in the decision-making process. In March 2006, Ehud Barak warned Olmert against this incohesive government composition he intended to make. He told Olmert that if a security crisis occurs: "actually, you are going to be totally alone." Olmert replied: "I'll always be able to talk directly with the Chief-of-Staff bypassing Peretz" (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 131). Olmert and Peretz argued with each other on a daily basis; "Olmert ... has shown extreme impatience with Peretz, and had difficulties to remain in unity with

him. Peretz completely lost confidence in the Prime Minister and was convinced that Olmert was doing all what he could to put him in embarrassing situations” (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 133). Within this competition, each one competed over taking hard positions to appear as the stronger and more qualified leader. Similarly, Livni was a political rival for Olmert. Her popularity, relying on refraining from taking contentious positions, antagonized Olmert who had to minimize her role as much as he could (Shelah and Limor 2007, 114). On the other hand, the rest of cabinet ministers who were not part of this PM contest were ignored in the decision-making process. Even those who were known to have military experience, such as the Minister of Transportation Shaul Mofaz and the Minister of National Infrastructure Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, were allowed little say in the process.

Decision-Making

In the decision to initiate the air bombing campaign, a significant factor in restricting the ability of the Cabinet to perform the procedural tasks of the decision-making process adequately was Israel’s absolute air superiority. The temptation was considerable to make a swift and massive retaliation in order to realize the capability to which neither the Lebanese state nor Hezbollah had an answer. The IAF has developed a remarkable capability in using precision guided munitions, along with supporting Communications, Command, Control, and Intelligence (C³I) systems, to hit the target’s critical spots. This was clearly manifested in carrying out “surgical operations” hunting individual Palestinian militants in the second *Intifada*. As far as airstrike accuracy is concerned, “the Israeli air force [was] second only to the US air force, and in some respects might even surpass it” (Ophir 2006, 30). This environment explains the perception that Israel had to, and could, deal Hezbollah a very strong blow (Winograd Commission 2007, 81-2). In particular, Lt. Gen. Halutz maintained “high confidence in the IDF capability to confront all the challenges in an optimal way, and

its capability to achieve all the aims assigned to it by the political leadership” (Winograd Commission 2007, 143).

Israeli decision-makers made a “very poor” survey of objectives. Israel’s stated war aims were: (1) to secure the return of the two captured soldiers; (2) to strike a significant blow to Hezbollah’s capabilities and distance its forces from the border with Israel, and thus put an end to “terrorism” originating from Lebanon; (3) to correct the prevailing system in Lebanon, based on an effective enforcement mechanism supported by international involvement (this was later changed to ‘have the Lebanese government use the Lebanese army to impose its sovereignty over its entire territory’); and (4) to strengthen the deterrence vis-à-vis Hezbollah and the entire region (Ben Meir 2006, 2; Romm 2007, 50). For these objectives, the Cabinet elected a strategy of air bombing against Hezbollah missile sites, headquarters, and Lebanese infrastructure. Ground operations were limited to commando raids and specific incursions.

But it was never examined whether the employed means would really achieve the anticipated ends. Adopting the objective of defeating Hezbollah in a short campaign of aerial bombing was simply unrealistic. Forcing a guerilla into decisive battles that would result in losing its capacity to fight or extracting a high price by damaging the civilian infrastructure was not feasible because a guerilla would vanish into the sea of its supporting population while it does not have the responsibility of a state (Brom 2008, 15-16). Such an objective requires a large-scale ground operation of an extended duration – an action Israel was reluctant to do. Second, the assumption that the Lebanese government and population would turn against Hezbollah ran against two indicators: (1) historical evidence and Israel’s own experience concerning the counterproductive effects of aerial bombing (Shlaim and Tanter 1978, 492); and (2) the high probability, as realized by Peretz and the Chief of Mossad Meir

Dagan, that by attacking the civilian infrastructure, Israel “will be pushing them [the Lebanese population] strongly to support Hezbollah” (Winograd Commission 2007, 75). In fact, this strategy only produced, at least during the war, the opposite effect. Restoring deterrence was dependent on the achievement of the first three objectives and it consequently failed since they were not met.

Israeli leadership’s survey of alternatives was also “very poor.” Ever since the IDF withdrew from south Lebanon in 2000, the so-called “containment policy” took hold that Israel would respond to Hezbollah’s attacks only locally and thereby contain its provocations. Hezbollah’s persistent attacks left the government with only two military options either of which would end the containment policy. The first of these, to engage in a broad ground operation in south Lebanon, was very risky and unpopular in Israel since it meant reentering the “Lebanese swamp.” The second alternative, to undertake massive aerial strikes, was also risky because it would lead Hezbollah to launch its missiles on northern Israel (Winograd Commission 2007, 44-48). Though the Winograd Commission is critical of the containment policy, it mainly faults the Olmert government for its hasty departure from this policy before offering a solution to Hezbollah’s missiles. Since the government recognized that it had to respond massively, the Commission noted, “it should have planned a short and intensive blow, after which it should re-evaluate and make a strategic decision between two alternatives ... [either] return to the containment or make a broad ground operation” (Winograd Commission 2007, 120). The government chose neither.

In the security consultation meeting Olmert held in the afternoon of July 12, three alternatives were raised: (1) attacking civilian infrastructure; (2) attacking Hezbollah’s missile system; and (3) a massive air strike against Hezbollah, combined with a ground operation in Lebanon and attacking targets of “terrorist” organizations inside Syrian territory

(Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 169). The sole advocate of the third alternative was Dagan who argued that if the strategic aim was to change the equation in Lebanon, this was not achievable in the air. In the belief that a ground operation in Lebanon was a remote and even minimal possibility, Lt. Gen. Halutz rebuffed Dagan's position, arguing that "at this moment, I'm not putting it at all on my schedule. Also, I cannot say that the solution to this problem is a ground operation" (Winograd Commission 2007, 75). There were some initial reservations by Olmert and Peretz about targeting civilian infrastructure, but they were quickly settled by Halutz who proposed a combination of the first two options within an almost-exclusive air campaign.

In the subsequent government meeting, the IDF offered this recommendation, but a review of its positive and negative consequences did not follow. Instead, in the words of Eiland, "ministers were placed in a situation where they had only two options: either approve or reject the military's proposal" (Eiland 2007, 29). In addition to Dagan's earlier proposition, Eiland suggests that two other plausible alternatives should have been presented and discussed: (1) air attacks against Hezbollah missile system and Lebanese infrastructure in a limited action lasting 24-48 hours; this option would not return the captured soldiers or destroy Hezbollah but it would restore deterrence and make it difficult for Hezbollah to act in the future; and (2) a strategic decision on a limited war, but the action to be postponed until the army got prepared (Eiland 2007, 29). But, according to Olmert's advisers: "we understood that in our [regional] neighborhood, if you do not respond after they hit you, you will end up with getting stronger blows. On 12 July, we have not heard any voices saying it's better to wait" (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 159).

Israeli decision-makers performed the task of information search in a "neutral" manner. Intelligence estimates that AMAN provided the government with on Hezbollah's

intentions and preparations before the war proved to be “wide, honest, and correct” (Winograd Commission 2007, 58-59; Zeevi 2007, 80; Kuperwasser 2006, 19-20). In the first military meeting held to evaluate the situation after the July 12 operation, the Chief of AMAN warned that Hezbollah’s response could bring Haifa under shelling by Fajr long-range missiles (Winograd Commission 2007, 68). Lt. Gen. Halutz consulted with his senior commanders. Major Gen. Gadi Eizencout, Head of the Operations Branch, proposed to wait some days to determine the required objectives and allow the IDF sufficient time to prepare for the upcoming operation, but the rest of commanders supported Halutz’s position (Winograd Commission 2007, 68-69; Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 160). Key cabinet members were also in contact with experts outside the immediate decision-making group. Ehud Barak, former Prime Minister and IDF Chief-of-Staff, advised both Olmert and Peres to define a time limit for the operation and to ask critical questions to the military in order to ensure that they have plans for different possibilities, but primarily recommended to wait two or three weeks to ponder about the action (Winograd Commission 2006, 22; Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 169; Shelah and Limor 2007, 56). Also, Ami Ayalon, former Chief of the General Security Service (SHABAK), advised Peretz to wait three days to allow the army to mobilize and get ready for the operation (Shelah and Limor 2007, 41).

Olmert also opened direct contact with the US administration. Before the government meeting, he talked with the Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice who expressed the US understanding that Israel had to respond since this was the second “kidnapping” operation in a row. However, Rice put two restraints on the upcoming Israeli action – not to harm the Lebanese government under the moderate Prime Minister Fuad al-Siniora and not to damage civilian infrastructure – which Olmert accepted (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 165). The Olmert government and the Bush administration are also reported to have coordinated plans

of a massive aerial attack against the pro-Iranian militia long before Hezbollah's operation on July 12 (Hersh 2006). Only the emergence of the currently classified documents can ascertain the veracity of this claim. Nonetheless, the positions that the administration made during the war leave no doubt about its full support and approval of the IDF campaign.

At the same time, the Prime Minister did not invest sufficiently in consulting his own colleagues in the Cabinet. Before the government meeting on July 12, Olmert and Halutz "maintained an intensive consultation, but they mainly did not bother to update Peretz" (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 159). Likewise, "other government partners, from the Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni [downwards] ... remained out of the circle. Only the men in uniform were allowed to present their perspective and propose a response" (Shelah and Limor 2007, 23). One minister expressed his disappointment that "in this meeting, like the other government meetings, they did not consult with us" (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 170-71). Likewise, Minister without Portfolio Eitan Cabel records: "I did not receive all the required information [nor was there] a possibility to get answers in the first government meeting" (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 172).

The group performance on the information processing task was "very poor." Following the survey of alternatives and information search, Israeli leaders became aware that the air campaign strategy was probably not going to achieve the desired objectives, but would instead lead Hezbollah to shell north Israel with missiles to which there was no adequate defense. However, the Israeli leadership did not show signs of reviewing its choice in light of this discrepant information. Despite the warning he received from the General Staff and his own report to the Minister of Defense about Hezbollah's expected response, Lt. Gen. Halutz still insisted on the immediate implementation of his proposed strategy. Similarly, plain recommendations by Barak and Ayalon either to define a time limit or to

postpone action until further deliberations and preparations take place went unheeded, and the decision-makers insisted on their preferred course of action. Prime Minister Olmert concluded the security consultation on 12 July stating that it is “almost certain” that the action that Israel was going to make would result in a reality of attacking the home front (Winograd Commission 2007, 76). He decided nonetheless to go to war.

The Decision to Initiate Large-Scale Ground Operation

Threat Environment and Group Cohesion

The threat environment conditions persisted throughout: Israel did not fear an Arab military coalition against her; it still had full US support; and had an obvious significant military advantage vis-à-vis Hezbollah which relied only on its small militia force and virtually had no allies but Iran and Syria. But two more factors enhanced the security of Israel’s threat environment. The first was the unprecedented international support Israel received above all from some Arab countries and from the United States which halted attempt to issue a cease-fire UNSCR until the IDF eradicates Hezbollah, and continued to ship weapons to Israel. The second factor was the initial IAF success in destroying Hezbollah’s long- and medium-range missiles which helped, along with the massive destruction it caused in the Beirut’s southern district – *al-Dahya* – Hezbollah’s stronghold in the city.

Israeli decision-making group was impaired by consistent struggles among its members over party factions and personal rivalries. Peretz and Livni persisted in their attempts to enhance their prime ministership credentials by opposing Olmert’s propositions. For his part, expectedly, Olmert made effort to undermine Peretz’s and Livni’s attempts by

not involving them well in the decision-making process. Other ministers were either used in this power struggle or just used, especially those of a military background, by Olmert to discredit the others.

Decision-Making

The ability of Israel's leaders to perform the procedural tasks of the decision-making process was restricted. International support was so important that Olmert mentioned to his Cabinet that "countries that were – morally – hostile to Israel, supported the struggle against Hezbollah" (Winograd Commission 2008, 125). Accordingly, Israel's threat environment was secure, and there was no urgency. As the Prime Minister put it in his meeting with senior military commanders on July 18: "we have time. There is no international pressure on us; the international pressure is to wipe out Hezbollah" (Shelah and Limor 2007, 162). The initial IAF success helped Olmert, Peretz, and Halutz to maintain their confidence in the current strategy and to be reluctant to make a change (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 217 and 365). The third factor was the continued division within the Israeli leadership. Alternative courses of action and information were not examined on an objective basis, but according to the identity of their advocates and their implications on the political prospects of the competing decision-makers. For example, one reason the decision to go to a large-scale ground operation was not given enough thought is the incessant rivalry between Olmert and Peretz. The Minister of Defense Office issued a statement on August 3 that Peretz gave orders to the army to prepare for a ground operation – thus outflanking Olmert and indicating that he was the one showing the right direction (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 360). Also, views expressed by Livni and Mofaz were not examined carefully because Olmert or Peretz would not give the credit to his own rival. Thus, Israel's leaders maintained a procrastination

of decision for many days and eventually opted for a half-measure, a large-scale operation in south Lebanon of 60-90 hour duration.

Israeli decision-makers made a fairly “poor” survey of objectives. They maintained the above-noted objectives of the war (Shelah and Limor 2007, 162-63), but as the air campaign failed to reduce the number of missiles shelling northern Israel, the aim of preventing Hezbollah from striking the home front took precedence (Winograd Commission 2008, 85 and 97-98). Decision-makers gradually recognized that achieving the war objectives required undertaking a large-scale ground operation (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 309; Winograd Commission 2008, 131). For that purpose, the Cabinet decided on July 27 to mobilize reserve divisions, but initiating the operation was pending a further decision which the Cabinet only made on August 9 provided that it would be of very short duration.

As it was the case with the decision to initiate the war, the employed means did not match anticipated ends. Preventing the short-range missiles requires occupying the territory south of the Litani River. To do so, the IDF would have to engage Hezbollah units in guerrilla warfare with the aim of either destroying these units or forcing them to withdraw north of Litani. In the view of Israeli strategists, such an operation would take at least two months. It was virtually impossible to achieve this specific aim, not to mention the over-ambitious objectives of the war, in an operation of 60-90 hours. When Prime Minister Olmert told Mofaz about the time limit of the operation, the latter replied: “[But] it takes so much time to move a single division. What are you going to achieve in 60 hours? You are going to achieve nothing” (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 410). In their attempt to solve the paradox, Israel’s leaders introduced a further confusion by identifying a different aim: putting pressure on the UN Security Council to issue a favorable resolution (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 410). Peretz explained before the Cabinet: “if they want us to withdraw,

Hezbollah should withdraw as well ... [if not] we stay, destroy the launchers, and then go back home” (Shelah and Limor 2007, 311).

Israeli leadership made a “neutral” survey of alternatives. Indeed, the IDF campaign reached its peak of success on July 17. By that time Hezbollah had been given a strong blow with the virtual destruction of its arsenal of long- and medium-range missiles, while the IAF “would not be able to reduce the missile launches any more than it already did” (Winograd Commission 2008, 113). Thus, from July 17 onwards, Israel faced three alternatives: (1) to accept a cease-fire; (2) to initiate a large-scale ground operation; or (3) to continue with the current air bombing strategy.

In fairness to Israel’s decision makers, they did discuss the costs and benefits of the first two alternatives – as opposed to the last one. To accept a cease-fire would not return the captured soldiers nor restore deterrence, but it would make it difficult for Hezbollah to act in the future because an international agreement to end the war would provide for a partial withdrawal of Hezbollah units from south Lebanon and impose an embargo on its arms deliveries (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 210, 311-12 and 295). On the other hand, a large-scale ground operation would eliminate the short-range missile launchers, give Israel bargaining power, and increase the probability of deploying a multi-national force in south Lebanon (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 311-12; Winograd Commission 2008, 118 and 141). But this operation might also result in heavy casualties, a prolonged occupation of south Lebanon which would hit Israel’s economy, all with uncertainty about results or exit prospects (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 311-12; Shelah and Limor 2007, 209-210; Winograd Commission 2008, 125). However, Israel’s decision-makers so far as August 9 still made no decision, even when Peres, Dagan, and the adviser to the Minister of Defense Amos Gilad, explicitly called for making a choice, knowing that either of which would have achieved at

least part of Israel's war objectives (Winograd Commission 2008, 118 and 121; Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 312). Rather, with the exception of Mofaz and Dagan who maintained their positions throughout, Israel's leaders kept going back and forth between the two alternatives and procrastinated making a decision. They did not recognize that the obvious consequence of this procrastination was to continue with the increasingly failing current strategy.

The General Staff finally presented on August 7 its plan for the ground action – Operation *Shinui Kivun 11* (Change of Direction 11) – employing four divisions to advance from the western and eastern sectors to occupy the territory south of the Litani River. The consequences of this alternative were discussed earlier, but then there was an additional serious disadvantage: time pressure. The execution of this operation required several weeks while the government was finalizing the cease-fire agreement; even if the IDF was given time, the weather was not suitable for aerial operations in September/October (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 388; Shelah and Limor 2007, 307). Mofaz raised an eleventh-hour alternative: a 48-hour operation employing two divisions to advance in the western sector and control the Litani crossing points to cut off Hezbollah units in the south. This alternative would not eliminate the missile sites immediately, but the force could advance southward to do so later. Also, it would end the war with minimum casualties, fit the limited time frame, and restore the IDF deterrence power (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 288-89 and 391; Shelah and Limor 2007, 312).

Nevertheless, in the belief that Mofaz was attempting to challenge their authority, the Minister of Defense and the Chief-of-Staff prevented the discussion of this option. Peretz suspected that it was Olmert who stood behind Mofaz's proposal to embarrass him (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 391). He called the Prime Minister before the Cabinet meeting on August 9 and asked him: "Are you bringing [ready-made] plans to show us as worthless?"

(Shelah and Limor 2007, 305). When Mofaz tried to present his plan to the meeting, Peretz retaliated with aggressive questions: “What is this, a coup? ... Is each minister going to propose his own plan? ... Who are you to talk like that?” (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 391). On his part, Halutz told the Cabinet that “there is no way in between ... it is either all or nothing” (Winograd Commission 2008, 180), and then subtly re-presented Mofaz’s plan as part of his own, where in fact they were utterly different (Shelah and Limor 2007, 312-13). Eventually, when the Cabinet finally decided to approve Operation *Shinui Kivun 11*, even when the action had certain advantages, it was too late given that the cease-fire was about to enter into force on August 14.

Information search conducted by Israeli decision-makers was overall “poor.” True, Lt. Gen. Halutz held General Staff meetings almost on a daily basis in which he listened to different points of views including those contradicting with his, particularly on the decreasing usefulness of the air bombing strategy (Winograd Commission 2008, 81, 90-91, 94, 104, and 112-15). Also, the Minister of Defense frequently held “Situation Assessment” meetings in which he openly encouraged the attendees to express their opinions (Winograd Commission 2008, 83-84, 92-93, 95, 105, 109, 117-19, 139-140, and 154-55). On the other hand, two parallel channels of information exchange with the United States were established: (1) with the Presidency (Turbowicz-Hadely/Abrams); and (2) with the State Department (Turbowicz-Welch/Burns/Bolton, Livni-Rice, or Olmert-Rice).

However, major flaws still existed. The Prime Minister used to hold consultations with the IDF command prior to the Cabinet meetings which were then presented with “ripe” conclusions; such procedures, as Peres put it, “render[ed] a discussion which lost so much of its effectiveness” (Winograd Commission 2007, 81). Recommendations by the NSC on 16 July and those of the Director-General of Ministry of Defense (MoD) to stop the war on the

grounds that it had achieved all its possible objectives were never presented to the Cabinet by Olmert or Peretz (Schiff 2007). The Foreign Minister also “came to understand that decisions were made somewhere else” as when she started to work on an exit strategy on July 17, she learned from radio and TV that military escalation was expected (Shelah and Limor 2007, 87). Livni failed afterwards to send conclusions of internal discussions in the Ministry on an “exit strategy” to the Cabinet and waited until July 23 to present the first relevant proposal. Similarly, while Halutz did not suppress voices of disagreement, he instructed that whatever the commanders’ views were at the General Staff meetings, the IDF had to present a unified position (usually his own) to the Cabinet – in effect preventing the government from receiving the required information to consider alternative military options (Winograd Commission 2007, 91). Finally, information search came to a virtual halt at the closing stage. While the Prime Minister sought the advice of Mofaz, who proposed a reasonable alternative (Winograd Commission 2008, 174), the General Staff and the bureaucracy stopped to be involved in the decision-making process which was confined to the few senior Cabinet members.

Perhaps the worst performance was that of information processing – “very poorly.” Despite the critiques voiced from July 17 onwards against the continuation of the air bombing strategy by the General Staff, the Foreign Ministry, the NSC, the Mossad, and some Cabinet members, the Israeli leadership remained reluctant to review its choice. Olmert persisted on dismissing a ground operation option until the very last moment. When Livni called him on July 17 suggesting that the air operation has reached its limit and proposing a cease-fire plan, he told her “not to worry.” On July 20, he told Halutz: “it might be raised by the generals or one of these forums that produce such moves; [but] I will not authorize a large-scale ground operation” (Winograd Commission 2008, 90). Also, Olmert was

presented on July 23 with a detailed analysis of the war failures as prepared by Lt. Gen. (res.) Moshe Yaalon, the former IDF Chief-of-Staff, whose view was to achieve a cease-fire (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 261), but the advice went unnoticed. Likewise, Peretz rejected the military's proposal on July 26 to mobilize reserves for a ground operation (Winograd Commission 2008, 119), and at the July 27 Cabinet meeting he argued against such an operation (Shelah and Limor 2007, 209-210). Livni, who suggested a cease-fire on July 17, "spoke faintly" for her position throughout (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 183), and on July 27 favored a "more dramatic action" by the air force to a ground operation (Winograd Commission 2008, 125). Finally, there is a consensus on Halutz's large share of responsibility in that he remained confident in the air power and rejected the advice of his generals on a ground operation (Winograd Commission 2008, 81-82; Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 299-300; Shelah and Limor 2007, 205). At the closing stage, and despite clear warnings that it was no longer feasible to undertake a large-scale ground operation because the cease-fire war about to enter into force and the weather conditions, the Cabinet voted for the IDF plan.

The Quality of the Decision-Making Process and War Outcome

Alternative Explanations

Two explanations have been advanced so far to account for the war outcome, but they provide only a partial answer. The first is Israel's military strategy, or more accurately its interaction with Hezbollah's. Influenced by the conflict with Palestinian militants, and the success of the US Effects-Based Operations (EBO) in Iraq and Kosovo, the IDF employed a strategy emphasizing air power over the role of ground troops (Siboni 2007, 66; Tira 2006;

Kulick 2006). Hezbollah deliberately “tailored” its force operation to defeat this strategy. It comprised two arrays: (1) three dense formations of missiles to strike within Israel throughout the fighting even under massive air bombing and Special Forces operations; and (2) a well-trained, decentralized-command guerrilla force operating from pre-prepared underground bunkers, whose mission was to wear the IDF down (Exum 2006, 3-7; Siboni 2007, 62; Kulick 2006). Thus the competent IAF failed to eliminate Hezbollah’s missile sites because the mission was beyond its capability; applying the EBO concept to Hezbollah guerrilla force was “similar to trying to break an amoeba’s bones – using force irrelevant to the circumstances, to the facts, and to the nature of the war” (Tira 2006). On the other hand, the IDF ground troops, ignored under the new strategy, performed badly in battle because of their low-level training and professionalism (Siboni 2007, 66-69).

Indeed, given what is now known about Hezbollah’s extensive pre-war preparations, once this Israeli strategy was on track, there was little chance of an IDF victory. However, the IDF still could achieve victory *despite* this ill-suited strategy had Israel’s decision-makers made different choices. First, a decision on a large-scale operation by the IDF, allowing both technological and numerical superiority even under the low level of its ground troops, would have stopped the launching of short range missiles and forced Hezbollah units to withdraw north of Litani. Tira later writes, since Hezbollah employed only several hundred fighters in south Lebanon, “[it] would not have been able to withstand a sustained effort over a number of days in several locations, even if only due to the inability of a few fighters to cope with the lack of sleep and manage a broad front” (Tira 2006). A delayed action, on the other hand, might have enabled the IDF to train the ground troops for the impending mission and thus not employing strategy in the first place. Second, Tira states that “It is not clear why [after a week in the campaign] the same operational concept continued to

be adhered to if it was obviously not yielding effective results” (Tira 2006). The answer is that the political leadership failed to stop the war; had Israel accepted cease-fire on July 18, the IDF would have emerged victorious even when it was adopting this ill-suited strategy.

The second explanation is Israel’s intelligence failure; AMAN failed to gather, assess, and disseminate accurate and sufficient information on Hezbollah (Hendel 2006; Bergman 2007, 523-27). This was partly due to budget cuts and AMAN preoccupation with the Palestinian militant groups, but mainly to Hezbollah’s strict security measures. Hezbollah has been virtually impervious to Israeli intelligence, and this was stressed by Nasrallah as his party’s strongest point: “when [Israel] makes estimates or calculations, it relies on mistaken evaluations and mistaken information ... the Israeli enemy is ignorant about our capabilities; it is ignorant about us in every way” (Nasrallah 2006). Because “Israel went almost completely blind” (Bergman 2007, 524) to the war, the bulk of Hezbollah’s missiles survived the IAF bombing, and the IDF ground troops were unable to cope with Hezbollah’s weaponry and combat tactics (underground system of fortifications and vertical bunker system) which remained unknown to them.

It is true that the gaps in intelligence significantly restricted the IDF ability to confront Hezbollah’s war machine, but this alone cannot explain the war outcome. First, these gaps in intelligence were confined to the tactics, whereas AMAN realized and conveyed the wide strategic picture (Hendel 2006; Winograd Commission 2007, 58-59; Kuperwasser 2006, 19-20). Second, this explanation might be valid had Israel’s leaders were deceived by their intelligence services, which was not the case. In the first military meeting held to evaluate the situation after the abduction operation, the Chief of AMAN warned that Hezbollah’s response could bring Haifa under shelling by Fajr long-range missiles with no effective defense (Winograd Commission 2007, 68). Also, Maj. Gen. (res.) Aharon Zeevi

asserts that “It was explained [to the government] that any measure to deal with the short range rockets would have to be based on the understanding that the Military Intelligence could not provide precise, detailed intelligence on the rocket sites” (Zeevi 2007, 81). Thus, losing the war was not AMAN’s fault but that of the decision makers who did not brake at the Intelligence’s red lights.

Counterfactuals

Counterfactual 1: The Israeli government decides on July 12 on a limited war against Lebanon, but postpones the action until the IDF ground troops and the home front got prepared.

How could “a delayed action” have changed the war outcome?

A large-scale ground operation, following or not a short retaliatory strike, was very likely to remove the missile threat to northern Israel and significantly reduce Hezbollah’s ability to act in the future. A broad ground operation appears to have been the *sole* solution to Hezbollah’s missiles so long as it was difficult for the IAF reconnaissance to spot the launch sites, and given the absence of an effective means to intercept the missiles (Rubin 2007, 8-9 and 18; Shapir 2006, 7-9). But the time factor was extremely important. A short delay of action would not, of course, suffice to develop and deploy new air surveillance methods or anti-missile weaponry, but it could have allowed the government to strengthen defenses at the home front, and the IDF to mobilize, complete the needed intelligence, and train the ground troops accordingly. Barak estimated that this would have taken six weeks (Winograd Commission 2006, 21).

Indeed, the south Lebanon terrain and Hezbollah's entrenched defenses there would have cost the IDF high casualties (Exum 2006, 3-4), but could not have failed the operation. It was Hezbollah's guerrilla warfare strategy to avoid direct engagements (Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 237); Nasrallah's statement amid the fighting that even if the IDF occupies the territory, Hezbollah would regain it (Nasrallah 2006) implies that an Israeli occupation of south Lebanon was likely even from Hezbollah's perspective. This occupation would have offered the IDF freedom of action to overrun Hezbollah's positions, search for and silent the launch sites in a relatively short period of time. Here, Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon is particularly relevant. Though Israel clearly lost that conflict in the long-term, it is evident that the IDF had won the immediate fight against the PLO in June-August 1982. Operation *Shlom ha-Galil* (Peace for Galilee), employing a force of eight divisional groups, managed not only to stop the cross-border attacks and to wipe out the PLO Katyusha rocket sites, but also to evict the entire Palestinian force from Lebanon (Herzog 1984, 343-52).

Why would "a delayed action" have been possible?

There are three reasons why this counterfactual was possible. First, the option of a delayed action was raised by both Barak and Ayalon to the decision makers in order to ensure that they have appropriate plans and for the IDF to mobilize (Winograd Commission 2006, 22; Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 169; Shelah and Limor 2007, 41 and 56). Second, it was possible for Israel to issue an ultimatum to the Lebanese government stating that unless the two soldiers were returned home safely; it retains the right to respond at the timing of its own choice (Winograd Commission 2006, 21). Indeed, this type of wisdom – i.e., responding cautiously to threats and deferring the eventual showdown with the adversary to a later stage – was not missing in Israel's military history, but rather one cause of its victories in 1956 and 1967. Third, this option would have been accepted by the government (though probably not

from the angry public) because a deliberately delayed action would not have threatened any of Israel's basic values that were at stake – these are restoring deterrence, weakening Hezbollah, and returning the two abducted soldiers.

What could have made “a delayed action” possible?

A better performance of the decision-making tasks could have made this counterfactual possible. An improved survey of objectives would probably have led the Israeli government to adopt, instead of the unrealistic objective of destroying a guerrilla organization, the more appropriate objective of “containing Hezbollah” because Israel “should have recognized that at issue was a guerrilla force acting from within a neighboring failed state” (Brom 2007, 17). If this was the case, the Israeli government – in making the connection between aims and means – would have recognized that this objective was well within reach provided the employment of a committed ground action. The same applies to the survey of alternatives. Eiland writes “What could have happened at the discussion? A representative of the government staff – a mythical position, in Israel's current reality – should have presented the government with at least three alternatives [short retaliatory strike, limited war, and a delayed action]” (Eiland 2007, 29).

Similarly, a more thorough information search, i.e., carefully investigating the military and the home front preparations and including other ministers especially those of a military background such as Mofaz and Ben-Eliezer fully in the process, would have probably convinced the Cabinet both of the unpreparedness of the army and the home front for an immediate showdown with Hezbollah, and of the futility of the air campaign strategy given the over-ambitious goals. Also, had Israel's decision makers showed a tendency to revise their option after receiving discrepant information showing that that they were going

in the wrong direction, it is unlikely that they would have proceeded nonetheless. An improved information processing might not have necessarily led Israel's decision makers to opt for this particular option – i.e., a delayed action – but it would have raised the likelihood of selecting the proposed counterfactual.

Counterfactual 2: The Israeli government decides on July 18 to end the air bombing campaign and accepts a conditional cease-fire.

How could “a short and intensive action” have changed the war outcome?

Even after engaging in the low-quality decision-making process on July 12 and the resultant decision it made, Israel still had a chance to reverse course and emerge victorious. If the Olmert government decided on July 18 to end the air bombing campaign and to accept a conditional cease-fire, it could have achieved a number of important objectives. First, this would have saved northern Israel from Hezbollah's missiles in accordance with the above-noted unwritten 1996 understandings to exclude civilians from the conflict. Hezbollah would have most likely refrained from launching its missiles into northern Israel given its inherent interest in protecting the Shiite community in south Lebanon and the fact that it had abided by these understandings throughout. Second, July 17 was a turning point; it was the day on which the IAF target list was exhausted and Hezbollah's losses were at their highest and Israel's were at the lowest. Had the war stopped then, Israel's deterrence vis-à-vis Hezbollah would have been restored (Evron 2007, 40).

Third, it would have enhanced the probability of bringing the abducted soldiers home in a way most favorable to Israel – by that time Hezbollah was even ready to submit the two abducted soldiers to the pro-Western Siniora government which was supposed to take charge of the negotiations with Israel (Nasrallah 2006; Harel and Issacharoff 2008, 218). Notably,

had Israel made this choice, the nature of this military dispute would have changed *ipso facto* from a war to an accident. At the same time, however, this option would not have necessarily ruled out the possibility that Israel would resume the fighting shortly later at its own choice when it completes its preparations as it is the case with the first counterfactual.

Why would “a short and intensive action” have been possible?

This counterfactual was reasonably possible. First, the option was proposed not only by some generals in the General Staff, Livni, and Peres, who discussed its merits and disadvantages, but also by the Minister of Defense Peretz who went back and forth between this option and the enlarged ground operation. Second, short and intensive blows targeting the organization’s infrastructure were not uncommon for Israel in its conflict with Hezbollah ever since the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1990. Indeed, Israel could have chosen to stop and consider the IAF operation as sufficient retaliation, as was the case with Operation *Deen vHeshbon* (Accountability) in 1993 and Operation *Anvei Za’am* in 1996. Third, this option would have satisfied Israel’s angry public and enhanced the probability of achieving part of Israel’s stated objectives in the war, restoring deterrence, weakening Hezbollah, and returning the two abducted soldiers; a partial fulfillment of these objectives would not have been considered a failure given the limited scope of the military operation itself.

What could have made “a short and intensive action” possible?

A better performance of the decision-making tasks could have made this counterfactual possible. An improved survey of objectives would probably have led the Israeli government to adopt the more appropriate objective of weakening Hezbollah and restoring Israel’s deterrence (Brom 2007, 19). Apart from the confused aim of putting pressure on the UN Security Council to issue a favorable resolution, it was no longer feasible

to achieve the aim of destroying Hezbollah or changing the equation in Lebanon through a large-scale ground operation (the first counterfactual) simultaneously, since the prerequisites for it, i.e., preparing the army and the home front, were difficult to attain once Israel had already committed itself to a military action. If this was the case, the Israeli government – in making the connection between aims and means – would have recognized that the objectives of restoring deterrence and weakening Hezbollah have already been achieved while the return of the abducted soldiers under favorable terms was highly probably. The same applies to the survey of alternatives. What could have happened had the Israeli government explicitly discussed the merits of the three alternatives it faced from July 17 onwards? It should have reasoned that given the start of military operation, the opportunity of a delayed action (which would require further preparations) had already been missed.

Indeed, the Olmert government could not probably have done better as far as the coordination with the US was concerned. However, a more thorough information search could have made things different. Had the NSC and MoD advices on the cease-fire were delivered to the Cabinet; had the ministers spent a little more effort investigating the military and the home front preparations; or had Livni's "exist strategy" not been silenced, the government would probably have been convinced of the utility of the cease-fire proposals. Israeli decision-makers could have also stopped to review the developing situation after receiving the multi-source discrepant information showing that the air bombing strategy has actually achieved its maximum and advising on a cease-fire, they might have opted for ending the campaign at this stage with grater knowledge of its merits as well as limitations.

Counterfactual 3: Hezbollah decides to launch a campaign of sporadic attacks against Israeli targets in and outside Israel to force it to withdraw from Shebaa farms and release the Lebanese prisoners.

How could “sporadic attacks” have changed the war outcome?

A campaign of sporadic attacks including cross-border raids, missiles and mortar fire, would have given Israel the time it needed to prepare for an eventual showdown with Hezbollah, and, even with limited initial Israeli retaliations, might have turned the non-Shiite Lebanese population against Hezbollah. Again, Israel’s 1982 invasion of Lebanon is a case in point. A long and protracted campaign of sporadic attacks was the strategic choice of the PLO and other Palestinian militant groups positioned in Lebanon since the late 1970s until the war broke out in June 1982 (Herzog 1984, 340-41). Israel did not fail to retaliate throughout, but the low-intensity conflict allowed Sharon and the IDF General Staff to spend an entire year in planning and preparation for the war once he became Minister of Defense in 1981 (Abraham 1996, 140). Though Hezbollah units are admittedly far more professional and organized than the earlier PLO force in Lebanon, the asymmetry in military power with the IDF is obvious, and a planned large-scale ground operation by Israel had a fairly good chance of success.

Also, it was the PLO operations emanating from Lebanon and the resultant Israeli retaliations that turned Christian Lebanese against the Palestinian presence there in a conflict which eventually developed into a full-pledged civil war in Lebanon (1975-1990). Some might argue that even the limited operation that Hezbollah “actually” undertook led to a month-long massive Israeli attack, but this argument both disregards that Israel did not invest a more determined effort to eradicate Hezbollah through a ground operation, and incorrectly

implies that Israel made the right choice in response to Hezbollah's operation, which is not the case as explained earlier. Also, Hezbollah was still able to reasonably argue that its limited operation by no means invited such a large-scale war over Lebanon; it was Israel that initiated this war, not Hezbollah.

Why would "sporadic attacks" have been possible?

There are three reasons why this counterfactual was possible. First, initiating a sporadic attacks, involving raids, launching missiles, and abductions was raised in the summer of 2005 in the discussions of Hezbollah leadership, and there were those who argued that this option would have forced the IDF to fight in two fronts simultaneously, as it was engaged in the fighting against Palestinian militants in 2005 (Sharara 2008). Second, this option remained well within Hezbollah's attrition and guerrilla warfare strategies and would still avoid direct engagements with the IDF. Third, had Hezbollah's action had any additional objectives other than the release of prisoners, a limited operation would not be sufficient. That is because attaining the aim of liberating the Shebaa farms was not feasible through a single attack, but rather necessitated an extended campaign of guerrilla warfare much like the one that Hezbollah was engaged in against the IDF (and South Lebanon Army – SLA) from 1982 to 2000 to liberate south Lebanon.

What could have made "sporadic attacks" possible?

A worse performance of the decision-making tasks could have made this counterfactual possible. A poorer survey of objectives would probably have led the Hezbollah leadership to adopt, instead of the pragmatic and limited objective of prisoner exchange, a conglomeration of ill-defined objectives, including the liberation of Shebaa farms, the release of prisoners, or probably the liberation of the entire historic Palestine (as

was the case with the PLO before the Oslo Accords of 1993, and is now with Palestinian militant groups, such as HAMAS and Islamic Jihad). Had Hezbollah mistaken the proper link between ends and means, it might have rushed into a large-scale conflict far exceeding its capabilities and directly inviting an Israeli large-scale operation and an internal backlash. Also, a less thorough survey of alternatives, Hezbollah might have not considered other reasonable options, such as the diplomatic resolution of the prisoners' issue, and decided hastily on making attacks here and there without thinking about the potential dangers these might entail.

Similarly, had it not been for the rigorous information search and processing conducted by the Hezbollah leadership, particularly the intelligence work directed against the IDF, the party might have overestimated its capabilities vis-à-vis Israel's and believed that it could launch a multifaceted campaign for an extended period of time while still expecting mild retaliations. Also, had Nasrallah been making decisions on his own – a manner that is neither unusual nor unexpected in similar ideological groups – he would not probably ignored the conclusions of the Lebanese National Dialogue and the reports on the Israeli preparations in the first half of 2006. Such a behavior could have led Hezbollah to underestimate both the internal Lebanese opposition to its arsenal and Israel's capabilities, and consequently engage in an extended campaign of attrition against the IDF that would give the latter enough time to carefully mount a second large-scale invasion of Lebanon.

Conclusion

The account of Hezbollah's victory in the July 2006 War robustly invalidates the "selection-effects" arguments. Institutional mechanism – that is, leaders who lead the nation to victory are more likely to be re-elected – was at work even in non-democratic regimes such as Hezbollah whose secretary-general remained in office and is likely to be re-elected. And it was democratic Israel whose leader remained in office for more than two years after the war and resigned over corruption allegations in 2008. As for informational constraints, not only did Hezbollah have no control over the Lebanese media, but it also had a wide public support for its policy towards Israel. Meanwhile, the Hezbollah leadership was provided accurate information about the costs and probabilities of war by its institutional settings. On the other hand, Israel's leaders enjoyed accurate information which should have enabled them to make better estimates of victory. The sources, however, were the bureaucracy and the military not the free press and the marketplace of ideas in society.

As my argument would predict, it was the threat environment in Israel's favor and the severe group incohesion vis-à-vis group cohesion of Hezbollah leadership that caused the disparity in the quality of the decision-making processes on both sides. In the decision to undertake the abduction operation, Hezbollah performances of the decision procedural tasks was usually either "very well" or "well." In Israel, the government's performances of the decision procedural tasks in the decision to initiate the air bombing campaign were all "very poor" except for a single "neutral" performance. Likewise, in the decision to approve a large-scale ground operation, Israel's performances of these procedural tasks were either "very poor" or "poor" except for a single "neutral" performance.

It was this disparity in the quality of the decision-making processes in the war participants that had a significant impact on the war outcome. Other explanations, Israel's intelligence failure and strategic interaction, are also plausible, but they remain both partial while their influence was contingent on political decisions. The analysis of three counterfactual scenarios – Israel decides on July 12 on war against Lebanon but postpones action; Israel decides on July 18 to accept a conditional cease-fire; and Hezbollah decides to launch a campaign of sporadic attacks against Israel – has shown that had only decision-makers performed their procedural tasks differently, they probably would have made different choices, and the war might probably have with an Israeli victory or a stalemate.

Conclusion

This dissertation has shown that the quality of the decision-making processes in war depends on two key factors: threat environment and leadership group cohesion. It has demonstrated that the quality of the decision-making process is crucial in determining war outcomes. These findings pose a serious challenge to the democratic victory theory “selection-effects” argument that democracies are more likely to win wars because their leaders make better decisions about initiating wars due to the restraining effects of public opinion and the checks-and-balances system.

I have identified the inadequacies of the “selection-effects” argument in that it cannot explain outcomes of wars between non-democracies, it is confined to decisions made by the initiator before the breakout of war, and it employs aggregate quantitative methods that establish correlations but fail to present adequate causal mechanisms. I proposed to bridge these lacunae through fulfilling three tasks: (1) establishing criteria for assessing the quality of the decision-making process independent of regime type; (2) providing an alternative explanation for variations in the quality of decision-making; and (3) conducting a detailed case-study analysis that provide insights into the causal mechanisms of the decision-making in both parties prior to and during the war.

I have argued that the quality of the decision-making process is constituted by four procedural tasks that are independent from regime type: survey of objectives, survey of alternatives, information search, and information processing. The causes of the quality of the decision-making process are likely to be threat environment and group cohesion; when external environment poses a serious threat to a state’s security and when its leadership is

cohesive, a high-quality decision-making process is made, which offers greater chances of victory.

The first section of this chapter outlines the findings of the case study analysis. It shows that the way events unfolded in each case supports my argument vis-à-vis the “selection-effects” argument, highlights the accumulative value of each case study showing that my argument can account for the entire range of war outcomes, and provides general insights on the Arab-Israeli wars. The second section details the implications of these findings for the literature on military victory, foreign policy decision-making, balance-of-power-theory, and the role of democracy in international relations. The third section discusses the implications of the findings for policy makers. The fourth section outlines directions for future research.

Findings of the Case Study Analysis

The Pattern of Outcomes

The above propositions have been tested in case study analysis of four Arab-Israeli wars. These wars – all between democracies and non-democracies but differ on alliances, nature of war, and the participation of non-state actors – suggest consistent patterns concerning the causes of the quality of the decision-making process and its impact on war outcomes. If the democratic victory “selection-effects” argument was valid, war outcomes should be both constant and caused by the regime type, but the evidence is more consistent with the alternative argument that this study presents.

The June 1967 War shows that my argument can explain war outcomes that democratic victory can predict but cannot explain. For this war, both democratic victory and my argument predict Israeli victory, but the way Israel won goes with the alternative argument presented in this study.

Indeed Israel's leaders engaged in a high-quality decision-making process, but not because of their concern of electoral chances to which they paid little attention, or the accurate information received from the free press and public opinion which they tried to control. Rather, it was Israel's grave security situation and the cohesion of the Eshkol government that prompted it to carefully seek and analyze information and advice. When the war broke out, not only did the Israeli public remain ignorant about the course of the war, but the Minister of Defense Dayan monopolized the decision-making and ordered an attack on Syria without considering a cabinet voting or even consulting the Prime Minister.

Also, autocratic Arab leaders in 1967 engaged in low-quality decision-making processes, but they were held accountable and proportionally punished for their role in the defeat. They also received accurate information and were influenced by public opinion despite their tight control over the media. It was their secure threat environment and the severe lack of group cohesion, both within each state (the rivalry between Nasser and his second-in-command Amer, for example) and among the states' leaderships, which prevented them from searching for new information and analyzing available information. During the war, the formerly secure threat environment was completely reversed following the astonishing Israeli victories, but the incohesion of leadership groups hampered any chance for coordination or reasonable information processing.

The cases of the War of Attrition 1969-70 and the October War 1973 show that my argument can explain war outcomes that are excluded from democratic victory analyses. Democratic victory theorists opted for the “either-victory-or-defeat” classification of war outcomes and eliminated the draws because democratic institutions do not vary within a short period of time. But threat environment and group cohesion can change quickly and did so in these two cases.

Between 1967 and 1974 Israel was a stable democracy as the regimes in Egypt and Syria were stable autocracies. However, Israel’s military superiority and the new territorial status-quo reversed the pre-war regional threat environment. The rivalry between Eshkol and Dayan rendered Israel’s leadership group incohesive – a situation which persisted later under Prime Minister Meir’s exclusive “political kitchen.” Conversely, Egypt’s threat environment and past experience could not have been worse, though the conflict between Nasser’s Minister of War Gen. Fawzi and the Chief of Intelligence Howeidy remained a problem. Nevertheless, the situation changed in early 1970 when Moscow intervened to support the Egyptian air-defense against the IAF, and the replacement of Egypt’s Chief of Intelligence had better relations with Gen. Fawzi.

In 1973 Israel had a significant military superiority over its Arab rivals, an experience of triumph, and a divided leadership group under Meir’s “political kitchen” which excluded most of the cabinet members. For their part, Egypt and Syria had a serious security situation and the experience of the June 1967 debacle, and a relatively cohesive leadership group, but still suffering from the skepticism that affected the relationship between Sadat and Assad. Nevertheless, the Arabs’ significant military achievements at the initial stage of the war completely reversed the threat environment and allowed deep divisions of Arab leaders, both within the Egyptian leadership between Sadat and his

Minister of War on the one hand and the Chief-of-Staff on the other, and between Egyptian and Syrian presidents to surface.

The War of Attrition and the October War, where victories were snatched from the jaws of defeat, and defeats were turned into victories, also demonstrate how war outcomes are sensitive to variation in the quality of the decision-making process. The mixed outcomes of these two wars corresponded to the mixed qualities of decision-making processes on both sides.

In the War of Attrition, Israel's decisions to hold the Canal line and to initiate the in-depth raids were of poor quality: its leadership failed to identify clear and attainable aims, appraise alternatives to end the war, or to examine discrepant information warning against escalation. These decisions allowed Egypt to fight under more favorable conditions, and provoked a Soviet intervention on Egypt's side. Israel's decision to accept the cease-fire was of a neutral quality: its leadership identified a clear objective and cautiously surveyed its limited options, but it failed to employ appropriate means, i.e., an approval of US monitoring of the cease-fire. This decision secured US support to Israel, but allowed Egypt's air-defense to cover the Canal area.

For its part, Egypt made a neutral performance of the procedural tasks upon making the decision to initiate the war: its leadership chose a limited war strategy which suited the current balance of forces, but failed to secure a Soviet support to cover the vulnerable air space. This decision permitted the army to wear the IDF down, but also allowed Israel to escalate the war in the air unopposed. Later on, the Egyptian leadership surveyed well its objectives and alternatives and made sure to secure Soviet support of the cease-fire proposal.

This decision allowed it to move the air-defense network eastward, and the “Battle of Egypt” was won.

In October 1973, Egypt’s and Syria’s decision to initiate war were of high-quality: both leaderships opted for a limited war strategy which suited the available armament and the current alliances, they searched thoroughly for information to ascertain the exhaustion of diplomatic solutions or general war alternatives, and were able to change their minds (such as delaying action) when confronted with new information. By contrast, Israel’s decision not to mobilize or to preempt was of poor quality: its leaders failed to match their aim of preserving the status quo with the means employed, i.e., waiting for the attack with limited mobilization, they limited their information search to AMAN, and decided not to take action against the accumulation of discrepant evidence. These decisions by both sides combined to pave the way for the initial Arab military successes.

However, Egypt and Syria were denied decisive victory and Israel was able to make significant military achievements. This was a result of a combination of Sadat’s poorly-made decisions to advance the offensive and to accept the cease-fire, which he made with the confused aims of helping Syria and saving the army, with virtually no consultation with either his advisors or his ally Assad, and against the advice of top military commanders. This decision coincided with Israel’s well-made decisions to authorize the canal crossing and accept the cease-fire: Israel’s leaders clearly defined their objective in each decision, carefully surveyed the military commanders’ views, were in incessant consultation with the US administration, and were able to halt their preferred option (action) when incoming information challenged it.

The July 2006 War shows that my argument can account for war outcomes that democratic victory theory can neither predict nor explain. It was a war that a democracy initiated and then lost – an anomaly for democratic victory theory. This case also shows that my argument applies to non-state actors as well as state actors.

Reiter and Stam (2002, 20) have argued that “[Democracies] are better at avoiding wars they would have gone on to lose had they had actually fought them. This may explain, for example, why democratic Israel has won *all* of the wars it has initiated.” The July 2006 War that Israel initiated and lost disproves this claim. Hezbollah won because it has achieved the two aims it pursued in this war: prisoner exchange and the organization’s survival as an active fighting force, and Israel lost because its use of militarized action failed to force a favorable change in the status quo.

“Selection-effects” mechanisms do not appear to work in either side. With the exception of the Minister of Defense and the Chief-of-Staff, none of Israel’s leaders resigned over the debacle; Prime Minister Olmert remained in office more than two years after the conclusion of the war and then resigned over allegations of corruption. Indeed, Israel’s leaders enjoyed high-quality information, but these came from the bureaucracy and the military, and not the marketplace of ideas in society. Israeli public support for the government was a classic example of “rallying ‘round the flag’” phenomenon. Nasrallah predictably remained in office after the war since Hezbollah emerged victorious. Hezbollah also had accurate information, but it had no control over the Lebanese media, and it enjoyed the support of Lebanese population in its goal to abduct IDF soldiers before the war started.

Hezbollah’s victory in 2006 can be attributed to a large extent to the high-quality decision-making process that its leaders, though undemocratically elected, engaged in before

opting to undertake the abduction operation. In a serious threat environment, the cohesive group of *Majlis al-Shura* surveyed its options to select a strategy of a limited abduction operation. By contrast, the Olmert government engaged in extremely poor-quality decision-making processes. Secure in its regional environment and led by a divided leadership, Israel chose the wrong approach twice: first in the decision to initiate the air-bombing campaign, and second in the decision to launch an ill-fated ground operation.

These four cases also demonstrate that the quality of the decision-making process was the crucial factor in determining outcomes of Arab-Israeli wars. Examinations of alternative explanations – numerical superiority, intelligence failure, military strategy, force employment, national culture and civil-military relations – demonstrate that while these are plausible causes, they remain partial. Also, analyses of counterfactual scenarios show that in each war the outcome was likely to change either to a stalemate or to a victory to the other side if decision-makers opted for different choices, which is the function of the performance of the four procedural tasks of decision-making.

Insights on Arab-Israeli Wars

Together, these four case studies provide useful insights into the Arab-Israeli wars in general. First, Arab-Israeli wars appear to be a classic example of the oft saying: “There are only policy successes and intelligence failures.” Intelligence services on both sides have usually been made scapegoats to cover bad decision-making processes. In 1967, the burden of Egypt’s defeat was put on the intelligence’s shoulders, ignoring that the GIS had provided Nasser with ample intelligence warning against the risks of escalation and indicating the Israeli plans for a pre-emptive strike. Israel’s military intelligence was blamed for the

Egyptian-Syrian surprise attack in October 1973. But upon closer inspection, AMAN seems to be only partly responsible for reporting a “low” probability of war; the main responsibility lies with decision-makers who were aware of other AMAN indicators of the Arab armies’ preparations and received warnings from other sources, but nevertheless decided neither to preempt nor to mobilize. In 2006 the blame for losing the war was also attributed to AMAN for failing to report adequately about Hezbollah’s preparations and weapon systems. It is true that gaps in tactical intelligence restricted the IDF’s ability to confront Hezbollah’s fighters, but AMAN provided the wide strategic picture and warned the political leadership both before and after the abduction operation that Hezbollah was capable of shelling deep into Israel which had no effective defense.

Second, the findings of the case studies challenge the prevalent view in the Arab world that the IDF successes over Arab armies have been the result of a massive US support rather any particular advantage on the part of the Israel. The case studies suggest that this is only partly true. On the one hand, the US support that Israel received, either political as in 1967 or both political and military as in 1969-70 and 1973, did help the IDF attain its military achievements in these wars, though this was not the case in 2006. But this support was by no means automatic; it depended on the extent to which Israel’s leaders were willing to consult with Washington and secure its support. Whenever Israel’s leaders did not invest sufficiently in exploring the US position – as was the case in the War of Attrition and on the eve of the October War – the IDF effort suffered accordingly. On the other hand, the case of allies’ support was not much different on the Arab side. Making intensive effort to explore the Soviet position and securing its support, Nasser, Sadat, and Assad were able to realize significant military achievements in the second stage of the War of Attrition and before the

October War; whenever they failed to do so, the Arab war effort suffered accordingly, as was the case in 1967 and at the later stage of the October War.

Third, the case study examinations indicate the emergence of a regional version of the “impotence of power.” This term refers to situations where a superpower is either unable to use the force at its disposal – especially nuclear weapons – or unsuccessful in the use of force to impose its political will (Morgenthau 1970; Kugler, Organski, and Fox 1980), but it seems also applicable to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The four wars examined above (and also the Lebanon War of 1982 in which IDF ended up in a stalemate with the Syrian army) show that despite the fact that Israel probably had the most powerful armed forces in the Middle East, it has not been able to secure a decisive victory in war ever since June 1967. To a large extent, this is due to a combination of improved performances by Arab states and either stable or deteriorating performances by Israel of decision-making processes.

Also, this formidable military capability, including nuclear weapons since the late 1960s, did not prevent the continuation of attacks against Israel. The October 1973 War has been cited in the literature as a case where the possible possession of nuclear weapons by a state (Israel) did not deter the rival (Egypt and Syria) from initiating a limited war (Paul 1995; Maoz 2003; Basrur, Cohen, and Wilson 2008). But the July 2006 War may allow this conclusion to broaden: Israel’s nuclear option did not deter Hezbollah from targeting population centers in Israel by short- and long-range missiles even when it employed a limited war strategy. Nor did it deter Palestinian militant organizations (primarily the PLO, HAMAS, and Islamic Jihad) from mounting minor attacks in protracted conflict campaigns ever since the early 1970s.

Implications for Scholarship

Important implications follow from the findings for the understanding of military victory, foreign policy decision-making analysis, balance of power theory, and the role of democracy in international relations.

Explanations of Military Victory

Realists have always seen military wherewithal – either in national material capability for hardcore realists or in its nature for offense-defense theorists – as key to military victory. But this realist view has been criticized by scholars of different schools of thought arguing that military power is chiefly a product of how states use the material at their disposal. Ivan Arreguin-Toft (2001), for example, proposed that the interaction between the opponents' military strategies explains outcomes of asymmetric conflicts. Also, Biddle (2006) has advanced the modern system of force employment, or how states use their material resources, as the key factor to military power and victory.

However, the case studies examined here show that the selection of specific military strategies or force employment systems is eventually a function of the decision-making at the political/strategic level – which is affected, in turn, by the threat environment and leadership group cohesion. The same can be said on other non-realist approaches, focusing on human capital, civil-military relations, and national culture. While the scholarship on military victory has gradually acknowledged that causal factors interact with each other (for example, the interaction between human capital and sophisticated weapons), it has fallen short of recognizing that there should be some sort of a connection between these various factors: the decision-making process. The decision-making process is *not* the source of any of these

factors but it does influence the employment of each. High-quality decision-making processes enable leaders both to exploit the advantages and plan around the deficiencies they have, and vice versa.

Thus the finding on the quality of the decision-making process not only elaborates on the decision-making process as a causal factor in determining war outcomes, but also introduces it as the one that *employs* other causal factors. From Thucydides to Waltz, historians and theorists of war have long pointed to the notion of sound or clever strategy on the part of the political leadership as key to military victory, but the term remained vague; and it is in this understanding of the role the decision-making process plays in war outcomes that one finds the practical manifestation of this notion.

Foreign Policy Decision-Making Analysis

The case study analysis has two implications for foreign policy decision-making analysis. This dissertation refines the causal mechanism of the quality of the decision-making process theory that links the performance of procedural tasks with policy outcomes by making three contributions. First, the analysis should examine *all* the decisions made during the selected decision-making episode, and not be limited to an individual decision. In each of the case studies presented above the decision-making involved multiple decisions. The Israeli decision-making in the July 2006 War, for example, involved two decisions. Second, an adequate understanding of a policy outcome is only possible when the analysis includes both sides to the conflict. The War of Attrition involved a chain of decisions involving both sides: Israel's decision to hold the Canal line led to Egypt's decision to initiate war; in turn, war along the Canal provoked Israel's decision to initiate the in-depth

raids, which eventually led both sides to agree to a cease-fire agreement. Third, the analysis should take into account that the quality of decision-making probably varies *within* the same process. In October 1973, the qualities of Egypt's decision-making processes varied significantly from the decision to initiate war on the one hand, and the decisions to advance the offensive eastward and to accept the cease-fire on the other.

Also, foreign policy decision-making analysis has so far been concerned with states' rather than non-state actors' decisions, even though non-state actors (such as national liberation movements and terrorist organizations) have long been active players in the international arena. To be sure, the study of militant non-state actors' behavior has almost exclusively been concerned with the methods of violence or military strategies they employ, with very little attention being paid to examining their decision-making processes. Democratic victory theorists have similarly excluded non-state actors from their analyses. The above examination of Hezbollah in the July 2006 War, however, suggests that non-state actors can be brought in the analysis because decision-making by non-state actors can exhibit characteristics that are quite similar to those of governments.

This similarity appears to be a function of the status of the non-state actor in its host country: the greater the autonomy and the more significant the political, social and economic roles of a non-state actor, the more likely it behaves like a state. Note that such non-state actors, especially those of the "state-within-the-state" category, emerge and operate in territories where the official state authority is not effective, as has been the case in some parts of the former Soviet Union, West and Central Africa, and Latin America. In such cases, the absence of the state from political, social and economic realms creates a vacuum that is filled by the non-state actors. This performance of state functions by a non-state actor is what would make its leadership calculate its decisions in a more formal way. It should be noted,

however, that this conclusion about the similarity between state and non-state actors' decision-making processes and its causes is only tentative, and thus an examination of a number of non-state actors is needed to see if the evidence is as strong as it seemed to be in the case of Hezbollah.

Balance-of-Power Theory

The finding on the antecedent causes of the quality of the decision-making process – i.e., threat environment and group cohesion – corroborates the argument that improving the quality of the decision-making process is one form of internal balancing in which states engage to enhance their security. This has three important implications. First, it indicates that the decision-making process is the medium through which rising threats (or imbalances of power) are transmitted into concrete actions or policies (to correct the imbalance). By demonstrating that the decision-making process is the link between “internal balancing” and “external balancing” behavior, this dissertation bridges the artificial gap between these two types of balancing behavior – a gap that exist in the previous literature but not in the real world.

Second, it challenges the conventional view that the balance of power is about decisions and not decision-making. Indeed, there has been a long-running debate among realists about whether the balance-of-power can account for the foreign policies of individual states; some scholars assert that the balance-of-power is a theory about international politics not foreign policy (Waltz 1986; Peterson 1995; Waltz 1996), while others have argued that the balance-of-power can be used to explain states' foreign policies because the latter are the mechanism through which the international outcome materializes (Walt 1987; Elman 1996;

Christensen and Snyder 1990; Levy 2004). But both sides concur in that they attempt to make predictions about decisions and not decision-making (Elman 1996, 17). In particular, this study refines the argument of the latter group of realist scholars: if individual states' foreign policies are the mechanisms through which the international outcome – i.e., balancing – occurs, then the decision-making process is the mechanism through which individual states' contributions to the balancing occur.

Third, that the cohesion of leadership group – when added to the balance-of-power variable – proved valid in explaining the variation in the quality of the decision-making process supports the argument that the addition of domestic-level variables improves the accuracy of systemic explanations. This argument has underpinned previous works in explaining balancing behavior, outbreak of war, and military doctrines (Christensen and Snyder 1990; Schweller 2006; Van Evera 1985; Posen 1984), and it is now proved able to include new domestic-level explanatory variables (group cohesion) to account for probably the oldest concern of realist theory, that is war outcomes.

Democracy and International Relations

The findings above pose a major challenge to the liberal tradition's predictions for the role of democracy in states' international relations. This dissertation shows that as far as decision-making is concerned, both democracies and authoritarian regimes behave in ways different from the mechanisms proposed by “selection-effects”; in other words, regime type is not the determining factor in making decisions about war. Democratic institutions and norms do not drive democracies to be more winning than other states in the international system. Democracies are not especially likely to make careful calculations about war, and

democratic leaders may start wars when they are not confident about the probability of victory or costs. Autocratic leaders may have genuine public support, and be able to receive accurate information even when they have tight control over the media – factors that eventually influence their decision-making process.

At the same time, because the democratic victory theory “selection-effects” argument is derived from the democratic peace theory’s claims of institutional constraints on democratic leaders, this dissertation provides more evidence on the flawed logic and application of democratic peace theory. This evidence is found not only in cases of democracies acting in other ways than institutional constraints, but also in cases of autocracies that followed these institutional constraints, though in a less formal way.

As far as accountability is concerned, it is only after the October War that Israeli leaders assumed responsibility and resigned, but neither did they do so after the costly war of Attrition nor after the losing war of July 2006. Arab leaders in June 1967 were punished proportionally for their role in the defeat. For public constraints, democratic leaders of Israel kept the public in the dark (1967 and 1973), ignored it (1969), or dealt with in a ‘round the flag’ fashion (2006). Contrary to democratic peace propositions, in the four cases not only autocratic Arab leaders received genuine public support for their policies concerning the conflict, but also the public opinion played a major role in the decisions to initiate war in 1969 and 1973.

Checks-and-balances do not appear to have worked either. True, institutional arrangements played virtually no role in the Arab decision-making as democratic peace would suggest, but in Israel the Knesset and political parties were also of little influence on the decision-making, though this little influence was probably the result of the consensual

democracy model in Israel (Lijphart 1999, 31-47; Fabbrini 2007, 272-75). As for the informational constraints, the marketplace of ideas did exist in Israel but the leaders usually made little use of it. Also, both Arab and Israeli leaders usually received accurate information from their bureaucracies, though the Arab states lacked effective marketplaces of ideas in their systems.

Implications for Policy

The validity of the democratic victory theory is not a mere academic concern. At the conclusion of their study, Reiter and Stam recommend American policy makers to use force to spread democracy because “democracies provide security for themselves by empowering their citizens and crafting more prudent foreign policies” (2002, 203). What Reiter and Stam imply by their assertion that “democracy provides security” is a suggestion of democratization to improve states’ chances in winning wars.

This view is exemplified by the US situation in Iraq. A declared aim of the United States invasion of 2003 was to introduce democracy to that country. The US later disbanded Saddam Hussein’s army and built a new army assuming that the latter would threaten neither Iraq’s neighbors nor its own population. Policy makers in Washington might think that the Iraqi “democratic” army would be a strategic asset in the struggle against terrorism and potential enemies in the Middle East (Iran and Syria). But this is all questionable. Not only is it uncertain whether the new Iraqi army will maintain its unity under severe ethnic and religious divisions, but it is also doubtful whether it will keep regional peace even if it becomes as powerful as believed by democratic victory theorists.

By contrast, the argument advanced in this study provides some prescriptive advice that can be utilized by policy makers even in a non-democratic context. While policy makers cannot obviously control external threats or past experience, they still can influence group cohesion and the performance of decision-making procedural tasks.

On the one hand, four case studies of Arab-Israeli wars show that a cohesive leadership group enhances the chances of a high-quality decision-making process and, in turn, the chances of military victory. As shown in Chapter Two, cohesive groups are not characterized by unanimity or an absence of disagreements, but rather by each member's acceptance of others as partners and his/her recognition of the unity of the group. Sharp ideological divisions, political frictions, or personal rivalries render a group incohesive and result in consistent and divisive disagreements which hinder even the minimum teamwork required for the undertaking of a decent decision-making process.

The cases also demonstrate that the role of leaders is key to group cohesion because they both synthesize the decision-making process and steer the group's collective actions. It is the leader's role to form his/her advisory group and to select a group of people who are like-minded about basic values and have mutual respect or a group of people who are divided by personal rivalries and fundamental political divisions. Members of the former group type would work in teamwork to achieve the group's interests, and need not try to score points in personal power struggles. Here, democratic leaders might have an advantage in that their "selection pools" are larger and less politically-restrictive than those of autocrats, but forming a cohesive group might not be an easy task even for democracies for considerations related to personal loyalties and the formation of coalition governments. However, leaders should also be able to make changes in the composition of the group once he/she recognizes that working as a group is no longer feasible.

On the other hand, it would be naive to argue that a good performance of the procedural tasks of decision-making – survey of objectives, survey of alternatives, information search, and information processing – is a recipe for victory in every instance. As noted earlier, the quality of the decision-making process is one causal factor among several, even though it is conceived of here as the one that employs the others. If all or most of other factors (size of the armed forces, technology of weapons, military strategy, and troop education/training) extensively favors the enemy, even a high-quality decision-making process may not help much, and the maximum it can achieve then is to avoid going to war in the first place. However, good performances of these procedural tasks will help avoid defeats, and if some other causal factors are favorable, victory in war is likely.

One important implication is that the management of the decision-making group would have to be designed to improve the performance of the four procedural tasks. In addition to the selective choice of members as noted above, one critical responsibility of the leader is to encourage each member, as well as outside qualified experts, to provide critical evaluations of the information presented to the decision-making group. Critical evaluations will serve two aims: to identify possible flaws in the preferred option(s), and to provide guidance to the search for new information. New information may either confirm the decision-makers' choice or lead them to review their position.

Of course, the existence of an independent and more systematic structure for policy-planning and evaluation, such as a national security council, could be helpful. However, it should be stressed that while such structures are important, they do not operate in a vacuum, and it is the political leadership that either utilizes or wastes the advantages of a specific structure. Illustrative of this point is the case of Israel's decision-making. Examining national security decision-making in Israel, Charles Freilich (1992) has identified the absence of a

structured system as key to deficiencies in Israel's decision-making, and he accordingly recommended the establishment of a national security council to fill this gap. Israel's National Security Council (NSC) has indeed been established in 1999. Nevertheless, in the July 2006 War the NSC's work had little influence on the decision-making process because conflicts within the Israeli leadership did not leave a space for non-military professional advice.

Directions for Future Research

There are some limitations of this study and the approach it has employed. This discussion is framed in terms of topics for future inquiry on military victory and the quality of the decision-making process.

A More Inclusive Explanatory Framework of War Outcomes

This study has mainly focused on the decision-making process to explain war outcomes, out of the belief that decision-making thus far has not been systematically examined. It has also examined some alternative explanations of war outcomes in the case-studies. However, for scope limits, the analysis was limited to those explanations that work at the strategic level, such as the military strategy, force employment, intelligence failures, civil-military relations, and national culture. But factors related to tactical military effectiveness, such as troop morale, terrain, and leadership have not been examined.

The ultimate goal of military victory theories, however distant its achievement, is to give a more-inclusive account of the impact of a large number of variables on war outcomes.

While the decision-making process is one variable among several, in attempting to link approaches culled from theories of military victory and regime type with the literature on foreign policy decision-making, this study offers a first step. But future work should attempt to include these factors that have not been examined in this study, and compare the relative significance of each as affecting the war outcome. Some attempts have been made in this regard, but apart from falling short of including *all* of the variables, they were dependent on large-*N* analyses. Thus, the challenge that future work would face is to use a multi-method approach that is able both to demonstrate generalizability of findings and to elaborate adequately on the causal mechanisms in real-world case studies.

A Broader Scope

This study has examined four Arab-Israeli wars as case studies. Indeed, as I argued earlier in Chapter Three, Arab-Israeli wars have a special visibility and impact because of their theoretical consequences on the democratic victory theory and real consequences as one of the world's most war-prone regions. Nonetheless, the propositions presented in this study would have greater credibility and generalizability if they were to be applied to a larger number of cases and in different regions in the world that had received little attention before. Wars in the Indian subcontinent, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America are among the candidate case studies.

Alternative Dependent Variables

This study has investigated only cases where wars did actually occur; in other words, it does not deal with cases in which the quality of the decision-making process led to war avoidance. This might be seen as a selection bias and an incomplete causal link. However, so long as the phenomenon under examination is war outcomes, it is obviously impossible to examine cases in which war has not occurred in the first place. Future research may build on this work by studying the quality of the decision-making process in cases of war-avoidance while having the phenomenon under examination as crisis outcome.

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