

The Security Imperative:
An Examination of the Influence of Strategic Depth on Israeli Defence

By

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Influence of Strategic Depth on Israeli Defence**

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Dale E.O. LaFreniere

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree**

of

MASTER OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT:
THE SECURITY IMPERATIVE: AN EXAMINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF STRATEGIC DEPTH ON ISRAELI DEFENCE

Israel is a territorially shallow nation, which for most of its history has been surrounded by enemies. As a result, it has constantly sought to acquire strategic depth in order to secure its borders. Initially, Israel focussed on strategic depth through geography, and sought to acquire territories to be used as strategic buffers. This thinking dominated Israeli strategic planning from 1948 until the 1967 Six-day war. The 1967 War saw the acquisition of territories and the placing of strategic buffers. However, Israel was unable to use its new territories properly, to ensure its security. This flaw resulted in harsh lessons learned during the 1973 war, and forced Israel realised that it must enhance its Strategic Depth through non-traditional means, via the international system and technology.

The examination of this thesis was conducted through empirical research of both primary and secondary sources, with the goal of determining historical patterns regarding the development of Israeli strategic doctrine as it relates to strategic depth. The work is broken into four chapters each dealing with distinct areas of focus; a theoretical discussion of the concept of strategic depth, the period of 1948 to 1967, characterised by Israel's lack of strategic depth, the period of 1967 to 1989, Israel's acquisition of strategic depth and the evolution of that Strategic Depth, and the period after 1989 with an examination of Israel's options for future security.

This research has yielded the following findings: Israel's strategic doctrine has gone through an evolution throughout its history. Because it has traditionally lacked strategic depth Israel relied upon a policy of pre-emption. In conjunction with this, Israel developed a very specific set of strategic triggers, which served to gauge the external threat posed to the nation. The tripping of these triggers indicated the necessity to launch a pre-emptive strike. It has therefore, traditionally focused on strategic depth as a means of providing security. Initially Israel felt that geography and the acquisition of strategic buffers was the key to its security. It came however, to realise that strategic alliances and peace agreements in conjunction with a strong nuclear deterrent were far more effective means of providing it with Strategic Depth.

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INTRODUCTION

Israel is a nation with a unique strategic imperative. It was born from conflict and exists within conflict; conflict that is driven by social, religious, ideological, and geographical imperatives. It is a nation, surrounded by enemies who have sought to destroy it throughout its history. Israel is a geographically small nation with little suitable territory, which it can use for defence. Thus, it has been forced to be innovative and aggressive in its approach to defence and security. As such, it is a nation with a siege mentality, which even today dominates its national psyche. Israel has, as a result of its strategic imperatives, therefore sought to obtain strategic depth in various forms, throughout its history.

Israel initially sought to acquire strategic depth through the traditional means of geography. This dominated Israeli strategic planning from 1948 to the 1967 Six-Day war. In an effort to secure its borders Israel sought to acquire territories to obtain and maintain strategic buffers between it and its enemies. However, once territory was gained and strategic buffers were in place, after 1967, Israel was unable to use its new territories properly, in order to enhance its defence. This flaw resulted in harsh lessons learned during the 1973 War. After 1973, Israel realised that it must enhance its strategic depth through non-traditional means using the international system and technology.

To understand this progression, one must first understand the concepts associated with Strategic Depth. Therefore, a significant portion of this work is devoted to a theoretical discussion of

Strategic Depth and its related concepts. To understand Israel's security concerns, one must then gain an understanding of its history in relation to strategic doctrine. The remainder of this work will examine the history of Israeli security concerns through a study of the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict since 1948.

Throughout this analysis, the underpinning Israeli security imperatives will be drawn out through an extensive examination of the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and an examination of the strategic imperatives which shape the Israel strategic position. The question of how strategic depth has shaped Israeli strategic doctrine will be answered through an examination of the various dynamics that have characterised the Arab-Israeli conflict.

There are three distinct periods of Israeli history relevant to the development of strategic doctrine. First is the period between Israel's founding in 1948 and the end of the 1967 War, which is the era when Israel had virtually no strategic depth. It was during this time that the Israeli mindset toward its defence was formed and remains prevalent today. It was an era of both intense conflict and desperation that served to solidify feelings of a siege mentality there. The strategic imperatives of the time drove a defence policy of pre-emption, ultimately culminating in the 1967 War, which was the pivotal turning point for Israeli security concerns.

The 1967 war fundamentally changed the geo-political imperatives in the Middle East. It vaulted Israel into the position of a regional power, while fundamentally changing its strategic focus. It allowed Israel, for the first time, to obtain territory, which could be used as strategic buffers. Thus the post 1967 period should have been a period of increased security for Israel, however, that was not the case. The change to its strategic situation was something that Israel was not entirely prepared for, as it was unsure of how to manage its new strategic buffers. Israel had become so accustomed to defending itself without the luxury of strategic depth, that when strategic depth through geography was achieved, it was not able to properly utilise it. Instead of using the territories to hold its enemies at arm's length, Israel tended to regard them as annexed land. As such defences were established along the borders of the occupied territories, in static positions with minimal depth. It was that mindset that contributed to it nearly being defeated in the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Lessons learned in the 1973 war forced Israel to realise that geography could not remain the key to strategic

depth. In order to ensure its security it must pursue depth through international agreements and technology. The result was its willingness to negotiate peace with Egypt, to solidify its 'special relationship with the United States, and to develop nuclear weapons.

The shift in planning for strategic depth led Israel to pursue the current peace initiatives, beginning in 1989 and continuing to the present day. This is an era characterised by a softening of the Arab-Israeli conflict and a move toward some form of peace process. It is also a period of shifting strategic concerns for Israel, away from external issues to internal issues surrounding the Palestinian people. The 1980s saw terrorism move to the forefront of Israeli security concerns, displacing for the most part, the threat of an all out war. The Intifada was in essence the culmination of this shift. It forced Israel to continue its pursuit of non-traditional means of acquiring strategic depth, ultimately leading to the peace process.

The prospect of Israel realising peace with the Palestinians, and its Arab neighbours also raises new security concerns for it. It will be required to ensure its security while relinquishing control of the occupied territories. Should this happen, Israel will be required to further enhance its strategic depth through non-traditional means.

CHAPTER I: PEELING THE LAYERS BACK: STRATEGIC DEPTH IN THE MODERN ERA

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The concept of Strategic Depth is useful to understanding modern strategic doctrine. Traditionally strategic depth has been solely defined by geography. However, in the modern era several non-traditional developments have emerged to contest its value and utility. These developments should not be seen as undermining or contradicting the concept of strategic depth, rather they are to be integrated into it. Geography is still the most significant component of strategic depth and several factors need to be considered to ensure its utility.

A nation's geographical situation has for a long time determined its defence requirements. For example, the nations of North America have vastly different defence requirements than do the nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The large buffers provided by the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic Oceans make the continent of North America relatively secure from nations that do not possess large and powerful navies, airforces or ballistic missiles. The majority of Europe, Asia and Africa, are geographically much less secure than their North American counterparts. Nonetheless, modern non-traditional technological components, specifically nuclear weapons and long range delivery systems, international political relations and domestic

factors, that traditionally were not regarded as strategic depth, must also be considered. These other factors, when linked into strategic depth, provide a useful means to understand a nation's defence doctrine. Therefore, in order to understand how both the traditional and non-traditional components come together, one must analyse the theory behind strategic depth, as it relates to the evolution of strategy.

Over the centuries, strategy has evolved from a concept that was only applied to the conduct of war, to a concept that is integral to the planning of any defence policy and doctrine in peacetime. As such, three major levels of warfare and defence planning have evolved; the strategic, the operational, and the tactical¹ levels, of which two, the strategic and operational, are applicable to planning strategic doctrine. From a conceptual perspective, these levels are the subject of much discussion, and to some extent, debate. The debate lies in the difference between them, how they are all related, and the extent that they overlap. They all represent similar concepts, even though each one exists at a different level along the spectrum of warfare. They are however, extremely important in defining strategy and by extension, strategic depth.

The examination of these levels clarifies specifically, where each fits in to the total spectrum of warfare and strategic doctrine in the modern era. Such discussion provides a context within which to discuss strategic depth. Also, the concepts of total war and the conduct of military operations versus defence posture are also vital to understanding strategic depth. These serve to emphasise the point on the spectrum where strategy lies, and how the concept of strategic depth fits into both strategy and the spectrum of warfare.

¹ Tactics occupy the lowest level on the spectrum of warfare. Cyril Falls, in The Art of War, defines tactics as "the art of conducting a battle, or section of a battle." (p 8) General Carl Von Clausewitz in Principles of War, defines tactics as "the theory of combat." (p 15) Along with that, he then defines war as "...the combination of many distinct engagements." (Ibid).

Leonhard has a more contemporary approach to defining Tactics. He defines the tactical planning level of war as "the planning level of war that deals with battles and engagements." He defines a battle as a "...direct conflict between large tactical units... that have been committed as part of a major operation. An engagement "... can be a subset of a battle, [and] is fought by divisions and below and can develop incidentally [or even accidentally] in relation to [a senior military] commander's plan." (p 9) What can be drawn from all of this is that tactics relate to a specific battle or engagement. Tactics fall only within the area of the conduct of military operations. Tactics then, exist within the domain of the military, and cannot be applied to planning for defence at the national level. They are a part of strategic doctrine, however the tactical level of warfare is concerned with only the use of soldiers and equipment and how they are best employed by military commanders on the battlefield.

To understand how strategic depth is defined, an understanding of its evolution, synthesised into several key concepts, is necessary. Total war, the levels of warfare, defensive depth, deterrence, buffers and the key types of strategic depth are the primary building blocks, which combine to form the greater concept of strategic depth.

1.1 THE EVOLUTION OF STRATEGIC DEPTH

Strategic depth can be defined as a nation's strategic military doctrine in relation to its fixed geographical environment, available military technology and its international political environment. Assessing these three components influences or determines the amount of strategic depth a nation possesses, and hence a nation's strategic response to ensure the ultimate goal of national security and survival. An understanding of strategic depth is contingent upon understanding of strategy and depth, and an understanding of the two applicable levels of warfare, the strategic and the operational.

In the modern era, strategy is more than the conduct of military operations. However, a nation's strategy is often accomplished through the employment of its military forces. Strategy is the method followed in order to ensure a nation's survival and further its national interest and such national interest may either be offensive or defensive in nature.² A national strategy is therefore the method or methods followed which make a nation survivable or defensible. The methods that a nation follows to provide a viable national defence encompass far more than just military preparations. The military aspect of strategy although key, now works in conjunction with other factors. These include all methods that a nation follows to ensure its national survival. Strategic doctrine is, therefore, the means by which a nation formalises its methods of employing its military so as to further its national interests and to ensure its defence. Strategy, although still the art of conducting a war, now also becomes the art of preparing a defence.

There are numerous non-military factors that directly affect strategy. The first is geography, which is perhaps the most significant, and largely determines the relative threat that a

² This analysis will deal with the defensive side primarily, because the greater focus of this work is centred on how Israel has defended itself throughout its history.

nation faces. Geographic issues are the proximity of a nation to its enemies, and how the terrain external to and within a nation's borders (e.g. rivers and mountains versus plains) determines its relative vulnerability to conventional land warfare. In so doing, geography significantly dictates the response a nation will take to reduce its vulnerability.

Historical experience is the next factor. The historical experience of a nation, whether it has been isolated from war, or constantly under threat of invasion for example, creates a national psyche which drives strategic concerns. It creates "...preconceptions about the nature of war and politics and may generate irresistible strategic imperatives" for a nation. Ideology and culture, which go hand in hand with historical experience, are the final two factors. They serve to set the mindset of a given nation's leaders and consequently, greatly influence and shape the course decision-makers follow.³

Total war is a key concept, which has caused strategy to move beyond the conduct of military operations, and has expanded it to the realm of national politics. Since the beginning of the modern state system, cities have traditionally not been targets of war. After 1648 cities were no longer besieged or sacked. However, beginning in the last century and continuing into the twentieth century, warfare has tended to become absolute in both its conduct and effects. All aspects of a nation and its society have become involved in modern warfare. Cities have become targets of bombing, streets have become battlefields, and industry has become heavily involved in arming for war. Non-combatants have become casualties along with combatants. Additionally, nuclear weapons add a terrifying element to total war, in that they bring about the potential for global destruction. This has become known as total war, which is "a war waged with all available weapons until absolute victory."⁴ Total war does not exist exclusively within the domain of the nuclear equation as popularly thought. It also entails the entire nation and the degree to which a nation is committed to conducting a war. It includes, among other things, the degree to which national resources are committed, the degree of mobilisation and the relative danger to non-combatants.

³ Ibid, pp 2 & 3.

⁴ Ibid, p 435.

Total war has resulted in non-combatants no longer being isolated from the battlefield. Military forces traditionally engaged each other on remote battlefields, away from populated centres. Technology has served to expand the battlefield regionally and globally to the point where no area is truly safe. This trend began with the Industrial Revolution. War in the nineteenth century was affected by "...the power of steam, the more fruitful cultivation of the earth, the increased extent and speed of industrial production, and the closely allied growth of populations."⁵ The early twentieth century saw a dramatic leap forward, in the technology of war. Indeed, prior to the Second World War, war became governed by one principle namely:

"...[war was] waged by means of all the man-power, all the energies, and all the material and moral resources of the state, and directed in 'totality' against the hostile state. It is all-in warfare, nothing being held back by the state which practices it and no objective being avoided, so long as attack upon it may damage the enemy."⁶

During the Second World War, not only were nations' militaries targeted, but also their industries, cities and even populations. The advent of nuclear weapons meant further changes also. Nuclear weapons represent unspeakable destructive potential. The consequences of war, in the nuclear age, go far beyond simple defeat of a nation. War now has the potential to destroy a nation entirely. In fact such a confrontation could mean the destruction of both sides.

The coming of total war, and especially the possibility of nuclear war, has fostered a feeling that war, on a large scale, is so terrible in its result that it should not be considered under any circumstances.

"It is a commonplace [view] that total war in the nuclear age represents the greatest peril with which mankind has ever been faced. So obvious is the fact that a concept of restraint has entered even this field."⁷

This means that war is now something to be avoided. It does not mean that war has been eliminated. War still exists in many regions of the world. However, total war and nuclear weapons have caused a fundamental shift in the nature of strategy. All of this places a much

⁵ Falls, C., p 148.

⁶ Ibid, p 152.

⁷ Ibid. p 158.

greater emphasis than ever before, on the strategy of defence, diplomacy and deterrence, with the latter being a key concept in dealing with nuclear weapons.

Barry Buzan in, An Introduction to Strategic Studies: Military, Technology and International Relations, defines deterrence as:

"One actor prevents another from taking some action by raising the latter's fear of the consequences that will ensue. Deterrence implies the existence of two parties, the deterrer and the deterree. Its object is to stop the deterree from taking actions against the interests of the deterrer."⁸

Deterrence entails three principal mechanisms. First, the deterrer must issue a threat against the deterred, then state the conditions on which it will be carried out, and finally, must possess the capability to carry it out. These are often referred to as the three Cs, communication, credibility, and capability. In so doing the deterred nation will then be required to calculate the consequence forcing the deterrer to carry out the threat, if the deterred nation acts against the deterring nation. Calculation is the "ability of both deterrer and deterree to weigh costs and benefits in a similar fashion."⁹

There have been many debates about the effectiveness of deterrence over the years. It is a concept that is very difficult to measure. If two nations, in a supposed deterrent relationship, go to war, then obviously deterrence has failed. However, if the same two nations do not go to war, is it because deterrence has held, or is it because of other factors, which involve national interests? The deterree may not be interested in, or averse to, conflict and in such a situation deterrence is not a factor in keeping peace. Therefore if two adversarial nations do not go to war, the reasons for it may not necessarily be deterrence.

There are three methods that a nation can use to practice nuclear deterrence. It is through deterrence that nuclear weapons provide strategic depth. These methods form a descending continuum in which the first provides the greatest amount of deterrence and the third the least. The first method of deterrence is the possession of a large operational nuclear arsenal.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

This is the case with the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.¹⁰ These nations hold the bulk of the world's nuclear weapons. With such large arsenals, both sides possess the potential for assured destruction. In reality such an exchange would mean global destruction. Mutual assured destruction is the outcome in this case, and it is credible because both sides are aware of the other's capability. Both sides are required to calculate the risks involved in acting against the other, which provided the calculating element, in the deterrent relationship. Neither side was willing to risk such an exchange. Therefore, it was largely accepted that a deterrent relationship existed, and as such provided strategic depth by forcing inaction.

The next two methods are forms of extended nuclear deterrence. They require an alliance with a nation with a large nuclear arsenal. Essentially a guarantor / guarantee relationship is established whereby a more powerful nation guarantees the security of a less powerful one. Within the second method, a nation may possess a small nuclear arsenal, which is not sufficiently large enough to provide completely, a deterrent relationship, if it were to stand-alone. Such a nation would therefore enter into a defence agreement, with a stronger nuclear power, in order to enlarge the nuclear arsenal and therefore enhance deterrence.¹¹ Israel fits into this model. It possesses a moderate nuclear arsenal and has articulated its willingness to use it. However, it is debatable whether or not its enemies are sufficiently deterred by it. In order to enhance its deterrent capability Israel has cultivated a special relationship with the United States. This relationship has progressed to the point that Israel has acquired the status of "non-NATO ally" to the United States. In doing so, Israel has increased its deterrent capability by adding American "muscle" to the formula.

The third method is for a non-nuclear nation to enter into a defence agreement with a nuclear power.¹² In this case a nation which does not possess nuclear weapons, and therefore no deterrent capability, seeks a nation that does possess them, to act as a guarantor. This method provides the least amount of protection, in that the guaranteed nation is totally dependent

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

on the nuclear might of the guarantor. The guarantor in such a case therefore provides the deterrent and by extension strategic depth for the non-nuclear nation, by guaranteeing the possibility of a nuclear retaliation if the protected nation is attacked. Canada is involved in a relationship such as this, with the United States. Canada has no nuclear arsenal and relies on the American nuclear umbrella to provide it with nuclear deterrence. It has therefore gained strategic depth not only through nuclear weapons, but also through international guarantees.

These last two methods have one underlying problem, and that is the length that a guarantor nation is willing to go in order to guarantee the security of the guaranteed nation. It becomes a risk calculation of determining at what point the guarantor pulls back and leaves the guaranteed nation to fend for itself. During the Cold War the United States provided extended deterrence for not only Canada, but also the European nations belonging to NATO. The question was often posed: would the United States be willing to sacrifice Washington for Berlin, or London or Paris?

1.1.0 LEVELS OF WARFARE

Robert Leonhard provides the best definition of the levels of warfare, in his book, The Art of Manoeuvre: Manoeuvre Warfare and The Airland Battle.¹³ Figure 1.1 on the following page, part of his chart locates the operational and strategic levels as they relate to the planning levels of war by the United States. These levels relate to war, whether in the preparation for it or in its actual conduct. Also, both levels have two main principles in that there is an offensive and defensive side.¹⁴ It is at the strategic level, however, where national objectives and the civilian authority become involved. It is also at this level where strategic doctrine exists. Additionally, to examine each of these levels, one must first define war itself. At first this seems relatively easy, and as such, a definition rather obvious. Never the less, a firm definition must be provided in order to provide context for this analysis. War is best defined as "a state of hostilities that exists between or among nations, characterised by the use of military force. The essence of war is a

¹³ Leonhard, R, The Art of Manoeuvre. p 6.

¹⁴ Aron, R., Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations. p 82.

violent clash between two hostile, independent, and irreconcilable wills, each trying to impose itself on the other." ¹⁵

The highest level of warfare is the strategic level, and again it is at this level where the military and civilian government most often meet and work together to define national goals. It is here that defence policy and strategic doctrine intersect, and the planning for war occurs in peacetime. Falls defines strategy as "the art of conducting a campaign."¹⁶ Von Clausewitz defines it as "the combination of individual engagements to attain the goal of the campaign or war."¹⁷ B.H. Liddell Hart defines it as "...the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of policy."¹⁸ Finally, Leonhard describes the strategic planning level as "...the level of war that is responsible for applying military means to achieve national aims; the planning level that develops war plans and theatre goals."¹⁹

<u>LEVELS OF WARFARE AND STRATEGIC DOCTRINE</u>		
<u>PLANNING LEVEL</u>	<u>STRUCTURE</u>	<u>EXECUTION</u>
<i>STRATEGIC</i>	National Objectives Theatre Goals	National Command Authority
<i>OPERATIONAL</i>	Campaigns Major Operations	Theatre, Army Group, Army, Corps

Figure 1.1

¹⁵ USMC, Warfighting.

¹⁶ Falls, C., Opcit, p 8.

¹⁷ Von Clausewitz, General C., Opcit. p 45.

¹⁸ As quoted by Murray, W. and Grimsley M., in The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War. p 1.

¹⁹ Leonhard, R. Opcit, p 7.

All of these definitions describe strategy as the means by which wars are fought. As such, they restrict strategy to focussing on solely military affairs. The limitation of strategy to the realm of war-fighting and military operations may have held true prior to the First World War. However advances in industrialisation, which drove advances in technology and arms, has since changed the equation. Because of the First World War and the technological advances of the inter-war period and the Second World War, the lethality of warfare greatly advanced. The advent of air power, and subsequently nuclear weapons and ballistic missile delivery platforms for them, has forever altered the scope of strategy. Technology means that civilians are no longer removed from the battlefield.

The operational level of warfare is a relatively recent addition to the vernacular of warfare. It is a primarily western, (NATO) concept. Its function is to bridge the gap between tactics and strategy. It is at this level where the tactical level of battles and engagements are tied together and directed toward achieving strategic goals.

According to Leonhard, the operational level requires planning for campaigns and major operations. It is also the level at which peacekeeping operations, and domestic aid operations are located. He defines this level as:

"The planning level of war that constructs campaigns and major operations in order to accomplish the theatre goals articulated at the strategic planning level; the intermediate planning level that integrates tactical efforts and events into a campaign."²⁰

Richard Simpkin in Race to the Swift states that events exist at the operational level only if they directly impact a theatre, and therefore potentially a strategic goal.²¹ If they do not, then they exist at the tactical level. Such a definition can be somewhat problematic because it works very well in a large-scale war like the Second World War. However, when dealing with an operation that has only one theatre, as in the case of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, or in operations other than war as is the case with the NATO involvement in the former Yugoslavia, the definition is not entirely applicable. In such cases the line blurs between the operational and strategic levels, and as such an event can either exist at one level or another or both, depending on its effects, scope

²⁰ Leonhard, R., *Opcit* p 8.

²¹ As quoted by Leonhard, R., *Ibid* p 9.

and the perspective from which it is viewed. That is to say that if an event conducted at the operational level has strategic implications it may be re-located to the strategic level.

One aspect or element that forms strategy is defensive depth. Defensive depth, like strategy, traditionally evolved from a focus on conducting military operations. As a result, little regard was paid to the concept at the operational and strategic levels. This is because its utility has primarily been seen as a function of geography, largely negated by technological divergence. Moreover, it has also been neglected because depth has been traditionally linked to geography, and the aforementioned technology is perceived to negate the significance of geography. However, historically, Louis XIV and Napoleon's strategic goals have been seen as enlarging France to its natural, geographical boundaries, the Alps, Pyrennes, Atlantic Ocean and the Rhine. Defensive depth therefore has utility geographically, from the perspectives of strategic buffers and terrain and infrastructure, which may be understood by the concept of defence through depth.

General Carl Von Clausewitz spoke of depth formations, or what would now be called echelons, in Principles of War. He referred to it as "the number of corps which are lined up one behind the other." He also speaks of forming and positioning depth formations as "...two thirds or half or still less of the army ...drawn up in front and the rest directly or obliquely behind and hidden."²² Basically, depth is a layering of forces, one behind the other, so as to provide a force posture that not only covers a front, commonly known as the Forward Edge of Battle (FEBA), but is also several layers deep. From a defence perspective, depth seeks to reduce the penetration of an enemy force, because they have to penetrate multiple lines or echelons rather than just one.²³

Such a type of defensive posture depends not only on the composition and number of forces, but also on terrain. From a tactical perspective, natural and manufactured obstacles can aid in this layering. Obstacles such as rivers, mountains, hills, lakes, swamps, or marshes, along

²² Von Clausewitz, General C. Opcit. pp 16 & 17.

²³ Depth is also used in attack. It has become standard practice to layer attacking forces. Usually two thirds of the forces are put into the first layer and one third into the depth layer. This concept is used in all elements of warfare, ground warfare, air warfare and Naval warfare.

with constructed defences, provide an additional layer, which the enemy must penetrate before it can engage the first layer of opposing forces. However, one should not gain the impression that depth is only a defensive tactic; it has offensive operational and strategic utility also.

At the strategic level, depth is relatively synonymous with the idea of buffers and relates primarily to space. Space provides two types of strategic buffers, spatial and temporal. Additionally, space is very closely related to terrain; terrain being an integral consideration of the space within which a military force must operate. It refers to the distance that a given frontier, barrier or expanse of land provides separating a defending nation and a hostile nation. That distance, depending on the size and the type of terrain contained within it, may or may not provide a strategic buffer for a given nation. Space, working in conjunction with terrain, significantly determines how long it will take to traverse a given piece of land. Thus space combined with terrain determines the time that it takes for a given force to cross a given piece of land and therefore reach its objectives. Space and time determine how a nation will defend a specified area. These buffers are the very essence of the geo-politics of strategic depth.

Space in itself is a barrier, just as mountains, and rivers are barriers. However unlike mountains and rivers, it is not geography or terrain that makes up a spatial buffer. It is distance. Space, when considered as a buffer, is therefore essentially the distance that a given buffer provides between nations. It is this space that must be crossed by an invading force if it wishes to engage.

Spatial buffers also provide territory for a defending nation's armed forces to construct defences. It is these defences which provide a number of advantages. They provide the possibility of a layering of defences. They may also provide room for a defending force to manoeuvre so as to counter an enemy offensive. Spatial buffers result from the territory available to deploy forces in order to meet the enemy. It is the ability to meet an enemy, well away from the heart of a nation in unpopulated areas, which makes a spatial buffer useful. A spatial buffer allows a nation to meet an enemy force in an unpopulated region at a safe distance from the core of a nation, so that battle can be joined in such a manner as to protect the vital areas of the nation. Spatial buffers also provide an area where forces can fall back and defend, should the

battle go badly. Spatial buffers are therefore the basic size of a nation or expanse that a nation possesses. They provide territory for the construction of defences, and serve as an obstacle to impede an enemy's advance.

Israel's capture of the Sinai Peninsula in 1967 offers an effective example of a spatial buffer. The Sinai was the single most important factor that allowed the Israelis to fend off the Egyptian attack during the 1973 War. Alongside the additional space or territory acquired, the terrain enhanced Israeli depth. It is a very large region and is comprised of rugged desert that is difficult to traverse overland. It also offered the Suez Canal as a significant water obstacle, along the shores of which, the Israelis were able to construct defences. Mechanised forces could cross the peninsula, only by using the existing roadways or by constructing bridges. There were only four roadways, (five, if one is to consider the shoreline to the south).²⁴ Israeli depth thus enabled it to adopt a different strategic operational doctrine, because it could then afford to absorb an attack rather than act to pre-empt it.

Space and terrain also relate to the idea of a temporal buffer. This buffer provides increased warning time, in the event of attack. Unlike a spatial buffer, a temporal buffer does not provide an expanse of territory for which to deploy forces to join battle, but does allow a nation to move certain core technologies such as radar forward to increase warning and response time from air and missile attack.

One of the best examples of a temporal buffer is the aerospace defence umbrella provided by the North American Aerospace Defence (NORAD) Command. NORAD provided a network of radar and sensors stations deployed around the perimeter of North America to provide early warning in the event of aerospace incursion. The largely unpopulated north of Canada provided the physical buffer in the event of both aircraft and missile attack. The physical distance that they had to travel combined with a forward warning system allowed for warning time to intercept them.

The Sinai Peninsula also offered Israel increased warning time. By occupying the area, Egyptian aircraft had to operate from airfields West of the Suez Canal. This, in terms of a strike

²⁴ Palit, Major General, D.K., Return to the Sinai: The Arab Israeli War 1973. p 53.

against Israel itself, increased warning time from three to five minutes, to fifteen to seventeen minutes. The extra time offered Israeli air defences, and air force, provided a significantly greater lead-time in which to respond.

1.1.1 TERRAIN AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Terrain refers to the shape and topography of the ground. It is the terrain that will dictate the type of defence to be employed. Terrain offers the potential important advantage of natural obstacles. Mountains, rivers, deserts, and oceans are all difficult to breach. They serve to slow an enemy's advance, or channel, or canalise forces into areas that are more easily defensible. These are known as killing zones. Such barriers also afford a nation some protection from external intervention. Great Britain is protected by ocean. The mountains surrounding Switzerland have contributed greatly to its security and thus the viability of its policy of neutrality. Both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans have made North America a near fortress, and contributed to isolationism in the past. The taking of the Sinai Peninsula by Israel in 1967 created a barrier of rugged desert between Israel and Egypt.

Technology, which will be discussed in greater detail later when dealing with nuclear weapons, also has a role to play when considering terrain. It has reduced, but not eliminated, the effectiveness of terrain. The development of air power, and subsequently missiles, greatly diminished the effectiveness of such barriers. Attack aircraft and missiles have the advantage of being able to pass over physical barriers and can therefore negate their effectiveness and strike at the heart of a nation. However, straight air and missile attacks do not incorporate the component of moving ground formations. Air power does have utility for the movement of ground forces through the concept of Airmobility. Airmobility allows a force to be flown to its objective either by transport fixed wing aircraft or helicopter. Forces can then be placed anywhere desired on the battlefield. However, air mobility is dependent on the type and quantity of aircraft and the ability of vulnerable transport aircraft to operate over the battlefield unmolested. Additionally because weight is a factor whenever aircraft are involved, airmobile operations normally allow for only a limited number of lightly equipped troops to be moved at any one time. Large-scale operations still require the bulk of ground forces to be transported overland and such forces still

rely on favourable terrain for mobility. Victory is still measured by the occupation of territory, despite suggesting that it alone can produce victory.

Infrastructure relates to the amount of human development in a given region. It is buildings, roads, communications, electrical, and water systems. Infrastructure works in conjunction with terrain to determine the degree of impassability or functionality of an expanse of land for a given force. Essentially, infrastructure will either aid or impede an enemy forces ability to operate in a given area, and subsequently aid or impede its ability to advance. The same is also true for a defending force. In the Sinai Peninsula for example, the most significant infrastructure there is the road system through the passes. Roads traversing the passes are, in fact, the only means of moving overland across the region to reach Israel, unless one follows the coastal roads. Most significant are the three major passes, the Khatmia, Giddi and Mitla passes. Without control of these key roadways, direct travel across the region is virtually impossible.

Strategic depth is an amalgam of geography, technological considerations and political elements. First, technology has fundamentally changed how strategic depth is both defined and utilised. The most significant technology was the advent of nuclear weapons and delivery systems. Second, the international system, including international agreements, diplomatic initiatives and military aid has served to internationalise a nation's defence. A nation's domestic situation can be considered, but it has relatively little utility here, as strategic depth is a product of external components not domestic issues.²⁵ Technology and the international system will be discussed in turn, and together they will build a comprehensive definition of modern strategic depth.

²⁵ A nation's domestic situation can arguably be considered a component of strategic depth. However because it is an internal pressure, it in reality is not. Its effects are far less obvious or quantifiable outside of a nation's borders than the previously discussed topics. Essentially, the domestic situation as a component of strategic depth concerns the effect that the structure of a defending nation's society has on that nation's defence policy and strategic doctrine, and how significant that effect is. There are three major elements, which make up, and affect the domestic component. They are the homogeneity of population and culture, which to a large extent determines how easily it is to unify that population, in the event of an international exigency. Second is the effect of religion as a unifying force. It can either serve as to bind or divide a nation's population. Finally, there is the degree to which a nation has its population mobilised. This is defined by the size of the nation's armed forces, both regular and reserve, relative to the population of the nation. In fact the size of the reserve force is perhaps the best indicator of the domestic component of strategic depth. Mobilisation of a nation's reserve force indicates how deeply a military tradition is within a given society.

Defensive depth serves as the foundation for the geographic component of Strategic Depth. Geographical Strategic Depth is the obtaining, control, domination or manipulation of territories, either outside national borders, within national borders, or a combination of both, for the purpose of using them as buffer zones, for defence from an adversary. This includes the use of natural and manufactured obstacles, infrastructure and terrain. Geography provides space separating a nation from its enemies, and provides increased warning time in the event of attack. It allows for easier deployment of forces, and allows for a layered defence by providing graduated defensive positions, which also double as fallback positions, should withdrawal become necessary. Buffers finally provide areas within which to deploy, position and manoeuvre forces so as to provide a layered defence. Israel's taking of the occupied territories allowed it to compensate for its territorially shallow nation by acquiring additional territory with which they could extend their borders so as to provide additional space from their enemies. The occupied territories provided increased warning time in the event of attack, by pushing enemy forces farther away from the key centres of Israel. They also provided Israel with the ability to deploy its forces outside its own borders, while still in friendly territory.²⁶

The provision of buffers through geography provides one more advantage; the protection of certain natural resources. Such protection of resources is also a defining concept in geographical Strategic Depth. The best example is Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights. The Jordan River system provided the border between Israel and Syria, (the Golan Heights region). The river system is also one of the principal water resources for Israel. As far back as 1964, the Syrians had threatened to divert its headwaters. With the taking of the Golan Heights in the 1967 War, this threat was eliminated. Israel now controls both shores of the river, and the Sea of Galilee. The buffer in the Golan Heights was therefore instrumental in the protection of a vital water resource.²⁷

The technological component of Strategic Depth is concerned with strategic weapons and forces. In the modern era, this primarily means nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.

²⁶ Herzog, Major General C., The War of Atonement. Chap 1.

²⁷ "The Golan Heights"

When considering the military component of Strategic Depth, no other weapon creates the same situation as strategic nuclear weapons. In the past there were other weapons that were considered strategic in nature. Battleships in the early part of the twentieth century and long-range bomber aircraft of the Second World War are notable examples of early strategic weapons. Battleships allowed nations to project naval power internationally. The B-17 Flying Fortress, and later the B-29, (which became the world's first nuclear bomber), allowed nations to strike from considerable distance. However, it was not until the bombers of the 1950s acquired nuclear payloads that the aircraft attained its true status as a strategic weapon. It was only the nuclear ordinance that made the aircraft such an important strategic weapon. Nuclear weapons therefore, fundamentally changed the definition of strategic weapons. They, like battleships and aircraft, allow nations to project power internationally, and are instrumental in both influencing other nations and planning the defence of nations. However, battleships and aircraft without nuclear payloads do not have the potential to annihilate whole nations; nuclear weapons do. Nuclear weapons consequently, re-defined the concept of deterrence, and deterrence is key in understanding how nuclear weapons factor into strategic depth.

The international system component is not concerned with physical territories; rather it focuses on the external political context of a nation. A defending nation will seek to internationalise itself through diplomacy, with the goal of establishing international alliances so as to provide strategic depth through defence guarantees. Initially, a nation may seek agreements with its closest neighbours, for practical reasons, because they pose either the most immediate threat, or offer the most immediate benefits. By establishing such agreements, a nation obtains greater depth. Basically, a group of nations can bind together in a multilateral agreement in order to defend against a hostile nation or group of nations. It is such an agreement, which provides depth for the member nations, by extending their defensive capabilities. This extension is provided by other member nations who are committed to a collective defence.

Alliances can take three basic forms. First they can be focused on the general state of political relationships within a regional context. NORAD is regional in nature as it focuses on the defence of North American Aerospace. Both Canada and the United States acquired strategic

depth through NORAD with the United States receiving via Canadian territory and Canada via a linkage with a superpower. Second, alliances can focus on forging agreements with other nations external to the region, as is the case with NATO. From the perspective of North America, it was designed to defend against an outside aggressor during the Cold War, namely the USSR. The threat was external to the North America, so by combining with the nations of Western Europe, Canada and the United States acquired strategic depth. By entering into defence agreements with nations closer to the threat, the hope was to contain a potential conflict far from their own borders. Finally, an alliance can take the form of agreements among other nations around a state, in which a state is targeted. Israel's peace agreements with both Egypt and Jordan provide strategic depth by reducing or negating the military threat from these nations through the formal termination of hostilities.

The bottom line is that International agreements are designed to provide guarantees of security. This is especially so in the case of a weaker nation, or nations joining with a stronger nation or nations. The stronger fulfils the role of guarantor in the relationship. It is this guarantor, who provides the most strategic depth for a weaker, should it fall under attack. All of these agreements provide strategic depth through diplomacy. Simply put, strategic depth through international agreements is the seeking of defensive depth through the establishment of international agreements, to provide security for member nations through commitments of all in the agreement.

1.2 CONCLUSION

It is clear that the concept of Strategic Depth is far more complex than the traditional view of geography. It is derived from the two key concepts of Strategy and Depth, and a comprehensive understanding of these two is necessary, in order to understand Strategic Depth in the modern era. Contemporary military forces and technology have caused a fundamental shift in the application of both Strategy and Depth, and therefore requires that strategic depth be re-evaluated.

CHAPTER II

1948-1967: THE QUEST FOR STRATEGIC DEPTH THROUGH GEOGRAPHY

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In May 1948 the British mandate in Palestine ended and the fledgling nation of Israel was created. Within hours of the British mandate ending, David Ben-Gurion announced that the nation of Israel now existed. Within hours of that announcement, the surrounding Arab nations, outraged at the prospect of land being taken from the Palestinian people, attacked, and Israel's war of independence had begun. It was during those early years up to the 1967 war, that the traditional view of strategic depth as a function of geography was the overriding factor that drove Israeli strategic doctrine. The geography of the region, coupled with the size and shape of the new nation, created a significant defence dilemma. Israel was very small and its odd configuration made it very difficult to defend. This combined with a lack of unity within the government, and with meagre armed forces, made the defence of the new state seem untenable.

Israel had certain "...fundamental strategic inadequacies – serious flaws borne of an unremitting sense of vulnerability and the constant threat and occurrence of war."¹ It was a nation surrounded by enemies, because much of the Arab world supported the Palestinian Arabs, who were seen as having been forcibly removed from their homes. Israel's enemies had virtually every strategic advantage that one could imagine; greater population, greater financial resources,

¹ Handel, M.I. "The Evolution of Strategy: The Psychology of Insecurity and the Quest for Absolute Security." Taken From The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War. Edited by Murry, W., Macgregor, K., and Bernstein, A., P 534

greater military forces, and greater access to military technology.² All of this served to set the stage for the development of a siege mentality in Israel, which continues today.

Israel seemed to have all of the strategic inadequacies that would predict its likely destruction. This analysis does not attempt to explain why Israel survived or prevailed in war, but rather to understand the significance of strategic depth to its defence. The geography of Israel, combined with it being surrounded by enemies, dictated an offensive and pre-emptive defence policy and strategic doctrine. It also forced Israel to seek strategic depth largely through geography in order to ensure its survival.

The period between 1948 and 1967 was characterised by a lack of strategic depth through geography. "The notion of secure defensible borders is a post Six - Day War addition to the prevailing concept of national security in Israel."³ It was precisely because Israel had borders impossible to secure that the nation adopted a strategic doctrine of pre-emption. In order to examine this process, three key periods must be discussed. The first is the birth of Israel and the geo-political situation that it was born into. One must understand how that situation led to the 1948 War of Independence, as it was these first few years of Israel's existence that would set its national psyche. The second period is the 1950s, including the 1956 Suez War, which was a period of border skirmishes and a growing feeling of insecurity. The final period is the decade of the 1960s and growing strategic pressure on Israel, which culminated in the 1967 Six-Day War, which fundamentally shifted Israel's defence requirements.

2.1 1948 – THE BIRTH OF ISRAEL AND THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

In the early morning hours of May 15, the fledgling nation of Israel was attacked, virtually from all flanks⁴. Israel's small, broken territory, combined with the relatively splintered factions

² Ibid.

³ Horowitz, D., "Israel's Concept of Defensible Borders." P 5

⁴ The Israeli war of independence actually occurred in two distinct parts. Fighting actually began even before the nation was formed, beginning the day after the United Nations' resolution for the partition of Palestine was adopted on November 30th, 1947, and carrying on to May 14th, 1948. The actual War of Independence began on May 15th, 1948 the day after Israel declared its independence. Neither of these two parts or stages is more significant than the other, however since this work is dealing with the defence of the formalised nation of Israel, only the second stage of the war will be dealt with.

that had not yet become the Israeli Military, made defence of the nation seem untenable. Figure 2.1⁵ shows the UN partition plan. From it, the precarious situation of Israel becomes frighteningly apparent. The United Nations had originally planned for an area of about 6000 square miles for the new nation, which was eventually reduced to 5,500 square miles. Israel was also broken into three main areas. In the north there was an area between ten and twenty miles wide, encompassing the area west of Jordan and south of Lake Tiberias. The second part was a long narrow strip from Acre extending down the Mediterranean coast to Ashdod, which was at some points less than ten miles in width. The third region encompassed the triangle that is the Negev. The area around Jerusalem was to be under international control.⁶

The UN solution was unacceptable to both the Arabs and the Jews. The Arabs believed that any territory given to the Jews was stolen from them. The Jews saw the area as being their ancestral home, with a god given right to return. Additionally, they wanted an area large enough to build a nation and uniform enough so they could defend it. The situation made both sides realise that war was both unavoidable and imminent. The Arabs were outraged at the loss of a Palestinian homeland, and the Jews were willing to defend, to the death, their new nation.⁷

2.1.0 THE MILITARY FORCES IN 1948

The Arab factions, though vastly better equipped than the Israeli military, were also splintered. The major division in the Arab ranks occurred between Emir Abdulla of Transjordan (now the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan) and the rest of the Arab nations. However there were additional sub-divisions within the Arab factions. Abdulla believed he should be the sole occupier of all of those territories allotted to the Arabs by the 1947 United Nations partition plan. He felt justified because he already had forces in Israel, which were raised in conjunction with the British during their mandate.⁸ Many of the other Arab nations also had designs on Palestine.

⁵ Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.israel-mfa.gov.il.

⁶ Carver, Field Marshal, Lord M., War Since 1945. Pp 10 & 11.

⁷ The new nation of Israel included the holy city of Jerusalem. It was and is perhaps the most significant objective of the long conflict between the Arabs and Jews, as Jerusalem is considered to be the centre of not only the Jewish and Muslim religions; it is also a focal point of Christianity. Control of Jerusalem was an objective that both sides steadfastly refused to give up.

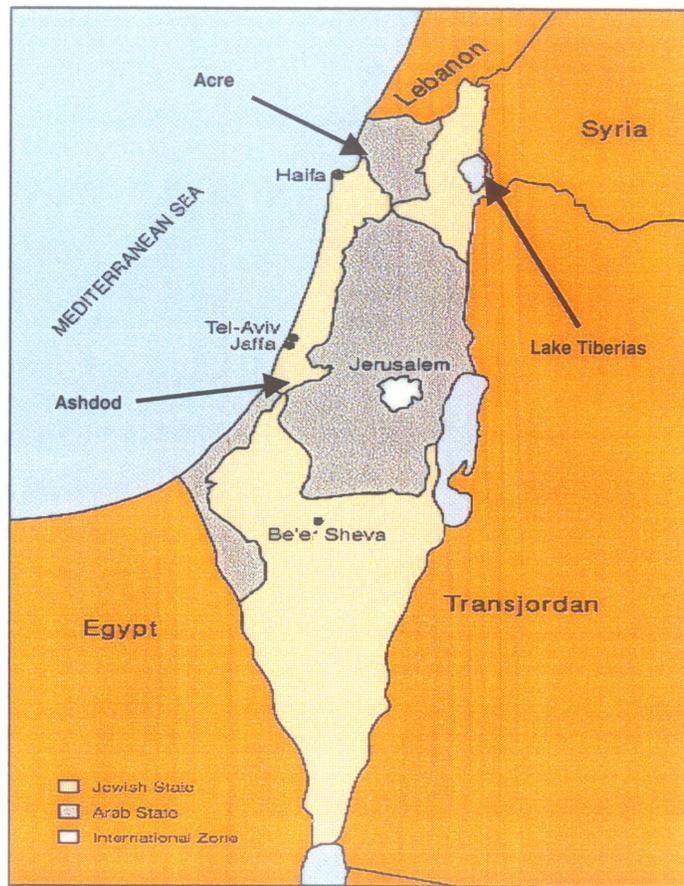
⁸ Ibid. P 235.

Strategic depth is still a function of geography, however it is also a function of two additional non-traditional components, technology and international agreements. Technology has changed forever the conduct of wars. Advances in strategic weapons like aircraft, missiles and nuclear weapons, have fundamentally changed warfare in the modern era. Technology has introduced the concept of Total War. War's effects now have an element of totality, involving entire societies. It is a totality, which prior to the twentieth century, did not exist. War now affects and involves everyone. Civilians are killed along with soldiers, and nuclear weapons spare no one. All of this has caused strategy to move outside the realm of just the conduct of military operations and onto the political scene involving it in defence policy and strategic doctrine.

A similar transformation has occurred with the concept of Defensive Depth. It was once considered to be part of an army's defence on the battlefield. That has changed as a result of the same advances and changes, which affected Strategy. Depth has also moved into the realm of defence policy and planning. It is a concept, which is now applied to the defence of a nation, as a whole. Together these two concepts have merged, and formed the concept of Strategic Depth. It is strategic, because it is now applied to the defence of a nation as a whole and depth because it involves the layering of defences, geographically, technologically and diplomatically.

The belief that depth is only possible simply through the acquisition of territory is no longer true. In the modern era strategic depth must include the non-traditional components of technology and the international system, for it to be viable. Nations in the modern era strive to place as many layers within their defences as possible. These layers must include strategic weapons and international agreements. The traditional and non-traditional components provide the necessary buffers that a nation needs to defend itself. It is only through a combination of all of these components, that true, modern Strategic Depth can be achieved.

The Mufti of Jerusalem sought to expand his rule to include an Arab state encompassing the whole of Palestine. Egypt had designs on southern Palestine, while Syria and Lebanon both wanted to secure the area around Galilee. As a result, the three principle Arab military forces that attacked Israel had their own differing objectives. The first was a rather motley group of irregulars lead by a loyal cousin of the Mufti. The second, lead by Abdulla, was the Arab Legion, which included Egyptian forces. Finally, there was the Arab Liberation Army, based in the Galilee area and lead by a rather disreputable mercenary called Fawzi el Kaujki. This force was made up of Arabs living in the area and volunteers from neighbouring countries.⁹



The Partition Plan, 1947
U.N. General Assembly Resolution 181

Figure 2.1

⁹ Ibid.

One key problem that Israel faced over and above geography was the fact that all of the Jewish splinter groups, which would eventually form the Israeli Defence Force, (IDF),¹⁰ were not united, and a formal military did not yet exist. Additionally, all of these groups were not well trained or armed, and did not even have enough rifles for every soldier. With the exception of a few machine guns and some crudely fashioned 'home made' guns, they were also virtually devoid of heavy weapons.¹¹ The lack of an organised military, the need for the consolidation of territory and creation of buffers became even more critical, with mobilisation as a key factor in defence.

The Yishuv or 'community', which was based on the British Jewish Special Police, stood at approximately 45,000 men and women¹². The Hagana, which was largest and best known of all the groups, most resembled an army. It was frantically building two corps, the HISH and the HIM. The HISH or Field Army was made up of men aged 18 to 25 years and the HIM or Garrison Army was comprised of men over the age of 25. By late 1947 the HISH consisted of some 9,500 soldiers and was organised into "Area Commands" which later became brigades named after those areas. The HIM numbered approximately 32,000 soldiers. The third Major group, the Palmach, was the only regular force group, unlike the other organisations which were mostly reserve force personnel. The Palmach had some 2,100 regular soldiers with an additional 1,000 reserves. There were also two other smaller organisations operating; the Etzel more commonly known as the Irgun with some 5,000 members and the Lehi with 1,000 members.¹³

Although the Arab invasion occurred on May 15, it was not until May 28 that the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) formally came into being. The IDF combined all of the previously discussed factions with the exception of the Irgun and the Lehi factions operating in the Jerusalem area. Irgun and Lehi forces elsewhere became part of the IDF. It was not until September 1948 that all of the Irgun and Lehi forces officially became part of the IDF¹⁴. On the surface the IDF seemed to

¹⁰ During these early years there were many groups, which fought to defend Israel, they were all eventually amalgamated into the IDF. For simplicity in this work unless a there is a reference to the actions of a specific group, the all encompassing term IDF will be used to identify the Jewish forces.

¹¹ IDF Spokesman, Information Branch, "Israel's Wars." P 2.

¹² Israel from the very beginning did employ women in combat roles. It was perhaps, more out of the necessity for numbers rather than an equalisation between the sexes, however the precedent was set.

¹³ Ibid. Pp 2 and 3.

¹⁴ Ibid. P 9.

be a unified force. This, however, was not the case. The various factions maintained their respective identities virtually throughout the entire length of the war. They were deployed as separate factions and conducted operations as separate factions. Even though the Hagana was the largest faction, and formed the general staff of the IDF, it was not always able to control all of the other factions and a great deal of internal conflict occurred.¹⁵ Fortunately for the IDF, the Arabs were not unified either, and this was the single most important factor in enabling Israel to fend them off. Due to small numbers, a lack of unity and proper equipment within the IDF, it was forced into an unusual yet effective strategy, which they called "Active Defence."

The IDF was incapable of mounting a large-scale counter-offensive sufficient to throw back the Arab forces. Therefore in the initial stages of the war, all they could hope to achieve was to hold what territory they had, and to prevent the enemy from gaining too solid a foothold. This new strategy became known as the active defence, and was one of a "combination of defensive and offensive actions."¹⁶

Since the IDF was small and fragmented, a single line of defence was also impossible. It was therefore decided that each area, settlement, or Kibbutz would mobilise its own defences. This freed up the small IDF to launch limited offensive actions against the Arab forces in order to destroy their ability to fight effectively. Since a war of attrition would spell death for the IDF, and thus the end of the new state, the IDF adopted a highly manoeuvrist approach to warfare. It had to pre-empt the enemy's operations, by using surprise hit and run tactics and finding the weakest areas.

The strategy of active defence is of vital significance to the understanding of the Israeli psyche and the formulation of its strategic doctrine, prior to 1967. It was that type of strategy and warfare that would dominate Israeli strategists from then on. Men like David Ben-Gurion, Moshe

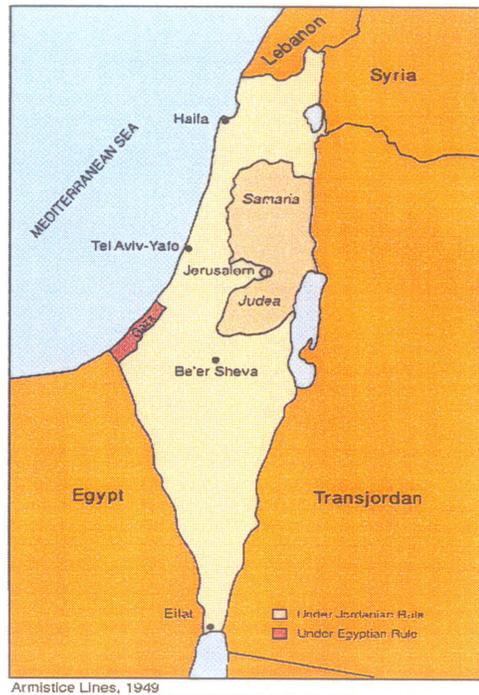
¹⁵ The disunity came to a head shortly after the first cease-fire came into effect. Count Folke Bernadotte, President of the Swedish Red Cross, was appointed as the UN mediator in Palestine. With him came several hundred Military Observers from various Western nations. On September 17, 1948 he was murdered by the Lehi allegedly for his report recommending a partition plan of his own, based on the rights of the area inhabitants included in that the majority of the Negev region would be ceded to the Arabs. (Carver, *Opcit.* Pp 236, 237).

¹⁶ IDF Spokesman, *Opcit.* P 9.

Dayan, Yigal Allon and Menachem Begin, who would later become key figures in the Israeli military and politics, would be forever influenced by their experience in the War of Independence.

2.2 THE END OF THE WAR AND EARLY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

The war ended in mid 1949 with a cease fire agreement.¹⁷ No formal peace agreement with any of the Arab nations was signed, and Israel technically remained at war with all of them; a condition which dominated Israeli history for most of the next 50 years.¹⁸ Figure 2.2¹⁹ illustrates Israel at the end of the war. The absence of a formalised peace agreement in the region was a major contributor to the Israeli siege mentality.



Armistice Lines, 1949

Figure 2.2

¹⁷ The end of the War of Independence can best be described as a tenuous series of cease-fire agreements. On March 23rd an armistice was signed with Lebanon. On April 3rd one was struck with Jordan, and on July 20th an agreement which included a demilitarised zone was signed with Syria. Egypt also claimed to remain at war with Israel and refused to pursue a permanent peace agreement at the time. Additionally, Israel did not negotiate an armistice agreement with Iraq at all, and technically Iraq remains at war, without a cease fire agreement, with Israel to this day. (Kurzman, D., *Genesis 1948: The First Arab-Israeli War*. Pp 710, 711.)

¹⁸ It was not until the 1979 treaty with Egypt that the first peace in the region was realised.

¹⁹ Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.israel-mfa.gov.il.

Israel however, was able to improve its position significantly. The Israelis were able to link together much of their fragmented territory in order to provide them with a more uniform border than allotted by the partition plan, (figure 2.1). However, the new areas did not provide any sort of significant geographical strategic depth. Israel was still a "...territorially-shallow nation surrounded by enemies with far greater populations, financial resources, military forces, and access to military technology."²⁰

In order to provide some perspective, one need only examine some of the proportions of the region, as illustrated in figure 2.3²¹. In the area of the West Bank, Israel is only 9 miles or 14 kilometres wide at its narrowest point. From Egypt's forward air base at El Arish (about 30 miles from the Israeli border, on the Mediterranean coast), modern jet aircraft could fly to Tel Aviv in 12 minutes. From Syria and Jordan the flight time is three to five minutes (figure 2.4²²). Additionally, Jordan, Syria and Egypt could, cover most of Israel with rockets and artillery, with the most significant threat coming from the West Bank, (figure 2.5²³).

Geography meant that the strategy of an "Active Defence" had to be retained, expanded, and developed into a working strategy between wars. In any conflict, Israel would be in a struggle for survival, which meant that the loss of any war meant certain death for the small nation. Geography therefore directly led to the first of three steps in the development of a formalised Israeli strategic doctrine of pre-emption or first strike. David Ben-Gurion perhaps summed up the strategic imperative best in 1955:

"...From our point of view there can never be a final battle. We can never assume we can deliver one final blow to the enemy that will be the last battle, after which there will never be the need for another clash or the danger of war will be eliminated. The situation for our neighbours is the opposite. They can assume that a final battle will be the last one, that they may be able to deliver such a blow to Israel that the Arab - Israeli problem will be liquidated."²⁴

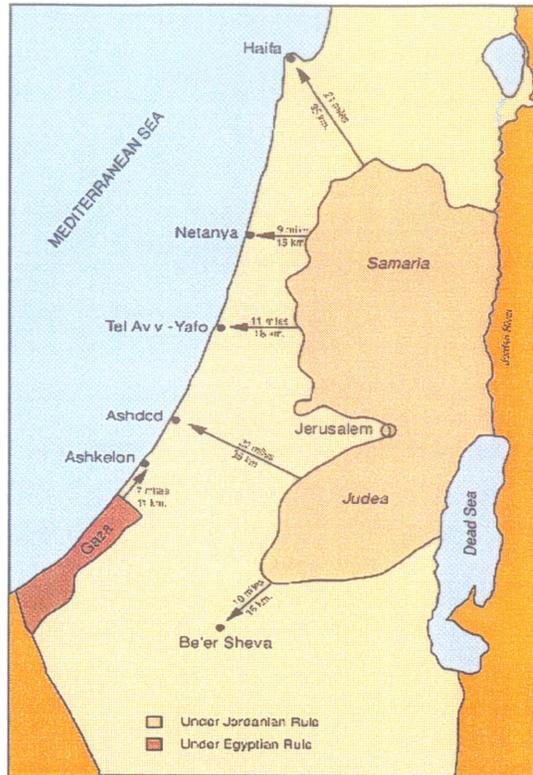
²⁰ Handel, M.I., *Opcit.* P 534.

²¹ Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.israel-mfa.gov.il

²² Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.israel-mfa.gov.il

²³ Gilbert, M., *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Its History in Maps*. Pp 54, 55 and Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.israel-mfa.gov.il.

²⁴ *Ibid*, P 537, as quoted fro Ilan Amit and Naomi Avigadol, "Notes on the History of the Israeli Concept of National Security," Mimeographed (Haifa, October 1987), P 14.

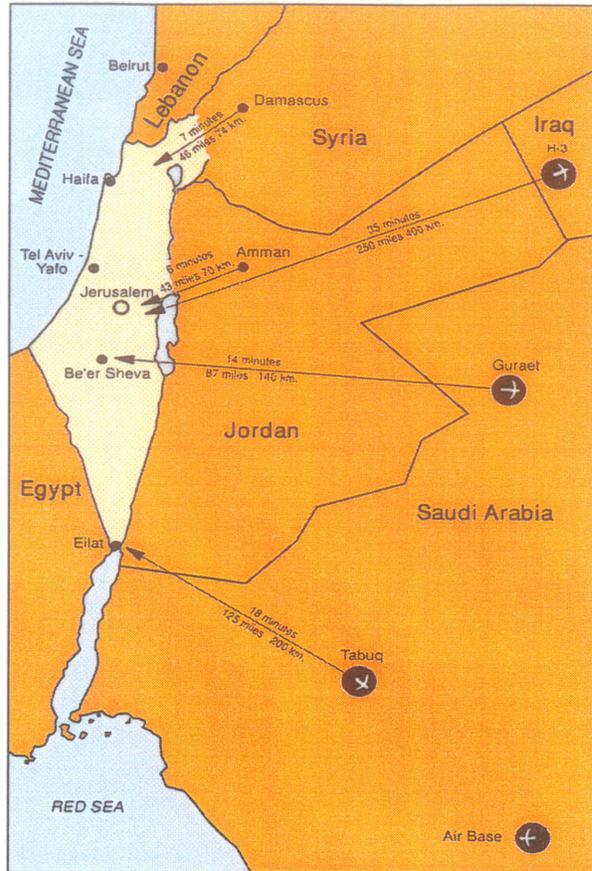


Distances between Israeli Population Centers and the Pre-1967 Lines

Figure 2.3

He accurately echoed most Israeli strategists at the time, who believed that final victory against the Arabs was impossible. Ben-Gurion and his contemporaries believed that they had to "carry the battle into the enemy's territory."²⁵ The first concept was the *Haganah Merchavit* or "Peripheral or Territorial Defence." This concept came about as a result of not only a lack of territorial depth, but also a large standing army, which amplified the problems of geography. It necessitated a heavy reliance on a reserve force, and was based upon the establishment of a paramilitary reserve force called *Nahal*. By raising a *Nahal* in each border settlement and then fortifying those settlements, it was hoped that in the event of an attack the settlements could hold out, repel, or contain the enemy until they could be reinforced by the IDF, and additional reserves could be mobilised.

²⁵ Horowitz, D., *Opcit.* P 5.



The Aerial Distances and Flight Times to Israel

Figure 2.4

The second step became known as that of *Af Sha'al* or "not yielding an inch." It was the immediate predecessor to Israel's "First Strike" doctrine, and was developed directly as a result of the geographical strategic imperative. Simply, *Af Sha'al* meant that under no circumstances could Israel afford to trade space for time in any sort of military engagement, because it was so territorially shallow. If it were to do so, it would have no areas to fall back upon. A fall back position for Israel would be the Mediterranean Sea.²⁶

Those first two concepts ultimately lead to the third step in the development of Israeli strategic doctrine; the adoption of a pre-emptive strategic doctrine or "First Strike." Israel's relatively little territorial depth, combined with a small in population, required it to meet any enemy outside of its borders should war come. Pre-emption became the order of the day. However,

²⁶ Handel, M.I., Opcit. P 536.

following a policy of pre-emption was a dangerous approach to take for a nation as vulnerable as Israel. If it was going to strike, it would have to ensure reasonably, that it could achieve victory so as to avoid a protracted war of attrition, which would be disastrous.

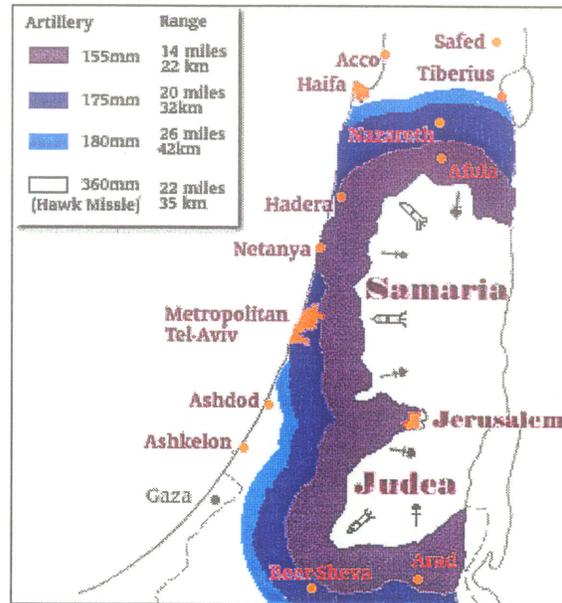


Figure 2.5

Fear of being unprepared to repel an attack was the primary motivator for Israel. It could be easily overwhelmed by a surprise attack. Therefore, Israel's only choice was to strike the enemy first. As a result, the Israelis intended to base their entire strategic doctrine on pre-emption or "interceptive" operations as they called them. It was a policy that permeated through both the operational and strategic levels of warfare.²⁷

There were other considerations, which led Israel to reject a purely defensive strategic doctrine and defence policy. Because Israel lacked spatial and temporal buffers as a result of its

²⁷ Handel, M.I., Opcit, P 538.

geographical situation, it had to reject the strategy of "absorption followed by counter-attack."²⁸ Israel, as already discussed, could not afford to give up any space in any armed conflict.

There were grave international issues that Israel also had to consider, which supported a policy of pre-emption. If it were attacked there was the danger that a conflict could be settled diplomatically, by an outside agency, during the initial stages of war. If the conflict was settled externally before a counter-attack could allow them to retake lost territory, then Israel would be further disadvantaged, geographically, which it could not afford. Consequently, Israel felt that it could not afford to be attacked at all.

In order for Israel to maintain an effective pre-emptive doctrine, it had to identify key strategic indicators of war, or strategic triggers. Israel defended its borders by developing strategic triggers, which if tripped, constituted an act of war. Initially it established four key strategic triggers as follows: the establishment of a unified Arab military command, any significant military build-up on, or near its borders, threats to its economy, international trade or resources and threats to the safety of its citizens or interests from cross border harassment.

In conjunction with the establishment of strategic triggers, Israel needed to establish an exceptionally competent intelligence system. If Israel's strategic triggers were to be of any use, it needed to ensure that it was always acutely aware of military movements in the neighbouring Arab nations. Israel soon began to regard their intelligence network as a "first line of defence."²⁹ Additionally, by 1967, Israel became the only country in the world to recognise its intelligence branch as an arm comparable in status to the army, navy and air force. The Mosad became internationally recognised as one of the most effective intelligence gathering organisations in the world, and also one of the most secretive.

²⁸ Horowitz, D., *Opcit.* P 7.

²⁹ *Ibid.* Pp 540, 541.

2.3 THE 1950s: TERRORISM, BORDER SKIRMISHES AND GROWING NATIONAL INSECURITY

The Israeli war of independence was not terminated on favourable terms for the Arab nations by any means. They would have continued the fighting, if in fact, they had been able. They had obviously not achieved their goal of destroying the state of Israel, and they did not relish the fact that they had to make concessions to it. Additionally, because the war ended with armistice agreements, the Arab nations led by Egypt,³⁰ believed that it was not truly over and that it could, should, and would be continued. Their plan was to continue the war through unconventional means at first and later through a conventional military offensive.

In addition to the de facto Arab defeat, numerous international factors came into play that further complicated the situation. First, there were the vague conditions of the armistice agreements, especially concerning the demilitarised zones. Second, the Arabs refused to enter into peace negotiations. Finally, there was a "lack of progress"³¹ in solving certain basic issues and problems among the belligerents, including the issue of Palestinian refugees. Nine hundred thousand Palestinian Arabs had been driven from their homes into overcrowded refugee camps in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Additionally, the armistice lines had been hastily drawn with little regard for village boundaries and water rights.³²

The Arabs continued the conflict covertly. They sought to continue the war against Israel by initiating a war of terrorism, poorly organised at first, and later state sponsored primarily by Egypt. The use of terrorism in the early 1950's became more and more prevalent, as the refugee Palestinians and other Arabs, began to organise and form terrorist "gangs."³³ This further sensitised Israel to the fact that without geographic strategic depth, it was vulnerable to terrorism and unable to secure its borders from within. Palestinian terrorists, operating out of the Gaza

³⁰ During this period, under King Farouk and later under Gamil Abdel Nasser, Egypt envisioned itself as the leader of the Arab world. Nasser especially, saw Egypt as the rallying point for what could be best described as pan-Arabism and the anti-Zionist movement, bent on the destruction of Israel. It was under the banner of this trans-national linkage that most of the Arab nations followed Egypt and Nasser.

³¹ IDF Spokesman, Opcit. P 16.

³² Hutchinson, E.H., Violent Truce: A Military Observer Looks at The Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1951 - 1955. Pp XXV, XXVI.

³³ IDF Spokesman, Opcit. P 16.

Strip and West Bank, began by targeting and sabotaging the Israeli infrastructure. The Israelis, frustrated with the Palestinian presence in what they believed was their land, formed gangs of their own. From 1951 to 1955 there were attacks by both sides.

As the terrorism continued the Arabs became more organised. Egypt became directly involved, when the Egyptian army began to recruit and train the *Fedayeen*.³⁴ In 1955 two significant events occurred which escalated the conflict. First, the Fedayeen began to expand their area of operations, by striking from bases in Jordan and Syria. Second, the Israeli government, through their now extensive intelligence network, was able to find evidence to prove that the Egyptian government and military was involved in supporting the Fedayeen. Until the summer of 1955, Egypt had denied involvement in the operations of, and responsibility for, the Fedayeen. However, on August 26 they reversed their stand and officially acknowledged the Fedayeen, and acclaimed them as "national heroes."³⁵ In early 1955, when their attacks were at their worst, the Israeli government changed its approach to terrorism. Israel began to use its military to retaliate directly, and the reprisals continued up until the outbreak of the Suez war.

In 1951 Egypt blockaded the Suez Canal to all shipping bound for Israel. Any ship dealing with Israel was refused the use of the Suez Canal. Egypt, realising that it was not yet capable of mounting a successful military offensive against Israel, sought to strangle Israel economically.³⁶ The blockade soon began to have grave economic consequences for Israel.

In early 1955 Great Britain, at the insistence of Egypt, removed its forces from the Canal Zone. Without British forces to act as a check on the Egyptians, nothing was in place to stop Egypt from mobilising in the Sinai and striking Israel. From that point on, Israel would view any significant military build-up on, or near its borders as a strategic trigger.

³⁴ The Fedayeen was organised, trained, and paid by the Egyptians. Their Headquarters was at Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip, and it was from there that they launched the majority of their raids. Henriques, R., 100 Hours to Suez. Pp 23, 24.

³⁵ Ibid, P 24.

³⁶ As long as British forces were still in the area of the Suez, an Egyptian military build up in the peninsula, sufficient in size to strike Israel was not possible. That was to change in 1955, as will be discussed. However until that time Egypt would have to be content with actions other than direct military conflict. It therefore, turned to terrorism, and sabotage against Israel's economy. (Carver, M., P 240).

An additional threat emerged in September 1955 when Egypt extended its blockade to the Gulf of Aqaba,³⁷ further restricting Israeli shipping, and moving closer to tripping Israel's strategic trigger regarding the security of its economy and international trade. Egypt accomplished the Gulf blockade by garrisoning the hamlet of Ras Nasrani and Sharm El Sheikh in the Straits of Tiran. They fortified these two areas with naval batteries and over two thousand troops.³⁸ Moreover, the fact that Egyptian forces moved into the region at all was a significant threat. Additionally, those forces effectively blockaded the entire gulf and completely stopped all trade in and out of the Israeli port of Elath. Only the ports on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean were open to trade, and any shipping from the Far East had to come via the Cape of Good Hope around South Africa. Egypt's actions soon created a situation, which Israel was unable to tolerate.

The Arab League further sought to augment the Egyptian blockade, and increase economic pressure by organising a complete economic boycott of Israel. It allowed no trade or communication of any sort between its members and Israel. Additionally, its members refused to have any dealings with any firm or corporation, which had dealings with Israel. The boycott was soon expanded outside of the region,³⁹ and by late 1955 included not only Israel, but also Jewish businesses worldwide. The boycott extended also to the UN and other agencies.⁴⁰

There were two final incidents in 1955 and in 1956, which convinced Israel that it had to strike in the Sinai. First, in September of 1955, Egypt concluded a major arms deal with Czechoslovakia.⁴¹ Such a deal was clearly done under the auspices of the Soviet Union, and was the first clear indication of Soviet involvement in the region. The arms deal was clearly

³⁷ It must be noted that the name of the Gulf was even a source of controversy. Depending on the source it is either referred to as the Gulf of Aqaba, if one is reading an Arab or British source, or the Gulf of Eilat if one is reading an Israeli source. Both Eilat and Aqaba are located at the northern most point of the Gulf and sit perpendicular to each other. The controversy is very similar in nature to the dispute over the Falkland Islands. The British refer to them as the Falklands while the Argentineans refer to them as Las Malvinas. For ease of clarity the Gulf will be referred to as Aqaba for this work.

³⁸ Henriques, R., Chapter 1.

³⁹ It involved international agreements governing air traffic, as the Arab League decreed that no aircraft bound for Israel could enter any Arab airspace, and no aircraft coming from Israel could land in Arab territory, even in the event of an emergency. It also included all communication between the aircraft and the ground, and incidents of jamming even occurred.

⁴⁰ Arab officials began to boycott UN specialised agencies, which had Jewish members and delegates, regardless of their nationality. Some Arab states also refused to allow Jewish delegates to attend conferences of any specialised agency held in their countries, again regardless of nationality. Ibid.

⁴¹ IDF Spokesman, P 16.

dangerous to Israel for two key reasons. First, it meant that Egypt had initiated a significant military build up, likely with the intention of attacking Israel. Second, and perhaps more importantly, it marked a shift in political alignments. Prior to 1955 Egypt and other nations of the Arab League had procured most of their arms from the west, primarily Great Britain and the United States. These arms purchases were at the time, relatively small.

The shift to the Soviet Union meant that the Arab nations would have access to a greater volume of arms and much more advanced arms than the West was willing to supply.⁴² It marked the beginning of a dramatic shift in the political balance of the region. It also meant that the potential for a dramatic change in the balance of power in favour of the Arabs was possible. If there was a 'silver lining' for this rapidly growing 'cloud' over Israel, it was a shift in the West's political allegiances, and priorities in the region. The United States became more sympathetic to Israel, because it felt it had to counter Soviet involvement.

The Arab shift in political alignment forced Israel to recognise the following issues. It had to decide quickly if and when it should strike. Israel could be too easily overwhelmed if the Arab military build-up exceeded Israel's ability to counter it. Second, if it did strike it would most likely receive support from the Western powers, which were eager to maintain influence in the region. The latter would become a significant factor in the Suez War.

The second major event was the movement of Egyptian forces into the Sinai, and a strengthening of Egyptian positions already in place. On October 24, 1956 a joint Egyptian-Syrian-Jordanian military command was established, headed by an Egyptian Chief of Staff, General Amer. The establishment of a unified Arab military command was a key strategic trigger because it indicated just how organised, militarily, the Arab nations were.

As a result of the unified command, the Arab League proposed to send Iraqi troops into Jordan to assist with internal security. Such a plan created two key problems for Israel. First, it violated the armistice agreement in place with Jordan. The agreement specifically stated that Iraq must withdraw its troops from Jordan, and ensure that it did not station troops inside the

⁴² The west was not in a position to supply certain types of weaponry because of restrictions placed on it by the Eisenhower Tripartite Agreement.

Jordanian borders. Second, it created a potential conflict with Great Britain, should the Israelis take military action, because of the Anglo-Jordanian treaty.⁴³ However, England was involved in a conflict of its own with Egypt, over the Suez Canal.

On July 26 1956, Nasser announced that he would nationalise the Suez Canal. It was unacceptable to the British, and French, who were the two major stockholders in the former Suez Canal Company, and had vested interests in the region. Along with the Americans, who had become increasingly involved in the region, the British and the French strongly protested nationalisation. Nasser countered by labelling the opposition as a "form of collective colonialism."⁴⁴ The British and French soon decided that they must take action, and began to lay plans for a military operation ("Musketeer"),⁴⁵ aimed at securing the canal region. They also began to negotiate secretly with the Israelis in order to mount a joint military action.

Such an action if successful, would solve a great deal of Israel's security issues in the Sinai region. Additionally, as long as Israel was not in direct conflict with Jordan, the integrity of the Anglo-Jordanian treaty would be maintained, and Israel would have allies in the region. Such an alliance afforded Israel an additional measure of security in that it provided strategic depth through an international agreement. This served to boost Israel's confidence if it struck in the Sinai.

The 'die was cast,' by October 1956. The united Arab military command virtually solidified the Arab encirclement of Israel. Israel realised that it was only a matter of time before the Arabs attacked. The united Arab military command was the last element required to trip Israel's strategic triggers.

2.3.0 THE SUEZ WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

Israel began to mobilise on October 25th, one day after the formation of the unified Arab military command. On October 28th it made the decision to launch the attack, and on October 29th

⁴³ Henriques, R. Opcit. Chapter 1.

⁴⁴ Donovan, R.J., Six Days in June: Israel's Fight for Survival. P 32.

⁴⁵ Carver, M. Pp 240, 241.

Israel struck in the Sinai. The Sinai Campaign, or Operation “Kadesh” was a prime example of a pre-emptive war. Figure 2.6⁴⁶ illustrates the operation.

For Israel, there were three primary strategic objectives; the destruction of the Fedayeen bases in the Gaza Strip and on the Sinai border; the prevention of an Egyptian attack, by destroying Egypt’s logistical network and airfields in Sinai, and finally the opening of the Gulf of Aqaba to allow trade in and out of the Port of Eilat.⁴⁷ At wars end, all of their goals were achieved.



Figure 2.6

Israel was motivated to strike for the two primary reasons, as detailed by Reiter; fear and the reasonable expectation of success. Fear as previously discussed, was that Egypt and the

⁴⁶Jewish Virtual Library, www.us-israel.org.

⁴⁷IDF Spokesman, *Opcit.* P 16.

unified Arab military command would be able to build up sufficient military force so as to invade, overwhelm and destroy Israel. In addition, the Israelis were convinced that it was only a matter of time before the Arabs did in fact attack. Israel had to make the decision to attack first in order to prevent a surprise offensive by the Arabs. The reasonable prospect for success came in the form of the proposed Anglo-French military operation. It was the intention of the British and the French to launch an attack to seize the canal region, and ensure that it would remain open to international shipping. Through secret negotiations, the Israelis arranged to co-ordinate their attack with the British and the French. Moshe Dayan, the Israeli Chief of Staff at the time, was sceptical of the British and French intentions. He was therefore careful to plan his attack in such a way so that if the British and French did not fulfil their obligations, and delayed or cancelled their attack, Israeli forces would be in a position to be withdrawn before great loss was incurred.⁴⁸

The Suez campaign was the first large-scale conflict since the War of Independence. It was also the first time that the IDF was committed to a mid to high intensity conflict, and it was also the first war that the Israelis had initiated themselves. All of this meant that there were a number of variables, which made the outcome difficult to predict. What was not anticipated was the poor showing of the Egyptian forces that spent more time withdrawing than they did fighting. They simply were neither expecting, nor prepared for such an attack. The element of surprise, combined with Israel's ability to seize and hold the initiative, proved the IDF to be a professional and skilled force capable of manoeuvre warfare.

The attack shattered much of the Egyptian forces' will to fight. When it came on October 29th, few envisioned that it would be over in just four days. In 100 hours the IDF was ten miles from the Suez Canal, and by November 5th the war was over. When the fighting had ceased, the IDF had captured the Gaza Strip and nearly all of the Sinai Peninsula, with the exception of a ten-mile buffer around the Canal, which was occupied by the British and French. The Israelis for the first time had a spatial strategic buffer against their most dangerous enemy, affording them a measure of strategic depth through geography.

⁴⁸ Carver, M. Pp 240 -244.

It is likely that Israel would have held this territory were it not for pressure from the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Nations to withdraw. Importantly, the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), which was established to stabilise the region, was essential in the Israeli decision to acquiesce. The deployment of UNEF served virtually the same purpose as Israeli occupation, with no cost. It kept terrorist activity down and the Straits of Tiran open to shipping. Israel withdrew from the Sinai in December 1956 and in March 1957 it withdrew from the Gaza Strip and Sharm El Sheikh in the Gulf. With UNEF forces in place, Israel still had its strategic buffer. Additionally, its military performance during the Suez War commanded a great deal of respect internationally.

The results of the Suez War did not change Israel's strategic situation dramatically, nor did it greatly affect its strategic imperatives. In fact, as with the First World War, the seeds for the cause of the next war lay in the settlement of the Suez War. The settlement arrangements sowed the seeds for the outbreak of the Six-Day War in 1967. Even with the UN in the Sinai, Israel was still vulnerable, and was destined to know no peace following 1956.

The period of 1957 to 1964 was relatively quiet; a lull in the Arab-Israeli conflict. It could even be classified as a "long truce,"⁴⁹ since it was the longest period of relative calm in the long running conflict. Terrorism continued. However, as a result of the virtual destruction of the Fedayeen in the Gaza strip, it was carried out only by small poorly organised bands of disgruntled Palestinian refugees. Additionally, the Arab League nations became embroiled in internal conflicts of their own, which pre-occupied them until the early 1960's.

The aftermath of the Suez War had far reaching international consequence for Britain and France. From then on the Middle East would involve the superpowers to a much greater degree. The 1956 war led to a shift in the fundamental international political character of the region. Prior to it, the major powers in the region were the colonial powers, primarily Britain and France. Beginning in 1957, the Arab world underwent two significant political changes. First, the region became polarised by the Cold War. Initially, as will be briefly discussed later, it benefited Israeli defence. Second, the region began to experience marked disunity among the Arab nations.

⁴⁹ Bell, J.B., The Long War: Israel and the Arabs Since 1948. Chapter 15.

Nasser, even though he had been beaten, ironically emerged as a hero in the region. He was able to portray himself as the victim of "big power aggression,"⁵⁰ and was able to sell this idea not only to the people of Egypt, but also to the rest of the Arab League. Nasser's status had the fortunate benefit for Israel of deflecting blame for the Suez defeat away from the Egyptian military and preventing it from addressing the significant problem of incompetence. Additionally, as a result of the defeat, Nasser turned more and more to the Soviet Union for aid. Egypt needed military aid, which the Soviets were willing to provide in abundance. Nasser also sought to enlist the aid of the Soviet Union to strengthen Egypt's position in the region. His plan was to initiate a military build up in order to gain the ability to defeat Israel, and unify the Arab world. Thus once again began a steady march toward tripping a key Israeli strategic trigger; the emergence of a unified Arab command.

The situation in the Middle East increasingly began to worry the United States. The result was a dramatic increase in American involvement in the region in order to counter Soviet involvement. Both the Americans and Soviets virtually began to bid among the nations of the Arab League for allies. It was also the beginning of the often referred to 'special relationship'⁵¹ between the United States and Israel. The relationship of a guarantor and protectorate began to develop between the two nations. It was the most significant step toward Israel gaining strategic depth through non-traditional means.

Superpower involvement soon began to polarise not only the region, but also the Arab League. Ironically, it was Soviet aid and influence that Nasser sought as a unifying force, which served to drive a wedge between the nations of the Arab League. Jordan was the first to leave the fold. In April 1957 King Hussein turned his back on Nasser and the Soviet Union and accepted an "American subsidy."⁵² Shortly thereafter, King Abdul-Aziz Ibn-Saud of Saudi Arabia

⁵⁰ Donovan, R.J., P 33.

⁵¹ Israel and the United States have since 1948 had a guarantor relationship. The United States has openly supported Israel and has also openly acted as a guarantor nation, militarily, economically and arguably socially.

⁵² Bell, J.B., *Opcit.* P 359.

accepted American aid. This presented Nasser with... "an unexpected ideological challenge,"⁵³ as the League began to fragment.

In the late 1950s other conflicts began to arise. Turkey and Syria moved to the brink of war. Lebanon experienced a rebellion, which led its government to invite American involvement and eventual brief occupation. Iraq, after experiencing a coup d'etat, and political shift⁵⁴ was not to remain pro Nasser. Other nations such as Sudan and Tunisia began to oppose Nasser. Finally, in 1961 Syria withdrew from the United Arab Republic. All of these events forced Nasser to adopt a policy of moderation up until the mid 1960s.⁵⁵

All of the strife in the Arab League meant that the focus of their hate was temporarily removed from Israel. It was a period of truce, even though it was not a period of peace. However, the late 1950s and early 1960s, although relatively quiet internationally, was not completely quiet domestically for Israel. The 1960s saw a resurgence of terrorism. The Suez War had enabled Israel to destroy virtually, the Fedayeen. The nature of terrorism was to again change in 1964 with the formation of the Fatah, which later became the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). It was a time when the Palestinian cause seemed to be lost in the turmoil of the Arab world and many Palestinians thought that Nasser no longer had their best interests at heart. This perception was in error.

Nasser, as discussed, was desperately trying to hold together what little Arab unity was left. He had commissioned a study in 1964 during the Arab summit, which indicated that the Arabs, at their current rate of progress, would not have sufficient military power to defeat Israel until at least 1969. This study was to disillusion the Palestinians who were not prepared to wait until 1969 for results. They wanted action and change to happen quickly. The study and perceived inaction on the part of the Arab League led to the formation of the PLO.

For the first time, the Fatah gave the Palestinians an organised body to represent them on the international scene, and it marked a renewed terrorist threat for Israeli. The PLO chose

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ The Iraqi coup d'etat resulted in the assassination of King Faisal, and the removal of the monarchy. It was replaced with a military Junta and eventually paved the way for the Baath Party and for Saddam Hussein to come to power.

⁵⁵ Ibid. Chapter 15.

Yasser Arafat⁵⁶ as its leader. He took charge quickly, and Fatah began to operate almost immediately, believing that the time had come for action and that "[The] battle 'must be today, not tomorrow.'"⁵⁷ Fatah operated out of Gaza, Jordan and eventually Syria; a situation that was reminiscent of the period leading up to the 1956 War, and soon became a serious threat to Israeli security. Israel began to commit its military to conduct raids in an effort to destroy the Fatah, but was never able to do so. It also marked the beginning of the incorporation of counter-terrorist strategies into Israeli strategic doctrine.

Israel did not allow itself to become complacent internationally during the long truce. It realised that war would come again, and it was only a matter of time before Nasser would again rally the Arab League and unite it against Israel. Israel used the truce to strengthen its military. Israel first concentrated on building up its airforce, which was deficient from the beginning. It was widely believed that if the Egyptians had been able to properly mobilise and deploy its airforce, Operation Kadesh would have collapsed. The Israelis were very well aware of this danger, and were determined to reduce it in the future.⁵⁸ Israel therefore, purchased 240 combat aircraft, most of which were state of the art French *Mirage* and *Mystere* fighter / bombers,⁵⁹ and embarked on an extremely rigorous training program for its pilots.⁶⁰

Israel's other priority was armour. The region of the Middle East is ideal for the deployment of large mechanised formations, and both Israel and the Arab nations realised it. Egypt continued to procure weapons including a large number of tanks from the Soviet Union. It realised, as did Israel that the next war would be highly mobile and mechanised. Israel purchased 800 tanks, primarily British-made Centurions.⁶¹ These, in addition to a substantial number of

⁵⁶ Arafat was a Palestinian refugee and engineer by profession. He was young, idealistic, enthusiastic, and totally dedicated to the destruction of Israel.

⁵⁷ Neff, D., *Warriors for Jerusalem: The Six Days that Changed the World*. P 33.

⁵⁸ Egypt did use its airforce during the Suez War, but its deployment was not effective. The bottom line was that the Egyptians had simply not learned how to use their new aircraft properly. It was another testimony to the effective timing of Israel's pre-emptive strike.

⁵⁹ Churchill, R.S. and W.S., *The Six Day War*. P 29.

⁶⁰ Israel was so committed to modernising and training its airforce that by 1967, Israeli pilots flew more hours and had more combat training than any other modern airforce in the world.

⁶¹ Ibid.

modified Second World War American M4 Shermans, made the Israeli armour corps a formidable force.

The build up of the IDF was the passive side of Israeli strategic planning in the period between wars. On the active side, there were several incidents where Israel was required to exercise pre-emption. In 1964, at the Arab Summit, Syria backed by Egypt decided to divert the headwaters of the Jordan River system. Work on the project began very shortly thereafter.⁶² This action was of grave strategic importance to Israel, as the Jordan and its tributaries provided much of the water resources for northern Israel. The diversion project directly threatened Israel's economy, and as such constituted an act of war in the Israeli view. Water from the Jordan River was vital for farming and the sustainability of communities in the region, and the potential loss of it served to trip Israel's strategic trigger regarding the protection of its economy. Additionally, it was unclear as to whether such a diversion would be a significant advantage for Syria. It appears that this decision was made primarily to provoke Israel, and perhaps to test its resolve. Israel reacted swiftly and decisively to the threat by launching air strikes and shelling the construction with artillery. The attacks continued until the works were eventually abandoned.

In late 1966 war seemed inevitable. On November 4th Syria and Egypt signed a defence agreement. Syria was again back in the fold of the Arab League. The encirclement of Israel began to emerge again, as the Arabs began to refocus their attention on the tiny nation. A Unified Arab command began to form initiating a steady move toward tripping the first of Israel's strategic triggers.

Fighting also continued between Israel and Syria in the form of sporadic border clashes and shelling from the Golan Heights. The Golan Heights were ideally suited for observation and harassment. The Syrians took advantage of the area by deploying artillery to send harassing fire into Northern Israel. They fired indiscriminately on settlements and farmers cultivating the land. The crisis came to the verge of war in April 1967, less than two months prior to the outbreak of the Six-Day War, as Israel decided to silence the Syrian guns once and for all. The action resulted in an air battle in which Syria lost six MIG fighter aircraft. It prompted the development of another

⁶² IDF Spokesman, Opcit, P 2.

strategic trigger, which was the protection Israeli of citizens and interests from cross border harassment. This was a significant factor in Israel's decision to strike in June.

In May 1967 Nasser, observing the tension between Syria and Israel, took action. He initiated three major events, which would lead directly to war with Israel. First, between the 15th and 17th of May, Nasser began to allude to the fact that he wanted the UN to withdraw from Sinai. With UNEF gone, he would be able to deploy fully his armed forces on the peninsula. This action would effectively remove any measure of a strategic buffer separating Israel and Egypt, and would, in the eyes of the Israelis, pose a direct threat to their interests in the south.

Nasser sent messages to his military commanders in the region that he wanted the UN out. He then began to mobilise troops and move them into the region. On May 18th, he formally ordered the withdrawal of the United Nations forces in the Sinai. Such an order was unacceptable to Israel for it meant a drastic violation of the 1956 cease-fire agreements and a grave security threat for Israel. The UN was faced with the dilemma of either removing the troops, which could lead to a war in the region, or keeping them in place and risking confrontation with Egypt. It was a dilemma, which Israel watched very closely, for its outcome would determine the security of southern Israel, and to a large extent determine if they would go to war. In the end the UN had no legal choice but to comply. On May 19th Secretary General U Thant announced to the UN General Assembly that, "with serious misgivings about it,"⁶³ he was ordering the withdrawal of UNEF from the Sinai Peninsula.

As in 1956, the die seemed to be cast. Figure 2.7⁶⁴ illustrates the threats to Israel in June 1967. Israel knew that the Egyptians were planning something. Combined with the troubles with Syria, the continued terrorism from the Fatah, and the rapidly forming threat from Egypt, Israel was forced to realise that its strategic triggers were being tripped and it had no alternative but to strike. On May 20th, one day after submitting a formal protest to the UN over the removal of UNEF, Israel began a partial mobilisation of its reserves.

⁶³ Churchill, R.S. and W.S., Opcit P 36.

⁶⁴ Jewish Virtual Library, www.us-israel.org.

On May 22nd Nasser tripped another trigger, in the eyes of the Israelis. He announced that the Straits of Tiran would be closed to all shipping and that a full blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba would follow. Israel's international trade was jeopardised and the second of four strategic triggers was tripped. The blockade also brought the superpowers, along with the UN into the conflict. It even looked for a brief period, as if a superpower confrontation might be possible. The United States and the Soviet Union, along with the British, ordered the deployment of ships to the area, including British and American aircraft carriers. What followed was a great deal of sabre rattling and desperate diplomacy. In the end none of them seemed interested in war, and Israel was left on its own to deal with the situation.

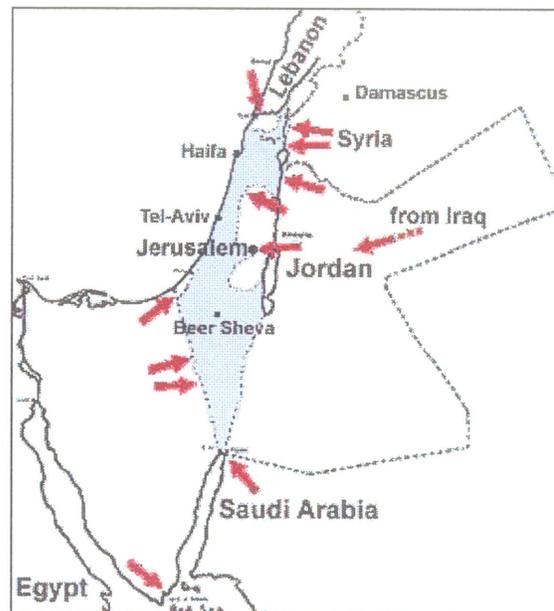


Figure 2.7

On May 30th, the most surprising event occurred, which directly led to the outbreak of hostilities on June 5th. King Hussein of Jordan flew to Cairo and after a visit of just six hours signed a defence agreement with Egypt. Under the agreement, the Egyptian Chief of Staff would command the combined forces of Egypt and Jordan in the event of war. Hussein had effectively given control of his military over to the Egyptians. The agreement "...establish[ed] a pincer

[movement] which could be manipulated from Cairo.”⁶⁵ Syria in an unusual act denounced the pact, since they were left out of it and felt slighted, and labelled Jordan as “the home of treason.”⁶⁶ However, what Syria felt did not matter much. When war did come it was already in conflict with Israel and therefore was considered as part of the common Arab enemy. It just made it easier for Israel that the Syrians were not part of the unified Arab military. A unified Arab command was truly beginning to take shape and with it three of Israel’s strategic triggers had been tripped.

For Israel, the point of no return had been reached and passed by June 5th. With a full 80% of its army made up of reservists and mobilisation complete by the end of May, it faced a dilemma of its own. The economy was beginning to suffer because of the sheer number of civilians serving in the military. Yet Israel could not stand down with the threat of a unified Arab Military.⁶⁷ Standing down would mean that they could be caught in a position far too vulnerable and the life or death struggle for existence could be lost. The Israelis could not afford to take such a risk. By June 5th all four strategic triggers had been tripped. The Straits of Tiran were closed, and Israel’s economy and international trade was threatened, Egypt had built up its forces in the Sinai and Iraqi troops were moved into Jordanian territory, a joint Arab military command was established between Egypt and Jordan, and attacks against Israeli citizens and interests near the Golan Heights continued. Israel therefore came to the realisation that it had little alternative but to strike.⁶⁸

History seemed to repeat itself. The lead up to the decision to strike was very reminiscent of the war in 1956. However, the outcome was very different. Israel emerged victorious, with the Sinai, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights firmly under its control, and the Arab

⁶⁵ Ibid. P 53.

⁶⁶ Ibid. P 52.

⁶⁷ Ibid. Chapter 3.

⁶⁸ During the time between May 30th and June 5th there was a great deal of debate within the Israeli government. Should they strike or stand down. In order to make the decision they turned to the one man who had become a living legend and a symbol of Israeli patriotism, General Moshe Dayan. Reluctantly, and after much debate he accepted to position of Defence Minister. He realised that the most serious threat came from the defence pact between Egypt and Jordan, as Egypt with Nasser at the helm was always considered the most serious threat to the survival of Israel. He realised that war was the only solution to the problem and decided that the time was right to strike. Beginning on June 2nd and continuing until the outbreak of hostilities, he began a masterful plan of deception using the media. It convinced Nasser that Israel was not planning to strike and that it preferred to let diplomacy solve the problem if at all possible.

Armies humiliated. Yet Israel would still know no peace. Regardless, Israel would for the first time, have strategic buffers against its enemies, with which to hold them at arm's length. For the first time, Israel had a measure of traditional strategic depth through geography. It was still territorially shallow. However, it controlled and occupied territories in which it could meet its enemies and counter their threat outside of its own borders. The concept of extended borders became a reality and could be truly made to be effective.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In the first nineteen years of Israel's existence the traditional view of strategic depth as a function of geography dominated its strategic doctrine. Israel had no strategic depth geographically and therefore had to establish it before it could pursue strategic depth in non-traditional areas. Although the foundation for strategic depth through international agreements was laid with the establishment of a "special relationship" with the United States, this relationship was not significant enough to ensure Israel's security. Additionally, strategic depth through technology was not relevant until the end of the 1960s, as no one in the region possessed operational nuclear weapons. Geography was the key.

The territorially shallow nature of Israel forced it to adopt a first strike doctrine or a policy of pre-emption. Its defence policy executed offensively was necessary in order to ensure its survival. Israel was constantly under the threat of attack by its Arab neighbours; attacks, which likely it could not defend against. As a result Israel felt that it could not absorb a large-scale attack and therefore must be in a position to strike first so as to prevent one. Geography became so important that terrorism, which is most often considered a domestic security issue, became a strategic imperative. Terrorists operating from the Gaza Strip and crossing the border to wreak havoc in Israel, became a strategic defence issue in both 1956 and 1967 because Israel had no physical buffers to stop it.

Israel's first strike doctrine led to the establishment of several strategic triggers. These triggers were designed as 'yardsticks' by which Israel could gauge the necessity to strike first. Four key strategic triggers were established. The establishment of a unified Arab military command,

which would indicate that Israel's enemies were preparing to attack, was the first. Any significant military build-up on or near its borders would also indicate that an attack was coming. Threats to Israel's economy, international trade or resources, such as the blockades in 1956 and again in 1967 constituted a serious threat to Israel's ability to sustain itself. Finally, threats to the safety of Israeli citizens or interests from across its borders, as indicated by the Syrian threat in the Golan Heights. Both in 1956 and again in 1967 when a combination of these strategic triggers were tripped Israel felt compelled to strike.

Geography remained the overriding strategic imperative until the 1967 Six-Day War. When Israel finally acquired the occupied territories, it gained a measure of traditional strategic depth. From that point on Israel was required to rethink its strategic doctrine.

CHAPTER III: 1967 - 1989 THE ACHIEVMENT OF TRADITIONAL STRATEGIC DEPTH: HOLDING ENEMIES AT ARMS LENGTH

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The 1967 Six-day war fundamentally changed the strategic situation in the Middle East. It irrevocably shifted Israel's position from that of a nation with little territorial depth to a regional, occupying power. Just as the war changed the strategic situation in the region, it also caused Israel to re-evaluate its strategic doctrine. It had gained strategic depth through the acquisition of territory, which then necessitated a rethinking of strategic doctrine. Doctrinal change however, did not come easily, and did not come without Israel having to learn some harsh and difficult lessons.

Israel's strategic planners were not ready, and to a large extent unable to cope with the new strategic situation. The pre 1967 period, although a precarious time for Israel, was a relatively simple era for strategic planning. It had little strategic depth, a relatively small standing army, terrorism was rampant, and the Arab world, lead by Egypt, was a constant threat to its security. First strike was the order of the day and the establishment of strategic triggers was paramount. Strategic planning was consequently simple; be prepared for war at all times and strike when a clear threat was imminent.

The 1967 War diminished the immediate external threat to Israel's survival. Major General Chaim Herzog of the IDF described the situation in the Sinai as follows:

"The depth afforded by the territories taken by Israel in the Six Day War gave the country for the first time in its history a strategic option. All Israeli centres of population were now removed from the Egyptian forces, and a desert barrier some 150 miles wide separated Israel from the Suez Canal... An Egyptian

commander thinking of attacking Israel now would have to plan not only the very formidable task of crossing the Canal against opposition but also of developing a major attack across the Sinai desert.”¹

The situation was similarly favourable on the Syrian and Jordanian borders with the acquisition of the Golan Heights and the West Bank.

Although the 1967 War strengthened Israel's strategic situation, it also placed it in the midst of new strategic imperatives. Israel's strategic doctrine reflected the needs of a nation with no strategic depth. However, it now had territories, which provided buffers, and in turn strategic depth. The new situation was one with which it had no experience, and consequently had great difficulty in dealing with, and adapting to. This inability to change would later cost Israel in 1973. The 1973 war shocked Israel in to redefining its strategic doctrine once and for all.

After 1973, geography became less relevant, and technology and the international system began to come to the forefront in providing Israel with its much-needed strategic depth. In addition, Israel faced further internal security concerns as the PLO stepped up its terrorist activities. As Israel entered the 1980s, the threat of external attack became overshadowed by the threat of internal terrorism. The Arab League also changed, and Israel made peace with Egypt in 1979.

This chapter examines all of these new key strategic imperatives, how they relate to strategic depth, and the subsequent changes in Israeli strategic doctrine. The discussion will be broken into four sub-sections: The Aftermath of the Six-Day War and the challenges to Israel's defence; the 1973 Yom Kippur War and its importance relative to strategic depth, Israel's survival, and the refocusing of Israeli strategic doctrine; the post 1973 era, which includes peace with Egypt; and the 1980s, with a focus on Operation Peace for Galilee and the Intefada.

3.1 1967 - THE AFTERMATH OF THE SIX-DAY WAR: THE ACHIEVEMENT OF STRATEGIC DEPTH

The 1967 war left the Arab nations defeated. However, they were not willing to make peace with Israel. Israel was adamant about having the Arabs officially recognise its national

¹ Herzog, Chaim, Major General. The War of Atonement, October 1973. P 3.

legitimacy,² and perhaps it thought recognition would be realised with the 1967 victory. The situation in the Arab nations was bleak; they grudgingly admitted defeat on the battlefield and over time gradually accepted it. However, even with their rather dramatic defeat, none of the Arab governments were willing to consider negotiations for peace. Even Jordan the most moderate of the Arab states, was unwilling to entertain the idea of negotiating with Israel.³ Consequently, the Arab League opted for a policy of “no war, no peace.”⁴

Egypt restored Nasser to power after he resigned for a brief period. However, both he and Egypt were in dire straits. The economy was in ruins, the army was destroyed, and the resources of the Sinai were lost. None-the-less the Egyptian people were still willing to accept economic ruin rather than make peace with Israel. In Syria the ‘shoe was on the other foot,’ as it now faced Israeli guns deployed on the Golan plateau. However, Syria was unwilling to consider peace. It was interested only in the continuation of hostilities, and initiated a guerrilla campaign in northern Israel. Iraq was also unwilling to accept defeat and Algeria openly wanted war.⁵

Israel’s security issues were, therefore, not solved by the war. It had gained new territories, but also gained new strategic challenges. Figure 3.1⁶ shows the new borders after June 1967. Two key events came about as a result of the war, which fundamentally shifted strategic imperatives. First, Israel eliminated much of its enemy’s ability to make war. It had greatly reduced the threat of war, but it was not eliminated. Therefore, defence against the Arab League nations was still a priority, even though the immediate threat was diminished. Second, Israel had gained the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and all of the Sinai. This meant strategic depth. It now possessed key strategic buffers, and it was undesirable for Israel to return to the pre war borders, even at the behest of the United Nations and the United States.⁷

² Donovan, R. J., Six Days in June. P 148.

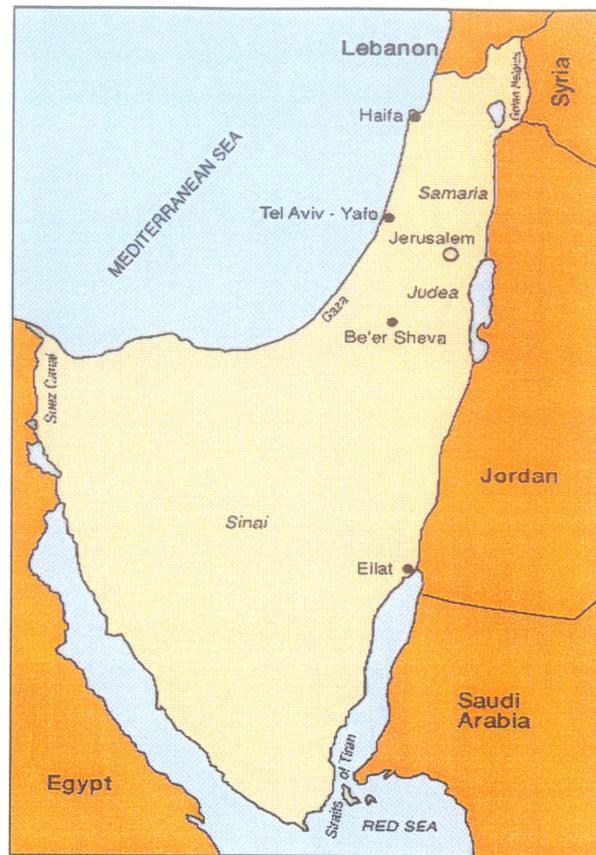
³ Jordan was inundated with refugees displaced by the war, yet King Hussein could not afford to negotiate with the Israelis because of his allegiance to the Arab League and popular opinion at home.

⁴ Bell, J. B., The Long War: Israel and the Arabs Since 1948. Pp 426, 427.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Israeli Ministry of foreign Affairs, www.israel-mfa.gov.il.

⁷ Carver, M., War Since 1945. Pp 254, 255



Cease-Fire Lines After the Six-Day War

Figure 3.1

The Six-Day War created the issue of how to employ the buffers of the new territories. Strategic depth was most significant in the Sinai, because of its sheer size and natural obstacles. Strategic depth was less significant on the borders with Jordan and Syria, where a significantly smaller piece of territory was seized in both cases. Additionally, the border with Lebanon had not changed at all. It was this territorial issue that combined with a difficulty for Israeli politicians and strategists to recognise a fundamental change in Israel's strategic situation, which stalled a re-evaluation of Israeli strategic doctrine.

Seizing the Golan Heights had allowed Israel to accomplish two vital objectives for its security; it was able to stop the frequent shelling and rocket attacks by Syria, and was able to observe Syrian troop movements. The Golan Heights also had the added advantage of being a temporal buffer providing Israel with greater warning time in which to prepare a defence.

Additionally, Israel could henceforth defend from the high ground, and force Syrian forces to attack in the open, up hill.

Acquiring the West Bank enabled Israel to defend on a straight line, along the Jordan River, which also provided a significant obstacle for any opposing force to cross. This greatly reduced the size of their operational front, and had the added benefit of considerably increasing the width of Israeli-held territory by increasing the distance between the new Jordanian border and the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.⁸ The West Bank, however, was far more useful as a temporal buffer, like the Golan, than as a spatial buffer. The increased territorial depth provided greater manoeuvre area and gave Israeli forces a significantly greater amount of time to mobilise and counter an Arab offensive.

The border with Lebanon remained unchanged after the war. However, the threat from Lebanon was of considerably less significance, largely because of the United States. In the 1960s, the Americans had unintentionally taken on the role of guarantor of both Israel and Lebanon. The Lebanese were consequently not in a position to cross the United States, for whom they still relied upon for their internal stability. This situation marked the beginning of a shift for Israeli strategic concerns, as non-traditional means of providing strategic depth emerged.

With Israel's new strategic depth, the importance of a "peripheral or territorial defence"⁹ declined. Israeli was able to expand significantly its standing army, and enhance its intelligence and early warning systems,¹⁰ which would reduce its response time, and military mobilisations would no longer hamper its economy to the same extent it did in June 1967. The IDF was therefore, able to be more selective about whom it mobilised and for how long. However, old strategic doctrine had left an indelible impression on the views of Israeli strategists, who still felt it necessary to continue some of the old practices.

⁸ The seizing, of the West Bank, also had important political and religious connotations. With it, control of the holy city of Jerusalem was assured.

⁹ Handel, M.I., "The Evolution of Israeli Strategy: The Psychology of Insecurity and the Quest for Absolute Security." P 539.

¹⁰ That is not to say that their reliance on reserves had in any way lessened. It meant that Israel would have a large standing army, which would be greatly enhanced by a vast number of reserve augmentees.

Strategists to a large extent were still trying to fight the 1948 war after 1967. Israel initially failed to capitalise on both its new territory and its modernised military in the Sinai. Rather than capitalising on its modern, highly mobile, mechanised army, Israel opted to situate its forces on the shores of the Canal. It established an expensive static linear defence along the Suez Canal, called the Bar-Lev Line. It was shallow and easily penetrable, as Israel would find out in 1973. In essence they became attritionists, rather than manoeuvrists. This created a problem for an army, which was manoeuvrist by nature.¹¹

Israel's failure to capitalise on the vast territorial depth provided by the Sinai, was probably due to the fact that it was unused to having any sort of strategic depth, and did not in reality know how to best utilise it. Israel seemed to feel that it could not allow any Arab penetration into any of the territory it held. It felt that it must defend at the shores of the Suez Canal, rather than by using the Sinai to halt an enemy's advance. By opting for a static line defence, Israel embarked on an unfamiliar strategic doctrine. Consequently, it did not effectively defend the Sinai, in 1973. The Bar-Lev Line was extremely shallow, poorly supported and under manned. Israeli strategists "...still favoured a heavily offensive strategy that was no longer dictated to the same extent by geographical concerns."¹² The mistakes made in the Sinai would eventually be corrected after 1973.

Along the Lebanese, Syrian and Jordanian borders, Israel took a different approach. The West Bank, although in fact providing a buffer, was never regarded as such, nor was it ever considered an occupied territory. It was, because of Jerusalem, considered part of Israel proper. As a result, Israel took the approach of an "extended border" plan for the West Bank. Israel decided to defend along the Jordanian border without a progressive layering of defences. On the Syrian border, Israel felt that the threat had greatly decreased. Israel believed in its own superiority to defeat the Syrians, which combined with the added advantage of holding the Golan

¹¹ It is unclear from research whether or not the Israelis had a declared operational doctrine of attrition or manoeuvre. However, whether or not it was declared, the IDF throughout its existence was a manoeuvrist force, concentrating on mobility and hitting the enemy where it is weakest. They were also quite effective at striking the enemy in such a way as to devastate morale, which is a classic element of manoeuvre warfare. It was therefore, out of character for them to consider a static defence in the Sinai.

¹² Handel, M.I., *Opcit.* P 540.

Heights, lulled them into a false sense of security. The result was a similar defence to that in the West Bank. The situation prompted Israel to formulate two somewhat diverging strategic doctrines: static defence in the Sinai and a modified version of manoeuvre warfare for the remaining territories.¹³

The doctrine for the northern borders was heavily offensive in nature, and was the type of warfare that Israel was most comfortable with, psychologically and militarily. In the south, however, the doctrine was heavily defensive and static in nature, and was not a form of warfare that Israel had a great deal of experience with, nor was it comfortable with. The two diverging strategic doctrines were therefore difficult for the IDF to reconcile. On one hand the IDF was supposed to be attritionist and static in the Sinai, implying a defence of waiting for the enemy to attack, while on the other hand, it was also supposed to be highly mobile and ready to strike quickly in the north. It was therefore likely that such a divergence created a dilemma in the psyche of Israeli politicians, strategists and soldiers.

None-the-less, Israel still felt that it was necessary to take the battle into the enemy's territory on all fronts, rather than fight it even in the newly captured territories. In essence Israel had obtained strategic buffers, which should have been used to meet the enemy in battle, yet Israel still felt that none of the new territories could be used as such. The thinking created two additional problems. First, it appeared that IDF forces were not given adequate direction and resources, so as to construct sufficient defences. Additionally, it meant that Israeli forces had to extend themselves even further in the occupied territories in order to meet the enemy. It was a problem of the ability to use the ground effectively.

Israel had officially committed itself to defend the Sinai in its entirety. Unfortunately, it did not know how to properly accomplish that. Additionally, Israel had lost a key strategic trigger, that of Egyptian troop deployments in the Sinai. Without that indicator, it became more and more difficult to gauge the Egyptian threat.

The change to the strategic situation for Israel could be reduced to one key factor. It had achieved strategic depth. However, instead of using the territories as spatial buffers, which would

¹³ Ibid.

have given it an effective area within which to build a successive line of deep defences, combined with space for manoeuvre, Israel opted for an extended border defence. At best that provided it with a temporal buffer, which in turn provided it some extended warning time in the event of aerial attack.¹⁴

That was a crucial error in judgement, simply because Israel's Arab enemies had virtually no airforce after 1967. Any attack would come from ground troops. The only aerial threat came from Egypt, which had a vast network of Soviet supplied Surface to Air Missiles (SAM), put in place between 1969 and 1973. Israeli air power could have been largely neutralised over the skies of Egypt. However, if the Israeli air force were to engage Egyptian ground forces over the Sinai itself, it could operate largely unopposed. Israel should have realised this in 1969 during the War of Attrition.

The War of Attrition between Egypt and Israel began very shortly after the war ended in 1967, and reached its height in 1969. Its focus was the Israeli positions on the shores of the Suez Canal, and its results would give the Israelis a dangerously false sense of security. The war began with sporadic raids by Egypt and culminated with a formal announcement by Nasser, initiating military action along the Suez Canal in 1969. It was Egypt's goal to "exhaust through attrition the Israeli will to continue the fight,"¹⁵ and to occupy sufficiently the Israelis, so as to allow time to construct a complex air defence system based on the Soviet SAM system.

The conflict was really a continuation of hostilities resulting from the 1967 war. Israel began construction of the Bar-Lev Line, largely in response to Egyptian raids and harassment, which it began to view as the primary threat. Egypt, after taking some time to reorganise and rebuild its military, took upon itself to escalate further the conflict by interfering with the construction of the Bar-Lev Line. It was really not a war in the traditional sense. It was by and large a series of exchanges and raids of no real threat to Israeli security. However, it did pave the way for the 1973 war.

¹⁴ Horowitz, D., "Israel's Concept of Defensible Borders." P 18

¹⁵ Herzog, Opcit. P 8

Egypt began the conflict by launching a series of commando raids and artillery bombardments against the Bar-Lev construction project. Its initial plan was to harass the Israelis to the point where it was hoped that they might give up building the Bar-Lev Line, and withdraw further away from the canal. Ironically, a withdrawal, combined with the deployment of listening and observation posts along the Canal, would have been in the best interests of Israel. Israel countered the Egyptian aggression initially with air strikes¹⁶ against Egyptian bases in the Suez region. Their objective was to destroy Egyptian forces in the region, using primarily air power and to a lesser degree commando raids. Israel was not interested in any further territorial gains, and hence did not cross the Canal.

The Bar-Lev line, as previously discussed, was not an effective defence against a large-scale offensive. Its purpose was three fold; military, political and psychological. Its military objective was to provide an armed presence on the canal so as to provide a military barrier to Egyptian forces, and to observe Egyptian troop movements across the canal. It was also designed to provide sufficient warning in the event of attack. It was, however, more effective as a political tool. Israel was only able to maintain a small standing force in the region. Consequently, the Bar-Lev Line allowed Israel to “[hold] the Canal Hostage,”¹⁷ Finally, from a psychological perspective, it assured the Israeli population that its forces held the Sinai, while constantly reminding the Egyptians that they no longer did.

In reality, the Bar-Lev line assisted in making the Sinai a temporal buffer. With the holding of the Sinai, Israel had increased the warning time in the event of air attack from four to sixteen minutes,¹⁸ along with warning time in the event of a ground attack. As a temporal buffer only, it was somewhat impractical. The line was not supported by a progressive layering of defences, and therefore not sustainable in the event of attack. It was a clear illustration that Israel had failed to utilise the spatial buffer provided by the large territory of the Sinai. If the line were penetrated, forces would have to cross the Sinai from the east, through the passes, in order to meet the enemy. Additionally, even though the Israelis had the correct idea of a temporal buffer,

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Carver, Opcit. P 254.

¹⁸ Herzog, Opcit. P 4

they failed to identify the correct one. The temporal buffer should not have been the defensive positions of the Bar-Lev Line. It should have been the expanse of the Sinai itself.

When Nasser escalated the war in March 1969, the superpowers became more and more involved in the dispute, and the conflict soon became a war of proxy for them. The United States sided with Israel, while the Soviet Union sided with Egypt. Both began to supply very sophisticated equipment, in greater numbers than ever before. The superpowers became so heavily involved in the region that the potential for a superpower confrontation became a danger should the conflict escalate.¹⁹ Although neither Israel nor Egypt had an interest in escalating the confrontation beyond the canal, the superpower intervention was an important factor in ensuring that the conflict did not escalate, because neither side was willing to risk a superpower confrontation.

It was precisely because of that, that Israel had halted its deep penetrative air strikes into Egypt very abruptly, in April 1970. The reality was that Israel was willing to go as far as necessary to deter the Egyptians from further attacks on the Bar-Lev Line, but was not willing to draw the superpowers into a shooting war.²⁰ The international system was truly beginning to play a role in strategic depth, although it was yet to be recognised as such.

The de-facto cease-fire did have one interesting side affect, unforeseen by the Americans and the Israelis. It had passed the strategic advantage in the Sinai to Egypt. The lull in the fighting allowed the Egyptians not only to complete construction of their vast SAM network, (See Figure 3.2²¹), they were able to move their air defence umbrella up to the shores of the Suez Canal. This meant Egyptian SAMs could not only cover Egyptian Territory, they could reach far into the Sinai. It was a critical error for Israel to allow Egypt to do this, as it negated the effectiveness of the Israeli airforce in the Canal region.

With that key exception, the war had done little in the way of improving the positions on either side. It did however, reinforce strategic mistakes made by Israel, like the allowing the SAM

¹⁹ Palit, D.K., Major General, Return to Sinai: The Arab-Israeli War, 1973. Pp 26, 27.

²⁰ In fact the war was ended as a result of a cease fire plan called the "Rogers Plan," initiated by President Richard Nixon of the United States, in August 1970.

²¹ Palit, D.K, Opcit. P 27.

"...Israel would not be in a position to take advantage of its undoubted superiority in manoeuvre and fast moving armoured warfare - the Suez Canal would prevent large-scale movements and would in fact protect the Egyptian forces from Israeli manoeuvre."²²

Finally, Israel during that time, had difficulty maintaining the integrity of its strategic triggers. With the holding of the Sinai, Israel could not use Egyptian Troop movements as an indicator; it had to rely on intelligence garnered from within Egypt. Egypt moving its air defence umbrella forward, could have been a trigger, however it presented the problem of determining if the deployment was offensive or purely defensive on the part of Egypt. Additionally, the formulation of a joint Arab command structure again in January 1973, dubbed "The Joint Command Headquarters of the Federated Arab Union,"²³ which was a key strategic trigger in the past, was not viewed as a critical threat. Israel seemed to suffer from a case of overconfidence after 1967, and it was a clear indicator that strategic depth from geography had become less imperative for it, because of the occupied territories, especially the Sinai.

3.2 THE 1973 WAR²⁴

The 1973 war came largely as a surprise to Israel, and it was a war on two fronts, which Israel had desperately tried to avoid. Geography however, was to prove the single most significant factor in Israel's ability to counter attack and drive back the Egyptian and Syrian armies. There were three key factors, which had contributed to Israel being caught by surprise; a failure of the Israeli intelligence community to foresee the attack, inadequate defences in the Sinai, and the general complacency of the Israeli government and military.

Two key factors affected the performance of Israeli intelligence. First, Israel had experienced five years of relative peace, with the exception of the War of Attrition, and its

²² Herzog, C., Opcit P 8

²³ Palit, Opcit. P 43

²⁴ As with most wars and battles, the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 was known by several names. It is most commonly called simply, The 1973 War. The Israelis call it the Yom Kippur War after the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur on which the Arabs chose to attack. The Arabs often refer to its as the Ramadan war which is the name of the Muslim holiday of the same time. For the purposed of this work it will be referred to as the 1973 War. (Middleton, D., Cross-roads of Modern Warfare: Sixteen Twentieth-Century Battles that Shaped History. P 266).

intelligence network had become complacent. Second, much of the Israeli intelligence community was required to divert its resources away from the external threats to its borders, and toward the rising internal threat of PLO terrorism. Ultimately, the problem of intelligence in 1973, was one faced by intelligence organisations the world over; that of effectively determining the enemy's intentions. Mossad had collected sufficient information, and catalogued the equipment and troop movements of both the Egyptians and the Syrians. However, it was unable to analyse the information effectively enough to determine the significance of the Arab activities. General Avraham Tamir sums up the failure very succinctly. He stated that:

"The basic Intelligence error in this case was that it focussed not on actual troop movements (which were accurately observed and reported) but on mistaken assumptions regarding enemy intentions."²⁵

The Israeli intelligence system had identified the Arab build-up along the Suez Canal and in the Golan. However, it failed to make the determination that an attack was imminent. "[That] ignorance, reinforced by military complacency, led both the government and the military to ignore, or at best discount, Arab preparations for war."²⁶ Effectively, the Israelis had failed to re-establish a new set of strategic triggers that reflected its new strategic situation.

Complacency, arrogance, and conceit best describe the general mood of the Israeli government and military and intelligence community, prior to the outbreak of the War. When Drew Middleton visited the Bar-Lev Line in 1972 he spoke with many of the Israeli defenders there. At that time only two infantry battalions and a third in reserve, held more than twelve miles of the line. He later wrote:

"[the] Israeli colonel rejected the idea that his forces were very thin on the ground. If he faced an attack by Americans, British, or German troops, he said, they of course would be much stronger. But Egyptians? His boys could handle them."²⁷

That quote best describes the attitude of the IDF, as a whole. When Egypt did attack, on October 6th 1973, many of the Israeli soldiers were away from their positions and vehicles, reciting the Yom Kippur afternoon prayer.

²⁵ Tamir, A., A Soldier for Peace. P 195.

²⁶ Ibid. P 270.

²⁷ Ibid. P 269.

The War unfolded in three distinct acts.²⁸ Act one was the surprise, simultaneous offensives on Saturday October 6 by the Egyptians in the Sinai, (Figure 3.3²⁹), and the Syrians in the Golan Heights (Figure 3.4³⁰). The second was the period of Israeli counter attack, beginning on October 8th, during which time Israel was able to seize the initiative, and drive both the Egyptians and Syrians out of the Sinai and the Golan Heights. The final act was the Israeli crossing of the Suez Canal on October 17th, and the establishment of an eighteen-mile deep bridgehead, which occurred just prior to the official end of the war, through UN Resolution 338, on Monday October 22nd.



Figure 3.3

²⁸ Middleton, Opcit. P 268.

²⁹ Jewish Virtual Library, www.us-israel.org.

³⁰ Jewish Virtual Library, www.us-israel.org

The war itself, from Israel's perspective, was in reality a single campaign fought on two fronts. However, those fronts were very different. The Sinai front was one in which the Israelis fought, at least for the first act, a battle of attrition from static positions. For the first time since 1949, Israel was on the defensive, and was forced to fall back. Even though Israel had not planned to defend within the Sinai, it was the depth provided by it, which sufficiently slowed the Egyptian advance, in the first few days of the war. This allowed Israel to absorb the attack, reorganise, counter-attack and advance. Without that depth, Israel would have had considerably more difficulty in absorbing the attack.

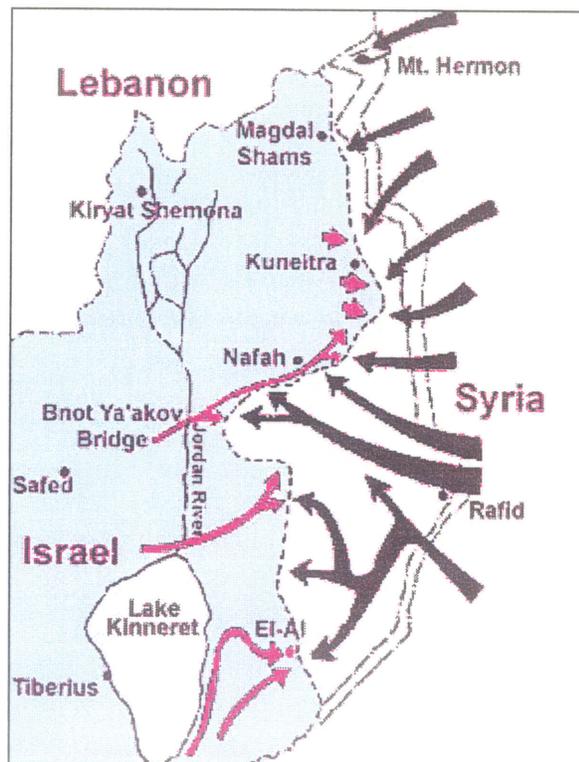


Figure 3.4

The Golan Heights presented a different problem for Israel. Although it provided a strategic buffer, it was very small and because of its hilly terrain, was a difficult manoeuvre area for armour. However, it was much easier to defend than it was to attack, for precisely that reason.

Unfortunately, the defences put in place by Israel were also not entirely effective. The Golan was only seventeen miles in depth, which also meant that there was no room for Israeli forces to fall back to. Any fall back position would be inside of Israel itself, which was unacceptable. If the Syrian forces had broken through the Israeli defence it would have been extremely difficult for the IDF to absorb the attack and counter-attack before northern Israel was overrun.

On October 6th the Israeli defence in the Golan consisted of several fortified settlements with their own watchtowers and resolute settlers. The defence was set up along the lines of the passive defence of the early 1950s, and was designed to counter the Palestinian guerrilla threat, not to oppose a large-scale armour thrust. Consequently, those settlements were quite ineffective against Syrian armour, and contributed relatively little to the Golan defence on the first day. In fact those very settlements, as they were overrun, became strongholds and staging areas for the Syrian forces.³¹ Two under-strength Israeli armour brigades, with a combined total of 176 tanks, many not their best, carried the battle. They were able to hold off the Syrians until reinforcements could be mobilised thirty-six hours later. It was only because of the superior training and experience in manoeuvre, combined with a more flexible tactical doctrine, that Israel held the Golan. If the Syrians had broken the Israeli armour defence, the war could have been lost in the first three hours.³² It was their valiant defence on the first day that afforded the Israelis the ability to hold in the north, and concentrate on driving the Egyptians back across the Suez Canal in the south, before counter-attacking in the north.

The battle in the Golan Heights was another clear example of Israel not taking the Syrian threat seriously and failing to monitor the strategic trigger of a Syrian troop build-up. The IDF should have had adequate observation into Syria, which would have given them adequate warning time to prepare for the attack. Yet when it came, the IDF was caught by surprise. It is not entirely clear as to why that happened. However, it is likely that complacency, combined with the observance of their holiday, resulted in a lack of sufficient resources committed to observation.

³¹ Middleton, *Opcit.* P 277.

³² *Ibid.*

In summary, the 1973 War had exposed fundamental flaws in Israel's approach to its strategic doctrine after 1967. Israel attempted to defend on the borders of the occupied territories without sufficient depth in its forces, which was dangerous and impractical. Also it failed to establish new effective strategic triggers. The situation was exacerbated by a general complacency in Israel toward its enemies, and the ineffective use of its intelligence resources, all of which allowed Egypt and Syria to launch surprise attacks on two fronts.

The 1973 war finally forced Israel to realise one important strategic factor about geography; security is not ensured solely by the acquisition of territories. The 1973 War proved that Israel's concept of extended borders did not work without augmenting its strategic depth through non-traditional means.³³ After the war, the Israeli government began to favour, especially in the Sinai, a demilitarised zone which would become a "warning zone on land..." rather than "... control of deep desert territories which necessitate fighting with one's back to the desert and long supply lines."³⁴ This view initiated a movement toward providing strategic depth through international agreements.³⁵

Major General D.K. Palit saw the only solution to Israel's security issue as follows:

"The solution lies not in expansionist strategy but in seeking accommodation: and despite the counter arguments that the Israeli government has put forward, the aftermath of the (1973) war has, more than at any time previously indicated that a negotiated peace in West Asia (Middle East) is not impossible to establish."³⁶

He was not far from the truth. After the war, there came about a dramatic change in Israeli security issues. The terrorist threat posed by the PLO became the overriding concern in the mid 1970s.

³³ Palit, D.K. Opcit. P 172.

³⁴ Horowitz, D., Opcit. P 20.

³⁵ By utilising the Sinai as a strategic buffer it would become a *de facto* "strategic trap for the Egyptians." With such a strategic doctrine the Egyptian armour and mechanised forces would have to cross the Sinai before threatening Israel. In doing so they would be easily detectable by the Israelis and they would have to leave the protection of their air defence umbrella. They also would leave themselves open to air and armour attack. In both cases they would be at a distinct disadvantage to the Israelis. (Ibid. As quoted from Yigal Allon, and presented by Y. Evron in "The Demilitarisation of Sinai as an Aspect of Arms Control in the Middle East.")

³⁶ Palit, D.K., Opcit.

The period following the 1973 War, marked a further shift in Israeli strategic thinking and the geo-political situation in the Middle East. Egypt was again defeated, and unable to pose any serious threat to Israel. Jordan had become a reluctant adversary, as King Hussein began to soften his position. The real threat came from Iraq, which was still a staunch enemy of Israel, and the possibility of it moving forces against Israel through Jordan, still existed. Syria had always been the most militant of the Arab nations bordering Israel. It was especially unwilling to accept defeat and began to work very closely with the PLO to move against Israel more covertly, by sponsoring terrorism. Lebanon also emerged as a threat, as its government began to break down by the mid 1970s and the PLO began to move into its southern region. Lebanon soon became a threat as a terrorist staging area.

Israel was still adamant about holding the occupied territories because the war had reinforced the need for strategic depth through geography. However, events of the latter part of the decade, began to negate the need for strategic depth through geography alone, even though peace did not seem forthcoming.³⁷ Non-traditional means of acquiring strategic depth came to the forefront.

The most significant change in the Arab-Israeli conflict, which had the most impact on the security of Israeli borders, was the peace agreement with Egypt.³⁸ The Camp David Accords marked a normalisation of relations between Israel and one of its former Arab enemies for the first time. It marked a dramatic shift in Arab - Israeli relations. No longer would Egypt be the rallying nation calling for the unification of the Arab peoples in their struggle to destroy Israel. The agreement served to stabilise dramatically the region, while it also fractured the Arab League. It was a situation, which could not have been more advantageous for Israeli security. However, it also served as a catalyst for more terrorism by the PLO.

³⁷ All of Israel's previous wars had ended in cease-fire agreements, without peace agreements and 1973 was no exception. Therefore, Israel technically remained at war with its neighbours, and still felt a great deal of justification in holding its enemies at arm's length, via the occupied territories.

³⁸ President Sadat of Egypt initiated the first peace overture, unofficially, as early as 1973, and more formally in 1977. The agreement was overseen by the United States under President Carter, and negotiated at Camp David. The formal treaty was signed in Washington in 1979.

The Egyptian-Israeli peace process actually began shortly after the end of the war in 1973. The goal of the Arabs, since June 1967, had always been the return of the occupied territories, and the establishment of a Palestinian state. It also became the objective of the peace process to follow. As early as October 16, 1973,³⁹ even while the war raged, Sadat began to speak publicly about a peace agreement with Israel. He began to allude to the desire that such an agreement would pursue the above two objectives. He outlined a five-stage plan that included a willingness to accept a UN resolution and cease-fire, the clearing of mines and re-opening of the Suez Canal, and a clear agreement on a framework for the mutual withdrawal of forces and the re-establishment of the 1967 borders. This overture led directly to UN Resolution 338, a cease-fire agreement, and an eventual termination of hostilities.⁴⁰

For the first time the 'ball was in the Israeli court.' It would be up to them to accept or reject the Arab design for peace. It was a difficult situation. The two objectives outlined by Egypt were precisely the two that had been the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict from the outset, and the same stumbling blocks that the current peace process faces. First, it was problematic for Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories and still maintain secure borders. Even with a formal peace agreement in place, security guarantees were far from assured, and there was much scepticism as to whether the Arab states would even honour the agreements. Second, Israel was faced with the difficult prospect of negotiating the formation of a Palestinian state within the disputed territories of the West Bank or Gaza Strip. For the same concerns as stated above, it was not readily willing to give up any territory to the Palestinians. Moreover, the PLO had

³⁹ Fraser, T.G., The Middle East 1914-1979: Documents of Modern History. P 130

⁴⁰ The cease-fire agreement was not negotiated in one fell swoop, and it was not until May 1974 before the entire agreement was implemented. Its success was largely due to tireless mediation by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger of the United States, which further strengthened American involvement in the region. Additionally, it illustrated that Israel was willing to pursue more non-traditional strategic depth. At any rate, such an arduous agreement was indicative of the extreme difficulty with negotiation in the region. Some of the Arab states, weary of continuous conflict, began to unify in a call for peace as they did in war. On November 28, 1973 at another Arab Summit in Algiers, they agreed that if there were to be peace it would be based upon the two objectives stated by Sadat, and for the first time it seemed possible that an agreement might even be reached with other Arab League nations. (Ambrose, S.E., Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938. Pp 279-281.)

become increasingly organised and militant, and its attacks more violent and frequent.⁴¹ As long as the PLO continued to practice terrorism, Israel was reluctant to enter into negotiations.

As a result the Sadat initiative moved slowly. It was not until September 1975 that Henry Kissinger was able to negotiate a "disengagement" agreement in the Suez region. It included an agreement on the part of Israel to withdraw its forces back beyond the Gidi pass in exchange for the Egyptians opening the Suez Canal to non-military Israeli shipping. The agreement was historic in that it formally ended fighting between the two nations. Although not a peace agreement, it was an agreement to pursue peace. As Article I of the agreement states: "The conflict between them (Israel and Egypt) in the Middle East shall not be resolved by military force but by peaceful means."⁴²

It was precisely this agreement that offered Israel the most strategic advantages. By moving back to the passes and creating a demilitarised zone (DMZ) to the west, Israel still maintained its depth, and a viable buffer separating its forces with those of Egypt. It provided Israel with the ability to observe the region, thereby re-establishing a key strategic trigger. It was also a formal, international agreement, which further enhanced strategic depth.

It was, however, not until December 1975, that the Israeli government seemed willing to make a true attempt to negotiate a lasting peace. At the Ismailia summit, the Israeli government presented a peace plan essentially in response to the Sadat initiative. In it, Israel proposed the formation of the El Arish – Ras Muhammad Line,⁴³ which was essentially a formalisation of the Kissinger agreement. If accepted, control of the Sinai in the area west of the line, would be returned to Egypt. The area to the east would become a DMZ, with a UN peacekeeping force to monitor the zone, (Figure 3.5⁴⁴).

The El Arish – Ras Muhammad line was a significant step forward for Israeli strategic planners, because the agreement would then provide the strategic depth required, while allowing

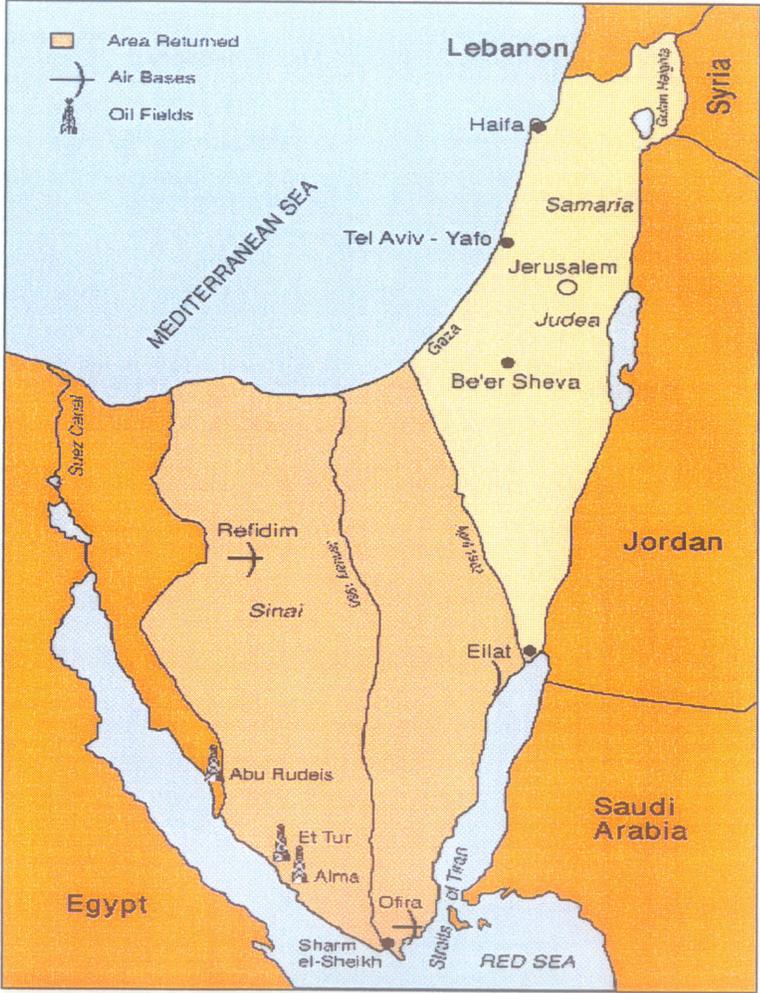
⁴¹ The PLO movement began to make significant progress in 1974 when the Arab heads of state formally recognised the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Additionally, Yasser Arafat was invited to speak on behalf of the Palestinian people, to the UN General Assembly, and the PLO was granted observer status in November 1974. (Fraser, T.G., *Opcit.* P 135.)

⁴² Fraser, T.G., *Opcit.*, as taken from the original document reproduced within this work. P 144.

⁴³ Tamir, A., *Opcit.*, Pp 18 & 19.

⁴⁴ Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.israel-mfa.gov.il.

Israel to leave the area. It demonstrated that the Israeli government had taken to heart the difficult lessons of the 1973 War and showed that Israel finally realised how the Sinai could be used as a strategic buffer. By converting the eastern side of the line along the passes into a DMZ, a significant spatial buffer was created separating Israeli and Egyptian forces. By having the UN occupy the DMZ, Israel could effectively remove its forces and retain an early warning system. Additionally, the stationing of neutral forces would provide a military barrier that the Egyptians would not likely attack for fear of outside intervention from one or both of the superpowers.



Withdrawal from Sinai Following the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty

Figure 3.5

Progress in the peace process continued to be very slow between 1975 and 1977. The Israeli government seemed to falter in its commitment, and it was not until the election of the Begin government in 1977, that significant progress was again made. Sadat, realising the overwhelming support that Begin enjoyed, believed that real progress could be made and took the initiative in the peace process.⁴⁵ Still, it took a further two years, and intervention from the United States before an agreement was finally signed at Camp David. Kissinger had left office in January 1977 and President Carter continued his work. He acted as a mediator in the peace negotiations, and was instrumental in developing an initial "Framework" for an agreement in September 1978. Yet it was not until March 29, 1979 that a treaty was formally signed. Even after the signing, it still took until 1982 before all of the Israeli forces had finally vacated the Sinai.⁴⁶

Begin was motivated towards peace because he realised that maintaining a strategic military balance, so as to fend off an attack on two fronts, through the Golan and the Sinai, was impractical. It was far too expensive and stretched Israel's military too thin. By establishing peace with Egypt, Begin could take the 1975 agreement further and effectively neutralise the Egyptian threat, eliminating the need for a physical strategic buffer in the Sinai. He could therefore turn Israel's attention to the north and East. Abba Eban⁴⁷ describes Begin's logic as follows:

"With Egypt's military strength neutralised by the peace treaty, Begin would be free to initiate operations against Syria, Iraq or the Palestinians in their Lebanese bases. Anwar Sadat became a convenient element in the success of Begin's design."⁴⁸

⁴⁵ The Begin government was a right-wing coalition and had a very secure power base. Sadat believed that finally there was an Israeli government strong enough to make the concessions needed to broker a peace agreement. With the change in government, Sadat was willing to take the case of peace to the Israeli Knesset, and on November 20th he travelled to Israel. (Ibid. P 148).

⁴⁶ "Historical Highlights" ask@israel-info.gov.il.

⁴⁷ Abba Eban became a government official in Israel before statehood in 1948. From 1950 to 1959 he concurrently held the posts of representative to the United Nations and ambassador to the United States. Throughout his career he held many ministerial positions including Minister without a portfolio, Minister of Education and Culture, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and President of the Weizmann Institute of Science. Currently he is a member of the Knesset. The importance of his observations throughout the history of Israel is undeniable. He has been involved in government decision making and negotiations at the highest levels in Israel, for nearly fifty years, and his insight is a great asset when dealing with the defence of Israel.

⁴⁸ Eban, A., Personal Witness: Israel Through My Eyes. P. 597

Begin's plan was political mastery at its finest. It was perhaps the single most important strategic move in contemporary Israeli history. The agreement not only led to the removal of the Egyptian threat; but also led to a serious fracture of Arab unity.

With the treaty, hostilities between Egypt and Israel were formally terminated. The Sinai Peninsula was returned, and both nations recognised the other's legitimate right to exist. The Suez Canal was opened to Israeli shipping, and the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba were declared international waters.⁴⁹ However, there was still one outstanding issue not addressed: an independent state for the Palestinians. It was the failure to resolve that key issue and Sadat's willingness to accept the non-resolution of it, which became a great political and diplomatic liability for Egypt. Without the resolution of the Palestinian issue, support for the peace agreement was lost in the Arab League. A rift in the Arab League then followed and Egypt became an outcast in the Arab world.

This fracture became a tremendous advantage for Israel, strategically. It meant that a unified Arab military command became a remote prospect. The fracture of the Arab League had in fact, inadvertently provided Israel with a further measure of non-traditional strategic depth. In reality, Israel was more secure than ever before. The threat of tripping two of Israel's key strategic triggers was greatly reduced. The Egyptian threat, which had always been the most serious one, was gone, and the ability of the Arabs to rally around their cause had also diminished.

Syria was the most outspoken nation opposed to Egypt's peace with Israel. In September 1978, while the Camp David Accords were being developed, Syria in conjunction with Algeria, Libya, Yemen and the PLO issued their "Proclamation of Steadfastness,"⁵⁰ in Damascus. It indicated that many of the Arab states were still committed to their struggle against Israel. The proclamation contained eight major points. It condemned the Sadat government, and severed all ties with Egypt. The de-facto Arab coalition vowed to extend the Israeli boycott to include Egypt and appealed to the UN on behalf of the Palestinian people. Additionally, they intended to

⁴⁹ Peace Treaty Between Israel and Egypt, March 26, 1979, as reproduced on web site: ask@israel-info.gov.il

⁵⁰ Fraser, T.G., *Opcit.* Pp 176-178, as quoted from the original document reproduced in that work.

strengthen their ties with the Soviet Union and gain its support in their struggle against Israel, which was now to include the Sadat government.⁵¹

3.3 THE PLO AND THE CRISIS IN LEBANON

The peace agreement and the fragmentation in the Arab league lead to disillusionment among the Palestinians. A Palestinian homeland did not seem to be on the negotiation agenda, and they felt compelled to act against Israel, through terrorism.⁵² In the latter part of the 1970s, the PLO moved beyond a simple guerrilla, terrorist organisation to an organised political entity. It did so as a result of two key events; the recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by the Arab League and the UN, and the civil war in Lebanon in 1975. Both created new strategic imperatives for Israel. Prior to the Lebanese civil war, the PLO moved into the southern region of Lebanon, and essentially set up a pseudo nation-state and base of operations from which to attack Israel.⁵³ It virtually took over southern and

⁵¹ It should be noted that in the proclamation the Arabs nations did not blame the Egyptian people, only the Sadat government. They saw him as a traitor to the Arab cause and his "regime" was to be their enemy. In point 3 of the proclamation they vowed "(t)o support the struggle of the Egyptian people, represented in their nationalist progressive forces, to cope with the plotting of the Egyptian regime against the fateful Arab issue." It must also be noted that Sadat was a man of strong convictions. He was committed to the peace process, after the folly of 1973. It was a commitment, which was to dictate his personal destiny, and eventually cost him his life in October of 1981.

⁵² Although terrorism is widely considered a problem of policing and does not belong in a discussion of strategic doctrine, Israel is unlike most nations. Terrorism for Israel has rarely been a problem handled by the police alone. It became a strategic concern in the late 1970s and ultimately led to war; a war with concerns of strategic depth in mind.

⁵³ The PLO became established in Lebanon as early as 1970, after King Hussein had expelled them from Jordan. During the late 1960s the PLO operated out of bases in western Jordan and even in the West Bank. King Hussein soon realised that the presence of the PLO, and its increasing militancy, was causing harsher and harsher responses from Israel. The situation soon began to threaten the stability of Jordan itself. He therefore initiated a military action to expel them. (Israeli Information Centre, "Toward a Safe Israel and a Free Lebanon." P 3). Many of the Arab States were reluctant to take the PLO in. However, Lebanon while undergoing internal strife of its own, was unable to prevent it from establishing itself in the southern part of the country. With Syrian backing, the PLO began to use the region as a staging area for launching attacks into the Galilee area of northern Israel.

At first the attacks were relatively small and isolated. The PLO had been severely weakened by the Jordanian action against them. However, it was not long before it began to regain its strength, which was further enhanced by support from both Syria, primarily, and the Soviet Union, who both became participants in the conflict. Lebanon officially stayed out of the 1973 war, however, it was unable to prevent PLO participation. The PLO took the opportunity to shell settlements in northern Israel. (IDF Spokesman, "Operation Peace for Galilee." P 12.) After the war, it began to step up its infiltration operations and its shelling in the Galilee region.

eastern Lebanon and developed its own infrastructure and government. It created a virtual "terrorist dictatorship"⁵⁴ as Israel viewed it, under which it took control of food supplies, electricity, medical supplies and water, "forc[ing] the local population to be totally subservient."⁵⁵ Consequently, the situation changed the 'playing field' upon which Israeli and the PLO dealt with each other, as the PLO became a pseudo nation, at war with Israel.

As time went on, the Lebanese government became weaker and weaker, while the PLO continued to gain strength. The PLO began to entrench itself into the Lebanese polity, and began to foster disunity. It "cultivated ties with local leftist Moslems, training and arming their private militias and gaining their support and trust."⁵⁶ As the practice continued, it destabilised the very delicate balance between the various diverse ethnic and religious groups within Lebanon. The situation led directly to the outbreak of civil war in April 1975; a war from which Lebanon is still recovering. The Lebanese government completely broke down and virtual anarchy reigned. It was an alarming event for Israel, as Lebanon's collapse introduced an element of uncertainty regarding which faction would form the government in Lebanon. It also allowed Syria to gain a foothold in Lebanon.

In June 1976, regular units of the Syrian army were sent into the region under the guise of peacekeepers. Its entry was legitimised at the October 1976 Arab Summit Conference, which created the "Arab Deterrent Force." It was made up mostly of Syrian troops already in place, and went in under the guise of protectors of the Christian community against the PLO. In reality, they were there to back up the PLO, which in turn was oppressing Lebanese Christians.⁵⁷

Terrorism in northern Israel increased dramatically, and soon became a real threat. Israel found itself in a very similar situation to that of the United States in Vietnam, where the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) used Cambodia as a staging area. The PLO, like the NVA, would cross the border, attack, then return ahead of Israeli forces. It was a situation that was beyond the ability of police to handle, yet not totally a military situation. The attacks came to a climax on

⁵⁴ IDF Spokesman, "Operation Peace for Galilee." P 14

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Israeli Information Centre, Op cit P 8

⁵⁷ Israeli Information Centre, Pp 8, 9

March 11, 1978, when a PLO raiding party captured a bus near Tel Aviv and killed thirty-five people, including children, and wounded eighty others. The attack became known as the Coastal Road Massacre, and prompted Israel to launch 'Operation Litani;' a military offensive into southern Lebanon designed to remove the terrorist threat.

'Operation Litani' began on March 14, 1978 and lasted one week. It was essentially initiated as a result of the PLO tripping the strategic trigger of the protection of Israeli citizens and interests along its borders. Its objective was to clear the PLO from the Israeli border to the Litani River, and establish a buffer zone. It was a classic part of Israeli strategic doctrine: seize the territory, establish a buffer zone and hold the enemy at arm's length. It was their intention to occupy the area and prevent a return of the PLO. The Operation was successful. However, the buffer was short lived, as Israel withdrew very shortly thereafter, under pressure from the UN.

The UN deployed a peacekeeping force with the title UNIFIL under the authority of Resolution 425. UNIFIL, in conjunction with the Christian militia, established a 120 square km security corridor in southern Lebanon.⁵⁸ With the UN force in place, Israel was willing to withdraw from the region, even though it required the strategic depth provided by the buffer there. However, with UN intervention and deployment, strategic depth was provided without Israeli occupation. Unfortunately for Israel, the force was never strong enough to keep the PLO from re-establishing itself in the region. It was that failure, which led to war again in 1982.

The 1980s presented Israel with two crucial security issues: combating PLO terrorism and maintaining the strategic balance of power. Both led to pre-emptive military strikes. During the 1980s Israel's strategic concerns shifted somewhat away from the threat of conventional war, as the events of the 1970's had largely negated the threat of an external attack. The War in 1982 was therefore, a transitional war for Israel, in that it was a war against terrorism. Yet, it was executed as a very conventional offensive, with the objective of providing a spatial buffer against the PLO terrorists, which had returned to southern Lebanon.

The root causes of the war in 1982 are found in the treaty with Egypt and the failure of the UN to safeguard northern Israel from the PLO, after Operation Litani. Both are directly related to

⁵⁸ IDF Spokesman, "Operation Peace for Galilee." Opcit.

the issue of strategic depth. As discussed, the agreement between Israel and Egypt failed to address two key interrelated issues: the occupation of the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and the resolution of a homeland for the Palestinians. Menachem Begin created much of the problem. Even as he was accepting the Nobel Peace Prize jointly with Sadat, Begin was not committed to pursuing the parts of the Camp David Accords pertaining to a Palestinian homeland. His commitment to the doctrine of the Likud Party, which staunchly opposed giving up any territory to the Palestinians, would not allow him to pursue the issue. The Palestinians could not have a homeland within the borders of Israel; the party and the people would not have it. It was also, ironically, the peace agreement that allowed Israel to pursue a campaign in southern Lebanon with relative impunity, as the removal of the Egyptian threat negated much of the defence requirements in the south of Israel.

The second key cause of the 1982 war was the inability of the UN to safeguard northern Israel from PLO incursions. Had the UN been more effective in the establishment of a demilitarised zone in southern Lebanon, an Israeli invasion would not have been necessary. The resulting failure destroyed the spatial buffer between the PLO controlled region and Northern Israel. After Operation Litani some 15,000 members of the PLO returned to southern Lebanon.⁵⁹ By 1981 it had renewed attacks to the point where exchanges of rocket and artillery fire became daily occurrences.

Syria also stepped up its actions. Between December 1980 and June 1981 it held the Christian town of Zahle under siege. It also stationed large contingents of troops in southern Lebanon, and deployed SAM missiles in the Beqa'a⁶⁰ Valley.⁶¹ This itself constituted a grave threat to Israel, as it afforded Syria the ability to control the aerospace over southern Lebanon and northern Israel. It was an unacceptable situation for Israel, as it had the potential to interfere with

⁵⁹ IDF Spokesman, "Israel's Wars." P 46.

⁶⁰ In the research conducted by the author, different spellings for Beqa'a were often encountered. The two most common are Beqa'a and Bek'aa. For the purposes of continuity Beqa'a will be used throughout.

⁶¹ Israel Information Centre, Opcit.

its air operations, both military and civilian, and was a direct threat to its sovereignty and territorial integrity.⁶²

On June 3rd 1982 the conflict began to escalate again. The PLO attempted to assassinate Shlomo Argov, the Israeli ambassador in London.⁶³ It prompted the Israeli government to examine a stronger response to PLO terrorism. On June 6, 1982, Israel began Operation 'Peace for Galilee,' and attacked in Lebanon. The attack came in the form of three main thrusts toward Tyre, Sidon, and Damour, each with armour spearheads. On June 8, the Israelis initiated action against the Syrian forces in Lebanon, by driving toward and through the Shouf Mountains and the Beqa'a Valley.

The primary objective was essentially the same as for 'Operation Litani;' to remove the PLO and Syrian threat to northern Israel and establish a strategic buffer in Southern Lebanon. It was the intention of Israel to cease operations in the area along a line extending from Sidon in the West, and Rachaiya along the Syrian border in the East. On June 12th, the sixth day of the fighting, the Israelis declared a cease-fire, which was initially accepted by the Syrians. However, within hours of the cease-fire the Israelis initiated hostilities again. It was at that point that they knew, even though they had broken the infrastructure of the PLO and the Syrian forces in Lebanon, the threat to their security was not removed. The IDF was convinced that it could not establish an effective spatial buffer, and that in order to ensure security for Northern Israel it would be required to push further. It was at that point that Israel made the only decision it viewed as

⁶² The conflict began to escalate to the point where life in thirty-three Israeli border towns, including Kiryat Shmona and Metulla, ground to a virtual standstill. The local populations had taken to virtually living in bomb shelters. The intensity and volatility of the situation prompted the United States to again step in diplomatically, and negotiate a cease-fire in 1981. The Israelis and the Syrians honoured the cease-fire, for the most part. However the same could not be said for the PLO.

The PLO began to operate in less overt ways. It began to stockpile heavy weapons, including Russian Katyusha BM 21 Multiple Launch Rockets. [The BM 21 is a significant weapon in the region. It is primarily a weapon for countering artillery. It has a range of 20.4KM and if fired in a volley the destructive capability of one launcher is equivalent to that of the Iraqi Scuds used in the 1991 Gulf War. Additionally, not only can they carry a warhead of high explosives, they can be equipped with chemical warheads. They can be disassembled and launched from a pipe using a standard automotive battery. (Issues Relating to Israeli Security (IRIS), www.netaxs.com.)] Most of these weapons were funnelled in from Syria, which continued in its familiar role of supporting and training the PLO, in both southern Lebanon and within Syria itself. During the cease-fire the PLO committed no less than 248 terrorist acts, with twenty-nine occurring in May 1982 alone. (IDF Spokesman, "Operation Peace for Galilee." P 14.)

⁶³ IDF Spokesman, "Israel's Wars." Opcit.

possible, to drive all the way to Beirut, remove the PLO and the Syrians, capture the Beirut to Damascus highway, and establish a strategic buffer there.

The fighting continued throughout the summer 1982, as Israel became involved in a difficult guerrilla war along with urban fighting within Beirut itself. A lasting cease-fire was finally negotiated on August 13. It included an agreement to allow the PLO and Syrians to surrender and leave Lebanon, and on August 21 they began to leave. The evacuation took until well into September. However, Syria kept its hand in Lebanon until long after.⁶⁴ In 1983 Israel was able to finally sign a peace treaty with Lebanon. However the Lebanese government abrogated it after just one year, due to Syrian political and military pressure, and the IDF remained entrenched in Lebanon.⁶⁵ In 1985 the Israeli government decided to extricate the IDF from Beirut and moved back to a security zone, (Figure 3.6), where they remained until 2000.⁶⁶ The withdrawal was conducted in several stages ending in June of 1985.



Figure 3.6

⁶⁴ In September of 1982 the Syrians sponsored the assassination of the newly elected Lebanese president Bashir Jemayel, only a few weeks after his election. The action dashed all hopes of a stable Lebanon.

⁶⁵ IDF Spokesman, "Israel's Wars." Pp 46-48

⁶⁶ Jewish Virtual Library, www.us-israel.org. Figure 3.6 is a map of the IDF withdrawal in May 2000, which is why the security zone is indicated as "former."

The Lebanon situation had stabilised somewhat. However, Israel did not yet feel secure enough to leave the country. Although Operation "Peace for Galilee" had eliminated the PLO threat, it did not eliminate terrorism. Numerous splinter groups and factions of the PLO, including Hezbollah and Hamas, began to operate out of the occupied territories.

Although, it seemed that the external threat of attack had diminished and that Israel would not have to face mid to high intensity conflict with its neighbours, it was still concerned with the balance of power in the region. As long as formal peace agreements with the Arab League nations were not in place, the threat of war still existed. Israel was therefore committed to maintaining the balance of power in the region, ensuring its position was not threatened and that its security was not compromised. That was especially true with weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Israel was committed to building its own nuclear deterrent, while ensuring that its Arab neighbours did not develop nuclear weapons of their own, and it was willing to launch pre-emptive strikes to ensure this.

In 1981 Iraq came dangerously close to developing nuclear weapons, which presented Israel with an unacceptable situation. Additionally, Iraq possessed a delivery system sufficiently advanced enough to reach Israel; SCUD surface to surface missiles (SSM), supplied by the Soviet Union, and modified to increase their range. As demonstrated in 1991 those missiles were easily capable of reaching Israel. Although their accuracy was limited, should they be equipped with a nuclear warhead, "close" would be all that would be required in order to cause massive devastation within Israel.

In 1980 Iraq obtained a nuclear reactor from France.⁶⁷ Since the technology and materials contained in the reactor, were sufficient for Iraq to use them to construct nuclear weapons, Israel decided that the reactor constituted a very serious threat to its security. As a result, on June 7th 1981 the Israeli Airforce attacked and destroyed the reactor. However, the long-term

⁶⁷ One of the first indications that the Israelis had was the fact that the Iraqis named the reactor the Tammuz 17. On the 17th day of Tammuz in 586 the Babalonian, Nebuchadnezzar lead the final battle, which resulted in the destruction of the ancient kingdom of Israel and scattered the Jews for over 2000 years. Nebuchadnezzar was a hero of Saddam Hussein, who felt that Iraq should follow in his path. (Nakdimon, S., First Strike. Preface).

effectiveness of the Israeli pre-emptive strike was difficult to determine. The reactor was destroyed, and Iraq was never able to construct nuclear weapons. However it is difficult to determine what the Iraqis' true intentions were. Regardless, Israel perceived a grave threat to its security, which constituted the formation of a fifth strategic trigger for Israel, that of its enemies acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

3.4 CONCLUSION

The period between 1967 and 1989 was a time of great change for Israeli strategic doctrine. For the first time, Israel had some measure of territorial strategic depth, which it initially failed to capitalise on. It was awkward with its new-found borders and was unsure of how to best use them. The result was a conflict in doctrine between the pre and post 1967 strategic imperatives. In turn, this resulted in an ineffective defence in both the Sinai and the Golan Heights; a defence that was falsely substantiated as being suitable, during the War of Attrition.

Prior to 1973 Israel had made two critical errors. It became overconfident in its own superiority, falsely substantiated in its newly acquired geographical depth, and largely disregarded its strategic triggers. The 1973 war taught Israel two important lessons. First and foremost, territorial strategic depth was not enough to ensure its defence, and second that it must maintain its strategic triggers and a first strike doctrine.

Israel began to change its approach to strategic depth. Geography began to fall away as the most important concern for Israeli defence. It realised that it could acquire strategic depth through both international agreements and technology, along with buffers in order to ensure its security. It led to its willingness to negotiate peace with Egypt, which both eliminated the Egyptian threat and fractured the Arab League. It allowed Israel to pursue more immediate strategic concerns that of PLO terrorism and security on its borders with Syria and Lebanon.

Additionally, the 1973 war showed Israel that it also required a means of deterrent. Although it had a nuclear force prior to it, no capability was articulated to its enemies. Even though Israel has never formerly admitted to having nuclear weapons, rumours began to circulate. Israel used that to its advantage, and did not deny a nuclear capability. Additionally, Israel

adopted a policy of not allowing any of its regional enemies to develop nuclear weapons, and was willing to strike militarily to ensure that.

Strategic triggers resurfaced as critical after 1973. Israel realised that it must maintain a policy of pre-emption. A new strategic trigger developed, that of its enemies acquiring nuclear weapons, and old ones resurfaced namely the security of its citizens and interests along its borders. Both triggers were tripped, resulting in two military actions in Lebanon and a strike against Iraq.

CHAPTER IV: 1989 AND BEYOND: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF ISRAELI STRATEGIC DOCTRINE

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The post 1989 era was a period of diverging strategic concerns for Israel. Terrorism and domestic concerns dominated Israeli strategic planning in the late 1980s. However, the external threat from Israel's neighbours was again to resurface with the 1991 Gulf War. Israel still occupied parts of southern Lebanon and did not withdraw until May of 2000, as terrorism continued to plague the country and increasingly became the focus of Israeli security.

The war in Lebanon was an apparent watershed for Israel as it was a conventional war waged against a terrorist enemy. The Intefada served to reinforce further the shift to a new strategic focus. However, the Gulf War was to prove a shock to Israeli strategic planners and to some extent re-direct its strategic thinking once again. On one hand, its most serious threat was terrorism, while on the other, the threat from its Arab League neighbours was still an issue. These two differing strategic foci forced Israel to realise, once and for all, that strategic depth was still the key for its survival. However, strategic depth through the traditional means of geography would not ensure Israel's security. Geography fell away in importance, as the pursuit of non-traditional means of strategic depth through the international system and technology, became the focus of Israeli strategic planning.

Israel faced a classic dilemma of trying to defend on two fronts. The question of the day for Israeli defence planners became how to divide defence resources to meet the terrorist threat while still maintaining a credible defence against external threats. That combined with the strain constant conflict placed on the nation and its citizens, forced Israel to explore means of ensuring

its security that it historically was opposed to. The change in thinking resulted in Israel actively pursuing a unilateral peace initiative beginning in 1989.

In order to understand what motivated Israeli strategic concerns, one must examine several key issues, beginning with the development of the peace process, and its implications for Israeli strategic doctrine. The peace process raises two critical issues for Israel's strategic doctrine: the potential return of the remaining disputed territories, and the possibility of the establishment of a Palestinian state. It is an analysis of those two issues that is necessary to understand the future of Israeli strategic doctrine. Finally, one must understand just what options Israel has to traditional strategic depth. The fundamental issue that Israel must address is how it can pursue strategic depth through both technology and the international system.

4.1 EXPLAINING THE PEACE PROCESS, WITH RESPECT TO SECURITY.

The current Arab-Israeli Peace Process is not drastically different from the Sadat initiatives of the 1970s. For the first time, Israel entertained the possibility of returning the remaining disputed territories and allowing the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Israel's proposed four-point peace initiative resulted from two key events. First and most significant, was the Intefada or holy war launched by the Palestinians living in the occupied territories. The second was the end of the Cold War and the easing of emigration restrictions in the USSR, resulting in a massive influx of Soviet Jews into Israel.¹

The Intefada was essentially a Palestinian uprising in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and to a smaller extent the Golan Heights, orchestrated by the PLO. It began as a result of frustration over the fact that little headway was being made in negotiations for the establishment of a Palestinian state.²

The Arab League became less interested in the plight of the Palestinians. In November

¹ "History of Israel." Ask@israel-info.gov.il

² As early as 1986 there was a change in the western view of the PLO. What little support they seemed to have evaporated completely with the Reagan administration. The United States government became more and more anti-PLO and set about to destabilise its local solidarity in the occupied territories, by initiating a 'Quality of Life' (McDowall, D., The Palestinians: The Road to Nationhood. P 99.) aid programme, which offered financial aid to the Arab peoples inside the occupied territories. That aid was funnelled through both Israeli and Jordanian agencies.

1987, Jordan hosted the Arab League summit, and for the first time since 1948, the Palestinian issue was at the bottom of the agenda. In fact, all heads of state were welcomed with the notable exception of Yasser Arafat and the PLO. What was even more unprecedented was that the most militant of the League's members, and the greatest supporter of the PLO, Syria, even tabled a league resolution, which was designed to exclude the PLO from any further international peace negotiations.³ What became clear at the 1987 summit was that the Arab League was moving towards a stance where they could credibly enter into peace negotiations with Israel. Hence they distanced themselves from the PLO and its militant leader, Yasser Arafat.

It was also at that time that Jordan had softened its resolve toward Israel.⁴ The two began to co-operate openly, and pursued a number of co-operative projects, including jointly appointed mayors for Hebron, Ramallah, and Al-Bira, and the authorisation for a Jordanian bank to open a branch in Nablus. All of this marked not only a change in attitude of the Arab League, but also a new approach by Israel in its dealings with the Palestinians. Israel sought essentially to 'win the hearts and minds,'⁵ of the Palestinians, and "[t]he intention, clearly, was to offer material advantage and external patronage in return for political tranquillity."⁶

The Palestinians became more and more demoralised as this co-operation continued. They soon came to realise that co-operation meant that the establishment of a Palestinian state became more and more a remote possibility. Consequently, the PLO began to step up its terrorist activities. Israel countered with one of the most severe crackdowns since the early 1970s. The Palestinians, further frustrated and demoralised by the crackdown, escalated the violence, and the

³ Ibid. P 186.

⁴ Jordan under King Hussein had always been a moderate in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The above is not the first example of a Jordanian move against the PLO's integrity and solidarity. 1970 saw open conflict between the two. After the Egyptian Peace agreement and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, Hussein seemed more willing to co-operate with Israel, even though it seemed that Israel would not relinquish its hold on the West Bank. It was this early co-operation, which eventually led to a formal peace agreement between the two nations.

⁵ Israel has, traditionally, never been particularly effective at winning the hearts and minds of people in the occupied territories, and 1986 / 87 was to be no exception. They, in fact, undermined their own initiative of co-operation by beginning a campaign of unprecedented repression, arrests, expulsions and house demolitions.

⁶ McDowall, D., *Opcit.*

Intefada was born in late 1987.⁷

As the Intefada gained strength, the Palestinians formed their own clandestine leadership, called the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU), designed to organise the population for the conflict.⁸ For the first year it seemed that the Intefada might succeed and Israel might be overwhelmed by rioting and terrorism, and forced to capitulate. Fortunately for Israel, the conflict fell in to a war of attrition by late 1988,⁹ and with Israel's greater resources, the Palestinians were unable to sustain it.

By late 1988 the Intefada was all but over.¹⁰ In fact, in November 1988 the PLO had, at considerable cost to its movement, adopted UN Resolution 242, renouncing terrorism and formally recognising Israel's right to exist. It was a move that raised the possibility of opening productive negotiations between Israel and the PLO, for the first time. This, combined with a growing feeling within Israel that the occupied territories were becoming a costly liability, both economically and militarily, opened the door to Israel's peace proposal of 1989.

The end of the Cold War had two very significant influences on the initiation of the Peace

⁷ The Palestinians began to realise that they were being ignored and that any peace agreements would be made without them and to some extent at their expense. They soon realised that they had no one except themselves to rely for a solution to their dilemma. The growing Palestinian sense of despair and frustration came to a head on December 9th 1987. It was on that day that an Israeli truck driver accidentally collided with a car driven by four Palestinians, killing them all. The incident touched off wide scale rioting and demonstrations throughout all of the occupied territories. It was the one event that PLO political activists were waiting for and they seized it, galvanising the Palestinian population and largely restoring its unity. Within days the Palestinians were acting as a unified body rioting, demonstrating, confronting and challenging Israeli authority and engaging in pitched battles with police and military, by throwing stones and Molotov cocktails. The Palestinian Intifada was born and Israel was faced with a dangerous insurgency within its borders.

⁸ It was and was made up of representatives of all of the radical PLO factions; Fatah, the PFLP, the DFLP, the Palestinian Communist Party and for a brief time even Islamic Jihad. (Ibid. P 101.)

⁹ As 1988 developed, the situation became more and more desperate for Israel, who was trying not to let the situation turn into a blood bath. Israel had no choice but to take stronger and stronger action. They virtually shut down the Palestinian infrastructure in the territories, as markets and schools were closed for reasons of security. For these actions Israel came under heavy international criticism for violations of both human rights and international law.

The Israeli action had its greatest effect on the Palestinian youth, who were essentially denied education for between two and three years. This combined with a growing split between the PLO leadership and the youth or *shabab*, who were engaged in the majority of the confrontations with Israeli authorities, and who's actions became more and more violent, bloody and difficult to co-ordinate and control, caused the Intefada to lose its momentum.

¹⁰ Some confrontations did continue well into the 1990s, however these incidents were not initiated by UNLU.

process: changes in superpower policy toward the region, and Jewish immigration from the USSR. The change in the relationship between the superpowers caused a change in their perceptions of the strategic importance of the region.¹¹ Changes in American policy toward Israel and the Middle East as a whole had perhaps, the greatest effect on the initiation of a peace proposal. With the eventual collapse of the USSR and the normalisation of relations with Russia and the former Soviet Republics, the United States no longer saw them as enemies. Consequently, the importance of Israel as the principal ally in the region also changed. Garrett Fitzgerald perhaps best describes the effects of the shift in American Middle Eastern policy as follows:

"[The change] had the dual effect on the one hand of influencing some in Israel to soften their attitudes on the Palestinian issue, while on the other hand it may have made some people feel more embattled than previously. On the Palestinian side, however, the effect has been unambiguously to encourage the development of a more moderate approach."¹²

With the changes in the USSR, a general loosening of regulations regarding emigration from it and its satellites came about beginning in 1989. This caused a massive influx of Jewish immigrants into Israel. This created a problem of settling the new immigrants. In many cases the only options seemed to be in the disputed territories. The increase in Israeli settlers in the territories further created animosity between the Israel and Palestinians, who were desperately attempting to hold on to any land that they controlled. With all of the new settlers, they faced the possibility of being pushed out to an even greater degree. By 1990 it was estimated that some 55% of the West Bank was in the hands of Israeli settlers, and the situation in Gaza was similar.¹³ If Israel was to increase settlement in the occupied territories safely, then a normalisation of relations with the PLO and the Palestinian people, was required.

Israel, therefore, came to the realisation that it must extend the 'olive branch'. It brought forth an initiative based on four premises: strengthening of the peace process, with Egypt as a regional cornerstone, promoting full peaceful relations with the Arab states, improving refugee

¹¹ Fitzgerald, G., "The Israeli-Palestinian Issue: A Report to the Trilateral Commission; 38." Pp 2-3.

¹² Fitzgerald. Op cit. P 2.

¹³ Ibid. pp 2-3.

conditions through international efforts, and the promise of elections and interim self-rule for the Palestinian Arabs.¹⁴ The proposals were not new by any means. The peace initiative was intended, as the Israeli government stated, as a continuation of the peace process, which began with Egypt, and would be based on the principles of the Camp David accords, which it saw as the cornerstone to Peace in the region. The initiative would eventually serve as a basis for the Madrid Framework for the Middle East Peace negotiations.

The timetable for the process was proposed in two stages. Stage 1 would be an interim transitional period lasting no longer than five years. Stage 2 would be a permanent solution, which would be interlocked with Stage 1, and would begin no later than the third year of implementation. Israel intended to approach peace in the following manner. First, it intended to expand the Camp David accords by calling for the "establishment of peaceful relations between it and those Arab states which still maintain a state of war with it, for the purpose of promoting a comprehensive settlement for the Arab-Israeli conflict."¹⁵ This was to involve direct negotiation, recognition, ending of the Arab boycott, the establishment of diplomatic relations, the cessation of hostile activities in international institutions or forums, and finally, regional and bilateral cooperation amongst all nations involved. Second, Israel was prepared to be a partner in the resolution of the problem of Palestinian refugee camps in Gaza, Judea and Samaria. Finally, Israel proposed free and democratic elections in those same regions, provided they were held in an atmosphere free of terrorism and violence.

At the outset the initiative seemed a very positive step. However, there were several inherent problems with it, which would later serve to be significant stumbling blocks.¹⁶ Serious problems lay in 3 of the 4 premises of the initiative. The second premise inflamed the Palestinians, because it appeared to them that Israel was unwilling to change the status quo in the governing of the areas of Judea, Samaria and Gaza. In addition, the phrasing of the third premise precluded, in the eyes of the PLO, the establishment of a Palestinian state in the disputed

¹⁴ "Israel's Peace Initiative: May 14, 1989" ask@israel-info.gov.il

¹⁵ "Israel's Peace Initiative." Opcit.

¹⁶ They were indicative of Israel's basic security concerns and paranoia. Israel seemed ready and willing to negotiate, as long as negotiations were completely under their control and conducted their way.

territories.¹⁷ Consequently, they believed that the fourth premise, that of self-rule, could not be brought to fruition under the initiative. To add to this, Israel declared unilaterally that it would not negotiate with the PLO, which for all intents and purposes doomed the initiative to failure. The Palestinian people were inextricably tied to the PLO, which was internationally recognised as their political representative. By failing to recognise the PLO, or to include it in the negotiations, Israel was essentially failing to negotiate with the Palestinian people.

The initiative, although not totally acceptable to the Palestinians, was never the less, seen by them as progress, and when they realised that the Intefada was losing its momentum, they were more willing to go ahead on the diplomatic front.

The 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent war in 1991 threatened to derail the peace process. However, in reality it did little to change Israel's situation. Initially, it seemed as though the Arab world would unite against any outside intervention. However, this was not to be the case, and that fear was soon dispelled when the Arab League, largely lead by Egypt, united against Saddam Hussein. It seemed that as long as Israel stayed out of the conflict, the American coalition and its mandate to expel the Iraqis from Kuwait would remain intact. When tensions began to rise and war seemed imminent, it was only a reluctant King Hussein of Jordan and an equally reluctant PLO, who were willing to support Saddam Hussein and Iraq.¹⁸

This was in fact a critical problem for the peace process as peace with Jordan was the most promising prospect in the process. Additionally, with the PLO supporting Iraq, it appeared that any sort of settlement between them and Israel became more remote. However, as events unfolded, neither the PLO nor Jordan was very vocal in its support of Iraq. They were still eager

¹⁷ It became very clear that Israel was unquestionably to determine the location of the Palestinian state, essentially, the West Bank. Israel was unprepared to give up any additional territory and further it seemed that it wished to confine a Palestinian state to one definable area. It soon became clear to all that Israel was unwilling to trust fully an independent Palestinian authority.

¹⁸ The PLO was reluctant to support Iraq largely because of the ongoing peace initiative. If it were to fall too far out of favour with the Israelis, then all of the progress made would be jeopardised. It was something that the PLO had to guard against. Initially it was quite content simply not to take a stand and see how events played out. However, as time went on and the Palestinian people became more and more militantly supportive of Iraq, the PLO was essentially forced to lend its support to Iraq. Arafat and the PLO leadership realised that they could afford to lose support in virtually any and all other areas, except with their own people, and still survive as a political entity. If they lost the support of the Palestinian people the cohesiveness of their organisation would be lost. (Mcdowall, D. Op cit. Chapter 9).

to go ahead with the peace process, and after the cessation of hostilities, the attention of the superpowers, Israel, and the Arab league again refocused on pursuing peace. In fact, in light of the devastating cost of the war, peace seemed to be pursued with increased optimism and enthusiasm. The period between 1991 and 1993 saw the initial rounds of negotiation. It was during that time that the majority of the peace agreements were proposed and frameworks for them were constructed.

In October 1991 under American and Soviet auspices, the first international Middle East peace conference since Camp David in 1978, opened in Madrid. It was there that the basic framework for an equitable peace, and the possibility of a Palestinian homeland, were first discussed in earnest. It was at this conference that the "Madrid Framework," was developed, which became the foundation for all future negotiations. It established that two types of negotiations would be conducted: bilateral between Israel and Lebanon, Syria, Jordan; and between Israel and the PLO. All would be conducted separately and would have the ultimate goal of resolving the conflicts. Additionally, the framework established a series of working groups, with an overall steering committee, designed to deal with issues of regional concerns and to "build the Middle East of the future."¹⁹

What was unique about the Madrid conference was that the Palestinian people were represented there, not by the PLO per se, but by individuals not officially aligned with the PLO. The Madrid conference did pave the way for greater PLO participation, and its eventual recognition by Israel and the United States. However, that acceptance did not come easily and required a great deal of humbling on the part of the PLO for it to make many previously unacceptable concessions.

What followed the Madrid conference, was a period of extensive negotiation, which culminated in a breakthrough in mid 1993. On September 9th 1993, Yasser Arafat sent a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin in which he outlined several concessions that the PLO was finally willing to make. Most importantly, the letter stated that the PLO was willing to recognise

¹⁹ "The Madrid Framework." The original text as reproduced by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as seen on ask@Israel-info.gov.il.

Israel's right to exist in peace, would no longer call for its destruction, that it was committed to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, and that it would assume responsibility over all PLO elements to ensure co-operation.²⁰ In response, Israel finally recognised the PLO as the official representative of the Palestinian people in peace negotiations.²¹

On September 13th a joint Israeli-Palestinian "Declaration of Principles" (DOP) was signed in Washington, based on agreements worked out in Oslo, outlining the proposed interim self-government arrangements agreed to by both sides. The agreements included immediate Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho, an agreement for the "early empowerment for Palestinians in the West Bank,"²² agreements on self-government with the election of a Palestinian council, and agreements on economic co-operation and negotiations on the implementation of the interim agreement.

On May 4th in Cairo, Israel and the PLO signed an agreement for the implementation of self-government for the Palestinians, the Gaza Strip, and the Jericho area. It became known as the Gaza-Jericho agreement, which encompassed Jericho and the surrounding area. Primarily, it provided for the withdrawal of all Israeli military forces and a transfer of power from Israeli civil authorities to Palestinian authorities including police duties. It also addressed four main issues, including security arrangements, civil affairs, legal matters and economic relations.

On August 29th, Israel and the Palestinians signed a further agreement on "Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities,"²³ which was designed to put the early empowerment clause of the DOP into effect. The agreement provided for the transfer of powers to the Palestinian authority in five areas, including education and culture, social welfare, tourism, health, and taxation. Most of the agreement was implemented by the end of 1994, with the exception of Social Welfare.

²⁰ "Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations" ask@israel-info.gov.il.

²¹ Israel in the past had steadfastly refused to deal in any way with the PLO. It was their firm stance that the PLO was a criminal terrorist organisation and as such was not entitled to recognition and would not be dealt with on the diplomatic front. It was and is the Israeli government's policy not to negotiate in any form with terrorists and until that point the PLO was considered a terrorist organisation. For the Israeli government to officially recognise the PLO showed a dramatic change in attitude. It meant that Israel was prepared to accept the PLO as a legitimate body and no longer as terrorists and criminals.

²² Ibid.

²³ "Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations." ask@israel-info.gov.il

On September 28 1995 an interim agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, was signed, which marked the end of the first stage in the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. It incorporated elements of, and superseded the earlier Gaza, Jericho, and the Early Empowerment agreements, and was designed to "broaden Palestinian self government in the West Bank by means of an elected self-governing authority - the Palestinian Council."²⁴ The period of implementation was not to exceed five years. Essentially the two parties had until May 1999 to implement the entire agreement and make arrangements for a more permanent solution. The agreement was to allow the Palestinians to conduct their own internal affairs, and thereby reduce tensions with the Israeli authorities. It was also designed to safeguard Israeli interests in the region particularly those relating to security, both external and internal.²⁵ It marked real move toward the possible establishment of a Palestinian state.

This part of the peace process was largely an internal matter for Israel. Its strategic significance lay in its potential to stabilise the disputed territories through diplomatic negotiation. The nature of terrorism does not lend itself to territorial concerns, from a defence perspective. Consequently, a geographic buffer can not be established within Israel or the disputed territories, to safeguard against terrorism. Therefore, in order to provide strategic depth, Israel was required to seek it on the diplomatic front. By initiating the peace process, Israel sought to end the violence and remove the threat of terrorism, thereby stabilising the region and reducing its internal security concerns.

Externally, peace was pursued with Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. These negotiations resulted in the most significant achievement of the current peace process: peace with Jordan. On July 25th 1995, an agreement was formulated under the auspices of the United States known as the "Washington Declaration," which formally ended hostilities between the two countries and established a formula for the negotiation of a formal peace treaty, and was a continuation of the

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Although much of that agreement was implemented and both parties have made great strides in recent years, the agreement has yet to be fully realised. With the shifting governments in Israel and the current violence ongoing now, it is difficult to determine just how far the agreement will be implemented. At this point there is an even greater risk that much of what has already been implemented may be rescinded.

September 1993 Common Agenda.²⁶ The agreement addressed seven main areas of concern and thirty separate articles,²⁷ and formalised a common understanding of non-aggression and a commitment to pursue a peace treaty. Additionally, it provided the framework for "breaking down of psychological barriers and to break with the legacy of war."²⁸ A formal peace treaty was finally signed on October 26th.

In Syria, the leadership there seems to be softening and it no longer clings to an adamant stand calling for the destruction of Israel. The Syrian government has moderated, and with the death of Assad, real progress seems likely. Syria may be willing to offer formal recognition and peace in exchange for the return of the Golan Heights. They have, perhaps, finally realised that they are not in a position to take the Golan Heights back by force, and that negotiation may be their only option. The loss of the Golan Heights is of great concern, strategically, for Israel. The

²⁶ On September 14th 1993 Israel and Jordan agreed to an agenda, which became known as the "Israel-Jordan Common Agenda." It was formalised in Washington and its goal was: "The achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between the Arab States, the Palestinians and Israel as per the Madrid invitation." ("Israel-Jordan Common Agenda." The original text as reproduced by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs at ask@israel-info.gov.il.) In the agenda both sides agreed to negotiate on issues of security, aimed at an eventual end to formal hostilities and a lasting peace. It also included negotiations on water resources, the alleviation of the refugee and displaced persons problem, and borders and territorial matters. Additionally, there were agreements on future bilateral co-operation, including natural resources, human resources, infrastructure and economic areas.

²⁷ Briefly, it formalised international boundaries between the two nations, provided for security arrangements, and guaranteed non-aggression between them. It dealt with an agreement on the sharing of water resources from the Jordan and Yarmouk River systems and their ground water tables. It guaranteed the freedom of passage between the two nations and the safeguarding of places of historical and religious significance. It dealt with the agreement of both nations concerning the problem of refugees and displaced persons. Finally, the treaty provided for the formal normalisation of diplomatic relations between Israel and Jordan. "Main Points of Israel-Jordan Peace treaty, October 26th, 1994." As presented by the Israeli Ministry of foreign Affairs at ask@israel-info.gov.il. It should also be noted that as a result of the progress made in the Middle East Peace Process, Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres, and Yitsak Rabin were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1994.

²⁸ Both King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Rabin of Israel believed that if a formal peace agreement was to be negotiated and implemented that such barriers between the two nations had to be eliminated as quickly as possible. They believed that "[b]y working with optimism towards the dividends of peace for all the people in the region, Jordan and Israel [were] determined to shoulder their responsibilities toward the human dimension of peace making. They recognise imbalances and disparities are a root cause of extremism which thrives on poverty and unemployment and the degradation of human dignity." Consequently a number of infrastructure, civil and economic initiatives were embarked on before a treaty was formally signed. ("The Washington Declaration, July 25th, 1994" as reproduced by the Israeli Ministry of foreign Affairs and presented at ask@israel-info.gov.il.)

territory was crucial in the nation's defence during the 1973 war, and continues to be so today.²⁹ If Israel were to give up the Golan Heights, it would have to demonstrate a willingness to accept the exchange of traditional strategic depth through geography with non-traditional strategic depth provided by a peace treaty.

As a result, progress with Syria has been slow. Negotiations were conducted in 1995 under the auspices of the United States. There, Israel indicated that it was willing to "accept the principle of withdrawal from the Golan Heights, in the context of a peace settlement."³⁰ However, such a settlement must include addressing four key issues; the degree of an Israeli withdrawal, a viable schedule for withdrawal, linked with the normalisation of relations, and finally, security arrangements. With that proposal, Yitzak Rabin stated publicly that "the degree of Israeli withdrawal [would be] to the degree of peace achieved," and that a peace treaty negotiated with Syria "...including any significant withdrawal from the Golan Heights... be put to a national referendum before it is signed."³¹

Lebanon was another key area of negotiation. Progress with Lebanon has been much slower than it has been with other Arab nations largely because of the Palestinian terrorist threat and Syrian influence. Israel still occupied significant areas in southern Lebanon in 1995, and was largely committed to remaining there as long as the terrorist threat remained. Therefore, as long as trouble existed between the Palestinians and Israel, progress with Lebanon was difficult.³² However, that situation had changed in recent years, and Israel has finally begun to withdraw, conducting a significant withdrawal in the spring and summer of 2000. Unfortunately, much of the progress made there is either on hold or seriously damaged as a result of new violence that erupted in September 2000 and continues to this day.

²⁹ Israel has one further key issue with the return of the Golan Heights, Israeli settlement there. Israel has allowed settlement in the Golan over the last thirty years. Therefore the Golan issue goes beyond strategic concerns in that it becomes problematic to remove Israeli settlements in order to return the Golan Heights.

³⁰ "Israel-Syria." ask@israel-info.gov.il.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Israel's commitment to remain in Lebanon was reinforced by the presence Hezbollah, and other terrorist organisations, which operate outside of the control of the Lebanese government. Although the PLO as a collective entity is no longer a threat, splinter groups still use southern Lebanon as a staging area and base of operations, despite repeated attempts by the Lebanese government to evict or control them. Conflict with Hezbollah still plagues Israel with terrorist and rocket attacks, prompting a rather significant military response by the Israelis on a number of occasions.

Syria's involvement is a crucial issue. It still supports many organisations like Hezbollah. Thus, in order for Israel to reach an agreement with Lebanon, it must also reach an agreement with Syria, and agreement with Syria must assuredly involve an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. It becomes a vicious circle for the negotiations. All of that may in fact be changing in Syria with the death of President Assad. A change in leadership there may bring a softening in stance and a greater predisposition toward negotiation and compromise.

4.2 SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF THE PEACE PROCESS: THE EFFECTS ON SECURITY AND STRATEGIC DOCTRINE

To understand fully Israel's security concerns over the Peace Process, one must examine it from two perspectives, concerns over peace with the Arab League nations, and the possibility of the establishment of a Palestinian state within the occupied territories. Each has a bearing on strategic depth.

The Arab-Israeli Peace process has already made great strides in securing the existence of Israel. Peace with Egypt in 1979 made the maintenance of a strategic buffer in the Sinai largely obsolete. Peace with Jordan has eased tensions in the West Bank and on much of Israel's eastern borders, in spite of the fact that Israel has not returned the West Bank. All of this does not mean that Israel is safe from outside attack however. Trouble could still come from the three nations, which have yet to make formal peace: Iraq, Syria, and by extension Lebanon.

To exist within such a volatile region, Israel must also ensure that it is prepared to counter any violation of peace treaties. Politics and leadership in the region can change virtually overnight, and Israel must be prepared for it. This itself has been a great stumbling block in the peace process, as Israel has always been extremely hesitant to enter into any peace agreement, which may limit it strategically. "For [the Israelis] if they pull back from entrenched defence lines, [they] feel more vulnerable with each step backwards. For [Israeli's] strategy for defence and strategy for peace are two sides of the same coin."³³ Consequently, they have always been extremely careful, if not obsessive, about writing the maximum number of safeguards as possible into any peace agreement that they enter in to. Safeguards provide strategic depth. The more

³³ Avraham Tamir, Major General, A Soldier in Search of Peace. Pp 2,3.

safeguards the less chance for conflict and the greater the strategic depth.

To gauge the threat posed to Israel today, one must consider one overriding fact. The paradox of the achievement of peace, for Israel has been consistently determined by war. It has been a fact of Israel's existence that an Arab nation will only come to terms with its existence if it recognises the permanence of it.³⁴ Recognition thus far has only resulted from defeat in war. Recognition and a viable peace agreement have also been the only hope for an enemy to regain control of a territory lost to Israel. That has most certainly been true for Egypt. It is because of that peace agreement that the Sinai was returned and the Egyptian threat was negated. Israel remains concerned. It still insists that the Sinai remain a demilitarised zone, and maintains that any large-scale mobilisation of Egyptian troops into the Sinai, remains one of its strategic triggers.

The situation with Jordan is far less clearly defined. Even though a peace treaty is in place and holding, the West Bank has not been given back, and it is most likely that it will become part of a Palestinian State, rather than be returned. This itself is not unpalatable to Jordan. Strategically, three key factors prevent Israel from returning the West Bank to Jordan; the Holy City of Jerusalem, the fact that the West Bank forms a bulge on the eastern side of the Israeli – Jordanian border that makes defence without holding the territory difficult and the possibility of the establishment of a Palestinian State there.

Jerusalem is a key focal point for not only the Jewish faith but for Christianity and Islam too. This may not appear to be a strategic objective. However, with a nation such as Israel, where its religion is so closely tied to political and social systems, it has become one. There is still a great belief within Israel that Jerusalem is the historical capital of the Jewish nation and that it should be again.

The disputed territories of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank pose a threat to lasting peace between Israel and Jordan and Egypt. Each has different strategic implications. The Gaza Strip is important strategically for security against infiltration and the threat of terrorism, as the Fedayeen once used it. With respect to a threat of invasion, the Gaza Strip serves little purpose in the way of a physical strategic buffer. Its relevance is more psychological and political rather

³⁴ Ibid, P 3.

than military. To add to this, both Egypt and Jordan still desire the return of the territories.

It seems likely that both treaties with Egypt and Jordan will continue to hold. Both nations entered into negotiations openly and with a genuine desire for peace. Moreover, Jordan has always been the moderate in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Consequently, it is likely that Israel can lay most of its fears over Jordan to rest. It is however, more than just the treaties that will ensure the stability of both those borders. The personalities of both Sadat and Mubarak of Egypt and the late King Hussein and his oldest son, now successor of Jordan, made peace possible and have allowed it to endure. It is therefore the peace treaties more than the occupation of the West Bank and the demilitarised nature of the Sinai, which provides strategic depth for Israel. The real external danger still lies with Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

Iraq has proven to be Israel's most dangerous external threat in recent years. Saddam Hussein demonstrated in 1991 that the Arab-Israeli conflict was far from over, and that war in the Middle East would inevitably involve Israel. Although Iraq's Scud missile attacks on Israel did not cause significant damage, they proved to Israel that technology was a significant factor in providing strategic depth. Had Iraqi missiles carried nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, the devastation in Israel would have been great. (Figure 4.1³⁵ shows Iraqi missile coverage over in Israel in 1991.) This danger has still not been eased with the end of the Gulf War and UN imposed sanctions against Iraq. As recently as February 2001 Saddam Hussein has still proven defiant, regardless of air strikes by the United States and Great Britain to enforce the UN no-fly zone.

The real threat from Iraq as discussed, comes from the danger of it producing weapons of mass destruction, with a delivery system capable of reaching Israel. Iraq has already demonstrated the latter ability during the Gulf war with SCUD missile attacks, and intelligence reports from the end of the war indicate that in fact very few SCUD Missile launchers were destroyed. Additionally, Saddam Hussein's continued lack of co-operation with UN weapons inspectors, and his secretiveness regarding certain military and industrial sites, may also indicate further development of such weapons.

³⁵ Jewish Virtual Library, www.us-israel.org.

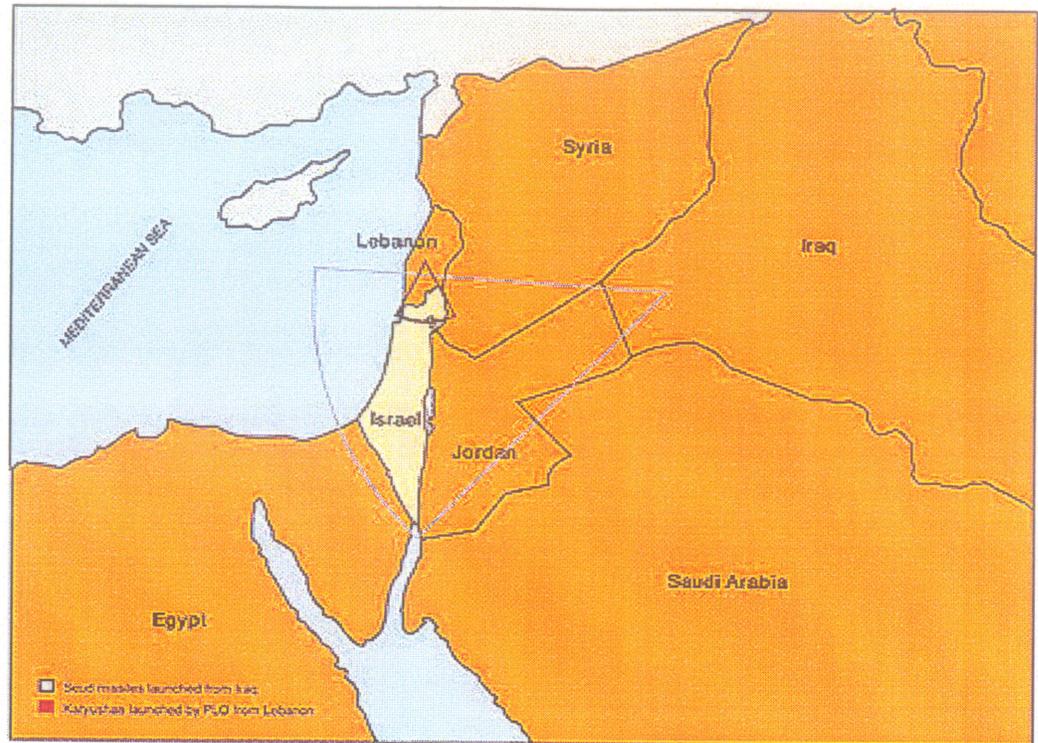


Figure 4.1

The danger of a conventional offensive from Iraq was largely negated by the 1991 war. The Iraqi army, with the exception of much of the Republican Guard units, was largely destroyed, and what little air force they had was either destroyed or fled to Iran. Additionally, UN embargoes have resulted in a limited ability for Iraq to rebuild its forces, and to properly mobilise what it has left. Moreover, the United States and Great Britain, acting under UN auspices, continue to monitor virtually everything Iraq does. Any large troop movements would surely be detected and countered long before they leave Iraqi soil. Additionally, Jordan, with its peace treaty with Israel, provides an effective spatial buffer between. Going through Jordan is simply no longer an option as an invasion route. Additionally, Saudi Arabia, as a result of its alliance with the United States and the coalition during the war, is also not an option for an invasion route. The only remaining option for a conventional strike would be a combined effort with Syria, and an offensive coming from the North through the Golan Heights, which is also not likely because of the current peace negotiations. It is therefore the peace treaty with Jordan and the American led UN force, which

provides the necessary strategic depth to ensure that a conventional threat from Iraq is neutralised.

The Iraqi situation forces Israel toward a policy of strategic depth through technology. It continues to believe that a strong nuclear deterrent is vital as long as peace is not fully realised. With a legitimate Iraqi threat and a history of defiance and its drive to acquire weapons of mass destruction, Israel also feels that it must maintain a nuclear monopoly in the region and police the other nations so as to prevent proliferation.

The threat from Syria and Lebanon, as discussed, is inextricably tied, as is any peace with them. The key issue is Palestinian terrorism, rather than a conventional offensive. As recent as 1996, Hezbollah conducted numerous attacks including Khatusha rocket attacks into northern Israel in much the same manner as the PLO did in the late 1970s and 1980s. Israel was again required to renew military action in Lebanon in April 1996. As long as terrorists use southern Lebanon as a staging area, Israel must be ever vigilant. With the IDF withdrawal in May 2000, and with renewed violence in the occupied territories since September 2000, the IDF must maintain a heightened state of readiness, especially without the buffer provided by the occupation in Lebanon.

The continued occupation of the territories has left Israel in a "territorial dilemma" as Avraham Tamir describes it. In reality Israel has only two stable, recognised borders. Those are the borders with Egypt, excluding the Gaza Strip and those with Jordan, with the exception of the West Bank. All other borders are still in dispute and consequently subject to revision either through diplomacy or the use of force. He further describes the problem by stating that:

"It involves issues fundamental to the future: national security; the final borders of the state; its demographic make-up; the democratic nature of its government and society; and the prospect of a peaceful solution to the Israeli – Arab conflict."³⁶

The peace process for Israel is inextricably tied to national defence, and by extension strategic doctrine. Territorial concessions will directly shape its strategic doctrine. Feelings on this matter, within Israel, fall along two opposing schools of thought: those not willing to give up

³⁶ Tamir, Avraham, *Opcit*, P 176

territory for peace because it would leave Israel far too vulnerable, and those willing to do so.

The "Greater Israel school" as Tamir describes it, is the more widely accepted school, which "calls for an undivided state that extends from the Mediterranean to the River Jordan, the area that was Western Palestine under the British Mandate."³⁷ Strategically, the maintenance of control of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is viewed as crucial to Israel's defence. Even with a peace treaty with Jordan and Egypt in place, many Israelis believe that if these territories were to come under hostile Arab rule, a military infrastructure could be developed so as to provide the means for a devastating surprise attack having the potential to sever the country. Additionally, without the control of these territories, Arab artillery and anti-aircraft systems as in the past, could cover most of Israel. Adding to that, the threat of infiltration and terrorism from both the West Bank and the Gaza strip from Palestinians dissatisfied with the solution could create a formidable psychological barrier against relinquishing control over the territories. "Only by holding these territories could Israel secure the minimum depth for its defence."³⁸ Peace treaty or not, the overriding concern in Israel is that if peace fails and Israel does not control the disputed territories, it would be unable to maintain an effective defence.

In contrast, the opposing view, championed by the Labour coalition in Israel, is far more receptive to returning the disputed territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, or using them for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Until recently, that view has been regarded as unreasonable and unacceptable to Israel. Even Egypt and Jordan have agreed that the establishment of an independent Palestinian state either in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, or both, is unrealistic. They believe that such a state would not be viable both economically or security wise.³⁹ Therein lies the problem. It is difficult to establish a Palestinian state while still maintaining the integrity of Israel and satisfying the wishes and requirements of the Palestinian people.

The issue of the establishment of a Palestinian state can not be ignored in any discussion of Israeli strategic doctrine. Until the mid 1990s such a prospect would have been considered

³⁷ Ibid, P 177

³⁸ Ibid,

³⁹ Tamir, Avraham, Opcit p 179

absolutely unthinkable. However, as the peace process moves forward, such a prospect is not outside the realm of possibility. There have been three basic theoretical approaches concerning Palestinian statehood that have emerged recently, including the Labour coalition view of giving up the West Bank and Gaza Strip for the establishment of a Palestinian state. The most widely accepted in Israel has been (until recently) the view held by the Greater Israel School, which favours the establishment of a state within the borders of Jordan.⁴⁰ Such an approach would effectively cede the West Bank to Israel, and force Jordan to either relinquish territory to the Palestinians or create a province for them.⁴¹ Strategically, the Greater Israel school offers the greatest strategic advantage geographically, because Israel would retain both the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The United States proposed A third plan in 1985 called the "Reagan Plan." It was a compromise between the Greater Israel and Labour views, and called for the occupied territories of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to be turned over to the Palestinians to form a "Palestinian national entity linked to Jordan in a single federal state."⁴² Both Jordan and Egypt favoured the plan along with the majority of the population of the territories and the Israeli Labour party. It had the virtue of ending Israeli rule and bringing the Palestinians under Arab rule in an economically and militarily secure environment. The Reagan plan was rejected outright by the Begin government, which clearly did not see it to be in the best interests of Israel.⁴³

The most critical strategic implication for Israel, remains the possibility of the formation of

⁴⁰ Tamir, Avraham, *Opcit*, Pp 177, 178.

⁴¹ The Greater Israel School believes that because the vast majority of Jordanian citizens are Palestinian Arabs, and that the territory, which is now Jordan, was part of Palestine under the British Mandate, and closed to Jewish immigration, the responsibility for the Palestinians rests with Jordan.

⁴² Tamir, Avraham, *Opcite*, P 180.

⁴³ It is difficult to determine whether a Palestinian state will be realised. The peace process may or may not be moving in that direction. With the defeat of the Netanyahu government last year, and the election of Ehud Barak and a labour government, Israel's stand on the giving up of the occupied territories softened greatly. It appears now that many Israelis, weary of war and the constant threat of terrorism, appear ready to support territorial concessions in exchange for peace and some measure of guarantee for their security. Agreements have been negotiated with the PLO, and certain areas of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank have been turned over to Palestinian authorities for administration. Yet there is still a strong Israeli civilian and military presence in the occupied territories and true autonomy for the Palestinian people still appears to be far away. The crux of the issue for Israeli security, is the giving up of the occupied territories, either for a Palestinian state or to return them to their Arab neighbours. Heller, Mark A., *A Palestinian State: Implications for Israel*. P 22.

a more effective Arab coalition, to include the support of a Palestinian state. It would have the potential to be a coalition that Israel, with its reduction of strategic, would be hard-pressed to cope with. Should the peace process be realised fully, and with that should Israel withdraw completely from the disputed territories, then it will be required to re-invent its strategic doctrine.

The future of Israel's security will depend on three key factors, the establishment of viable peace agreements with its neighbours, which have sufficient security safeguards built into them, the political stability of the region, which will determine the strength of any treaties forged, and the future shape of Israel's strategic doctrine. It is this third factor that Israel must focus on once the treaties are in place, because it will be the one factor of which Israel will have direct and complete control.

4.3 SHOULD PEACE BE REALISED: ISRAEL'S OPTIONS FOR SECURITY

If Israel is to give up any of the occupied territories it must, by definition, find alternatives to traditional strategic depth through geography. Peace treaties will provide some strategic depth. However, that will not be sufficient to ensure a feeling of security for Israel. Israel still has a collective siege mentality and its citizens must therefore feel secure before significant territorial concessions can be made. In order to ensure its security Israel has three additional options: its special relationship with the United States, nuclear deterrence and a policy of pre-emption.

Few can argue that the United States and Israel do not have a 'special relationship.' Since the creation of Israel, the United States has been Israel's greatest supporter. It was the first nation to recognise formally Israel as a nation, and with the removal of the colonial powers, after 1956, it assumed the role of guarantor for Israel. The special relationship between the two seemingly divergent nations is an unusual one indeed. Both contrast greatly in world influence, location, geography and natural resources. Dan Raviv and Yossi Melman sum up the unusual relationship between the two nations as follows:

"The relationship between the United States and Israel has come to be one of the strongest, if strangest, in history. It cannot be explained by one single event, personality, or motive. Rather it is the product of unexpected occurrences and dramatic coincidences forming a foundation on which dreamers, leaders,

and ordinary people have added their intentional deeds.”⁴⁴

Many have attempted to explain the relationship. However, few single works have done so entirely. It is therefore impractical to attempt to explain it fully here. In order to understand how this relationship is relevant to strategic doctrine, only a brief overview is necessary.

General Avraham Tamir explains the special relationship as built upon three factors: a shared Judaeo-Christian religious heritage, the large Jewish population in the United States, which has formed itself into an influential political lobby group, and a similar political ideology.⁴⁵ Raviv and Melman hold Tamir's three factors true. However, they have expanded this reasoning to five factors; Religion, including a shared Judeo Christian heritage, and a Christian Fascination with the Holy Land, a collective feeling of sympathy and guilt over the Holocaust, a common strategic objective, a common democratic value, and the influence of the large American Jewish population on American domestic politics.⁴⁶

The guarantor / guarantee relationship, which has evolved over the years, is crucial to Israel's security. The United States will not allow Israel to be destroyed. Its continued existence is far too deeply ingrained in the American psyche for it to tolerate. Combining this with the strategic importance of Israel, even with the end of the Cold War, the United States is committed to the defence and maintenance of the continued existence of Israel.⁴⁷ Raviv and Melman have best summed up the importance of the relationship with one brutally simple and honest statement: “[The] United States has many allies, and Israel has only one. Israel is quite important to a few Americans, but of occasional interest to most. To all Israelis, on the other hand, the United States

⁴⁴ Raviv, D. and Melman, Y. Friends in Deed: Inside the U.S. – Israel Alliance. Pp xiii, xiv.

⁴⁵ Throughout the Cold War Israel was seen as the only stable democratic nation in the region, which could be relied upon strategically, to counter both the Soviet threat and the spread of Islamic Fundamentalism. So important was and is this factor that in 1987 President Reagan accorded to Israel the status of a ‘non – NATO ally’ a distinction only shared with Egypt, Japan, Australia and South Korea. Tamir, Avraham, *OpCit* Pp 208, 209.

⁴⁶ Raviv and Melman further believe that the relationship deeper than simply these factors. In fact it is a relationship that is very clearly far greater than the sum of its foundation factors. The explanation of why this relationship exists is a topic of great importance in any discussion of Israeli politics. However, it is an explanation whose relevance is limited to this discussion suffice to say that such a relationship does exist and with respect to Israeli defence, the strategic factor is of most importance and will be the focus here. (Raviv and Melman, *OpCit*, P xiv.)

⁴⁷ However, one must never forget one vitally important truism, the relationship is far more important to the Israelis than it is to the United States. Without such an alliance the United States would continue relatively unchanged, Israel's continued existence, conversely, would not at all be guaranteed.

is extremely important.”⁴⁸

The provision of military aid and military co-operation, is something the Americans have deeply involved themselves in. In the early years, arms and equipment were the most vital supplies that the Israelis needed for their defence. They had gone through their war of independence relying on themselves and Jews of the world to obtain arms. It was not until 1951, as the relationship between the United States and Israel began to solidify, that the Israelis formally asked for arms from the United States. The request was initially turned down. However, “it [the request] planted the seeds for a process that would finally and decisively draw Israel into the U.S. Cold War camp,”⁴⁹ thus paving the way for future arms deals.

The American stand changed in 1955 when Nasser completed a substantial arms deal with Czechoslovakia, and threatened to dramatically shift the balance of power in the region. Israel again renewed its request for arms, which was granted,⁵⁰ and American weapons and military equipment began to arrive in Israel near the end of 1955.

Nonetheless, the Eisenhower administration hardened its view toward the delivery of weapons to Israel. Eisenhower believed that the key to stability in the region did not lie in the supplying of arms, and he was therefore, reluctant to provide them. He was willing, with the aid of the Intelligence community, to provide Israel with sophisticated detection equipment. Ben-Gurion lobbied Eisenhower, extensively, for the purchase of Hawk anti-aircraft missiles to counter the Egyptian air threat. However, it was not until John F. Kennedy came to power that Ben-Gurion received his missiles, although in secret.⁵¹

In 1965 President Johnson made a momentous decision. He decided to break the long standing American policy of an embargo on the sale of offensive weapons to Israel and approved an arms package to include 250 M-48 Patton tanks, and forty-eight A-4 Skyhawk fighter / bombers. Later in a separate agreement Johnson agreed to the sale of fifty F-4 Phantom jets.⁵² The result was a quantitative leap forward in air power for the Israelis. The new American aircraft

⁴⁸ Raviv and Melman, *Opcit*, P xv.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, P 59.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, Pp 78,79.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, Pp 90-93.

⁵² *Ibid*, P 111, 112.

combined with the French Mirage fighters that Israel already possessed, created the imbalance in air power in the region.⁵³

Israeli / American arms agreements remained relatively unchanged until 1973, when the 1973 War dramatically increased sympathy for Israel in the United States. Consequently, in 1974 the Nixon Administration approved \$2.2 billion in military equipment, with \$1.5 billion being an outright gift on the insistence of Congress.⁵⁴ 1975 was to see a dramatic shift in those relations again.

Two key events occurred in 1975 to change American-Israeli relations. First, American companies were having difficulty in maintaining business agreements with Arab nations, as long as the United States remained friendly with Israel. The Americans realised that stability in the region, combined with good relations, was very much in their own national interest. This directly led to the United States' becoming involved in the Arab - Israeli peace process.

Israeli-American relations became extremely strained when the Americans called for Israeli troop withdrawals in the Sinai. Israel flatly refused to entertain the prospect and relations reached an all time low. The situation resulted in President Ford announcing a "reassessment of America's relationship with Israel."⁵⁵ The result was a virtual freeze on arms deliveries, in February 1975, as the United States sought to use arms deliveries as a bargaining chip. Rabin eventually capitulated and agreed to withdraw the IDF to the passes. The end result was the signing of the first Sinai Accord, as a direct result of American intervention. The flow of American equipment began again, with an additional \$500 million added as a concession for the Accord. Included, was an agreement to station a small number of American troops in the Sinai and the provision of enhanced, air early warning equipment. Arms and equipment agreements between

⁵³ Their acquisition led not only to the Soviets increasing their supply of SAM systems to the Egyptians, it contributed to the level of destruction in the War of Attrition, and also was instrumental in Israeli salvation during the 1973 War. By that time the Americans and the Russians were irrevocably committed to the region and the Arab - Israeli conflict became more than a regional one, it became a proxy war for the superpowers.

⁵⁴ Raviv and Melman, *Op cit* P 168.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, P 167.

the Americans and the Israelis began to be the norm rather than the exception.⁵⁶

The 1979 Peace treaty between Israel and Egypt combined with the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian Revolution, became the catalyst for formalised strategic co-operation between the two nations. Both became very concerned over the renewed Soviet threat in the region, and growing instability there. Israel realised that it was caught in a vicious circle. The strategic changes and the rift in the Arab League as a result of the 1979 Peace agreement, resulted in both of the superpowers becoming more and more involved in the region. Increased Soviet arming of Arab nations increased the threat of attack, thus causing Israel to realise that it needed American aid in order to fend off such an attack. Yet Israel also realised that direct U.S. intervention was unlikely and that it would still be required to defend itself with its own resources. Consequently, Israel maintained a mandate to act on its own, independent of American approval and assistance, in matters of self-defence.⁵⁷

The Israeli approach to strategic co-operation was to solicit Washington for a plan, which was focussed only in areas that related to Israel's national security and American strategic interests in the region.⁵⁸ It was first formalised in late 1981 with the Israeli – American Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Co-operation. It was never fully implemented. However, in the end, President Reagan decided that American – Israeli co-operation would be “broadly aimed at deterring the USSR from endangering peace in the region and would be anchored in [the] strategic Memorandum of Understanding,”⁵⁹ which contained five main provisions (Figure 4.2).

The provisions of the Memorandum were never fully implemented, as a result of

⁵⁶ In 1980 the Israelis were sold a number of the very advanced and very effective F-16 fighter / bomber aircraft. (It was those aircraft, which they used to destroy the Iraqi nuclear facility in 1981). Aid continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s with a noticeable high point being the 1991 Gulf War, when the Americans stationed Patriot anti-aircraft / missile batteries in Israel, in order to counter the SCUD Missile threat.

⁵⁷ Tamir, A., *Op cit*, P 214.

⁵⁸ Israel was prepared for “strategic co-operation with the U.S. on a broad basis, covering land, sea, and air forces; production and maintenance of weapons systems; scientific research and development; intelligence; deterrence policy and medical facilities.” However they did make it abundantly clear to the Americans that in no way would they compromise their independent defence policy or subordinate it to the Americans for the sake of strategic co-operation. (*Ibid*, P 215.)

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, P 217.

numerous tensions.⁶⁰ However, strategic co-operation between the two countries continued. Throughout the 1980s, the American government became more and more pro-Israel, largely due to the Jewish lobby. By 1987 strategic co-operation was formalised when the United States granted the status of Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA) to Israel, which essentially gave it all the benefits of other NATO nations, and formalised America's commitment to safeguard it. Later, Reagan signed the "Memorandum of Understanding between the United States of America and the State of Israel Regarding Joint Political, Security, and Economic Co-operation" in 1988, which served to "institutionalise the special alliance." From then on all military, economic, commercial, industrial, and strategic joint groups had a "formal basis" which was "legally binding," and as a result, Israeli-American co-operation grew significantly by the early 1990s.⁶¹

American military aid and strategic and intelligence co-operation have become so deeply ingrained in the practices of both countries that neither can envision a situation without it. American guarantees for Israel are virtually unshakeable and will continue to be a cornerstone of Israeli defence. The militaries of both countries have an extremely strong rapport, and joint military exercises are commonplace.

Arguably the most important role that the United States plays in providing strategic depth to Israel, is that of guarantor. However, it has further augmented strategic depth by acting as the primary agent to broker peace in the region. Although not a military role per se, American involvement has changed the level of threat that the Arab League nations pose toward Israel. American influence greatly enhanced regional stability in the Middle East, which only enhances Israeli security, and further reduces its need for strategic buffers.

⁶⁰ The Americans froze implementation of the provisions shortly after the Knesset ratified it. The Americans seemed to view the plan as a further way to control the Israelis, and was a view that the Israelis did not agree with. Israel would not under any circumstances be intimidated by the United States, nor would it at any time, give any sort of concession regarding autonomy over its defence policy or strategic doctrine. The implementation of the provisions was further stalled by Israel's actions in the Golan Heights. The imposition of Israeli law in the Golan Heights, which the Americans saw as further Israeli entrenchment and a further obstacle to overcome if peace was to be achieved with Syria, was not in line with American intentions in the region. Further, the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear facility and later the invasion of Lebanon compounded tensions with the Americans, who sought to use the agreement as a bargaining chip to bring the Israelis into line. The United States however, failed to anticipate the hard-line response on the part of Israel.

⁶¹ By 1990 the two countries were engaged in no less than 321 joint strategic ventures in defence research and development which had a combined value of \$2.9 billion. (Raviv and Melman, *Op cit* Pp 248 - 251.)

**Provisions of the 1981 American - Israeli
Memorandum of Understanding
On Strategic Co-operation**

1. Strategic co-operation between the two parties was directed against the threat posed by the Soviet Union to the peace and security of the region, and not against any state or group of states within the region.
2. The strategic co-operation would extend, subject to agreement, to military co-operation, joint exercises, joint planning and preparatory measures.
3. A co-ordinating council would be set up to direct the work of joint working groups. To supervise implementation of agreed measures, it would hold periodic meetings in Israel and the United States.
4. The joint working groups would deal with joint exercises, including sea and air exercises in the Eastern Mediterranean; preparatory measures, such as access to maintenance and other infrastructure facilities; research and development, military procurement; and advance stationing of forces.
5. The Memorandum could be cancelled by either side on six months' notice.⁶²

Figure 4.2

Israel is also very much in favour of the Americans forming close strategic agreements with many of its Arab enemies. It encouraged greater strategic ties between the United States and Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan.⁶³ Such ties had two advantages for Israel; they ensured that there was American influence in these nations, versus Soviet influence, and they promoted stability in the region, because the closer these nations became to the United States, the less likely they would be to attack Israel. Greater American influence in Arab countries also shifted the defence dilemma to the Arabs. The Arab nations, friendly to the United States, were then forced to make the choice of potentially losing American military and economic aid and investment, should they decide to strike Israel.

Ties between both nations have become stronger and stronger over the years. They have become inextricably tied, militarily, socially, economically and diplomatically. The objective

⁶² Ibid, P 220.

⁶³ Ibid, Pp 214, 215

of the United States in the Middle East has always been stability with a secure Israel. This clearly illustrates why peace in the region is so important to it, and why it is so deeply involved in the peace process. The United States continues to seek an equitable solution to the Arab — Israeli issue: a solution, which would appease the Israelis, the displaced Palestinians and the Arab nations of the region. Should peace be realised, the United States will inevitably find itself in the role of overseer and stabilising agent for any such agreement. It would then find itself committed to Israel's security to an even greater degree than in the past. This perhaps, is Israel's greatest guarantee of security.

Even with this relationship, Israel, being a product of a history of conflict, is not a nation to rely solely on the security guaranties of other nations. It is a nation built on self-reliance, and a nation that will do whatever is required to ensure its own security. Therefore, should it fully commit to a peace plan, and withdraw entirely from the occupied territories, it would, by its very nature, seek its own security guarantees of which it has two. It can return to a greater reliance on a policy of pre-emption, as it did prior to 1967, and it has a nuclear deterrence.

A policy of pre-emption is something that comes very naturally to Israel. It has in fact maintained such a policy in spite of the strategic depth provided by the occupied territories, peace agreements, and involvement of the United States. Because of the "extended border" mindset, still present in Israel today, pre-emption has always been at the forefront of Israeli strategic thinking. Therefore, Israel will not have to return to a policy of pre-emption; it will simply continue with its current policy. The key difference will be that Israel will have reduced spatial and temporal buffers, which will result in two key imperatives. First it must reduce its reaction time, to a perceived threat, to the absolute minimum, and it must ensure that it has the correct strategic triggers in place, which will determine when to launch a pre-emptive strike.

Reaction time is largely axiomatic and is limited by force mobilisation, force posture, technology and intelligence. In order to reduce its response time, Israel may be forced to have a larger military force at the ready, with more regular and fewer reserve soldiers. This will have the effect of placing a greater strain on its economy by reducing the civilian workforce, and by increasing infrastructure, equipment, logistical support and maintenance costs required for such a

standing force. It is essentially the same problem that it experienced in June 1967. Additionally Israel will require a greater reliance on technology to ensure that its forces remain modern, and capable of meeting any potential threat, and it will have to rely even more on all types of intelligence in order to foresee a potential attack.

Strategic triggers will play a revitalised role as territories are returned. Israel will be required to consider carefully its strategic triggers: new ones may emerge, and old ones may re-surface. Again this will result in the need for a much quicker reaction time for Israeli forces. Reaction time is a key element for the future of Israeli defence. With minimal reaction time, Israel will be forced to pre-empt with much less cause than it currently does. It creates a potential problem, which could, ironically, cause a peace agreement to have a destabilising effect in the region rather than a stabilising effect.

Israel does, however, have one key strategic advantage that it did not have prior to 1967; a significant deployable nuclear deterrent, which is vital in the provision of strategic depth through technology. Since the early 1960s, Israel has been developing nuclear weapons. Over the decades there has been much speculation as to just how extensive Israel's nuclear arsenal is, and for many years the fact that Israel possessed nuclear weapons at all was a secret. Very few facts were available for international scrutiny. It was not until October 1986, when Israeli nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu revealed Israel's nuclear secrets, that the world received confirmation that Israel did, in fact, possess operational nuclear weapons.⁶⁴ Israel has neither confirmed nor denied that it possesses nuclear weapons.

The key advantage to possessing nuclear weapons is one of deterrence. Use of nuclear weapons in such a small region would undoubtedly result in unacceptable casualties, if not outright destruction for any nation using them against its neighbours. Israel would be no exception in this. However, it views its nuclear arsenal as giving it the ability to defend itself without the assistance of other nations. "Israel's nuclear programme is a fundamental element in its security. No Israeli government will entrust the country's fate to others, so it is most unlikely

⁶⁴ Cohen, Y. Nuclear Ambiguity: The Vanunu Affair. Page 1.

that any government will negotiate away its strategic superiority.⁶⁵ Thus superiority is defined by nuclear weapons, and is manifested by nuclear deterrence.

Israel's ambiguity toward its nuclear arsenal is part of its deterrence plan. Estimates have ranged from as little as twenty too as many as two hundred. However, the number is irrelevant, as the threat of one nuclear weapon is sufficient to provide credibility for deterrence. Given also that Israel is committed to maintaining nuclear superiority in the region, it will likely remain the sole nuclear power in the region for some time to come. Israel's nuclear deterrence is based upon two key factors then, its ambiguity as to its actual capability, combined with its articulated intent to use nuclear weapons for defence, and its maintenance of a nuclear monopoly.

It is widely believed that deterrence has already been tested, and quite effectively so, on two different occasions. The belief that Israel was developing or had developed a nuclear capability was a key factor motivating Sadat to pursue peace in 1977. Also, during the Gulf War, Israel had intimated on several occasions that it would use nuclear weapons if Iraq were to attack it with biological or chemical weapons. Then Prime Minister Itzhak Shamir stated publicly that if attacked by such weapons, it would retaliate "100 times over." Further, he stated on CNN; "Somebody threatening you with the most terrible weapons in the world has to think about certain responses to the use of such weapons."⁶⁶ It is difficult to determine just how effective such "sabre rattling" was. However, Iraq did not use chemical or biological warheads in its SCUD missile attacks on Israel.

4.4 CONCLUSION

It is difficult to determine if a lasting peace could ever truly be realised given the volatility of the region, the intense cultural and religious hatred, and the Israeli hard-line approach to negotiation. Any one of these factors could doom any peace process. An Arab-Israeli peace agreement, with the return of the occupied territories, will necessitate a fundamental rethinking of Israeli strategic doctrine, and will likely force Israel to return to a pre-1967 defence posture.

⁶⁵ Cohen, P 5.

⁶⁶ Ibid, P 2.

Without the occupied territories to provide some measure of spatial and temporal buffers, traditional strategic depth through geography is nullified. Additionally, with modern technology, the threat of air and missile attack is greater than at any time in the past. Chemical and biological weapons are also more lethal and easier to deploy than in the past, and an enemy's acquisition of such weapons would undoubtedly become a strategic trigger for Israel. Having the ability to simply react quickly will not ensure Israel's survival. Having the ability to predict an attack and pre-empt it is vital. However, this is based on a virtually infallible intelligence network. Israel has an effective human and electronic intelligence network but it lacks the technological resources to explore areas of satellite intelligence, which is vital in the modern world.

Strategic depth through non-traditional means is therefore the over-riding issue for Israeli strategic planners. Returning to a pre-1967 defence posture of pre-emption, based on a heightened state of readiness and tripping strategic triggers, will be more important in the future. However, true security for Israel will be a function of both the International system and technology. The returning of the occupied territories will force Israel to rely on three key strategic instruments to ensure its survival. It must actively pursue peace and ensure that it is lasting, it must maintain and cultivate its special relationship with the United States, and it must rely heavily on its nuclear deterrent.

CONCLUSION

Israel's strategic doctrine has evolved. It is a nation consistently seeking to achieve strategic depth. However, the focus of strategic depth has changed over the years. Initially, Israel sought to achieve strategic depth through the traditional means of geography. After the Six - Day War the importance of geography began to fall away, and the non-traditional means of acquiring strategic depth, through the international system and through technology, came to the forefront. Today, it is non-traditional strategic depth, which is the focus of Israeli strategic doctrine.

In the early years, Israel was a nation characterised by a desperate struggle for survival. It was very territorially shallow and under siege from virtually all of its Arab neighbours. Its military was made up largely of volunteers using what amounted to surplus and often scrap equipment. In 1948, when Israel declared its independence, it was not expected to survive the year, but it persevered and prospered over the past half century. During this time four key strategic themes developed, which became ingrained in Israel thinking, and still permeate the nation today. First, a national psyche characterised by a siege mentality developed, which drove Israelis to view themselves as desperate 'underdogs,' continually on the verge of destruction. Second, the military had to be extremely bold, flexible, and above all manoeuvrist in its doctrine. Third, Israel knew that if it were to survive it must gain a measure of strategic depth in order to

protect resources, and to provide buffers with which to hold its enemies at arm's length. Finally, Israel learned very quickly that it must be self-reliant when it came to defence, because it existed in a volatile region and could be attacked without warning. These themes became strategic imperatives and as such, resulted in Israel adopting a policy of pre-emption based around several strategic triggers, which if tripped resulted in Israel striking.

Over the years five strategic triggers evolved, which served as 'yardsticks' with which Israel gauged the relative threat to its security. They were: the development of a unified Arab military command, a significant Arab military build-up on or near its borders, a significant threat to its international trade, economy and resources, cross border threats to Israeli citizens and interests, and the possibility of its enemies developing weapons of mass destruction. It was these triggers that lead Israel to war in 1956, 1967 and 1982 along with various other smaller actions.

Israel has consequently, always viewed strategic depth as the key to its security. In its early years strategic depth was defined by geography. Israel sought to acquire territories to provide buffers against its enemies. The 1967 Six - Day war provided it with geographical strategic depth and buffers, and after 1967 Israel believed itself relatively secure. However, the 1973 war forced it to realise that strategic depth through geography was not sufficient to ensure its security. If Israel were to ensure its security it realised that it had to pursue strategic depth through the non-traditional means of the international system and technology, not just through geography.

In the modern era, Israel's security has become inextricably tied with three key factors in the international system; peace with its Arab neighbours, resolving the Palestinian Issue, and its special relationship with the United States. Peace with the Arab League nations means stability in the region, and the elimination of an external military threat. If Israel can maintain peace with Egypt and Jordan, and forge agreements with Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq it will gain strategic depth through peace. Peace with the Palestinian people, and a resolution of territorial issues, in whatever form that takes, means stability within the borders of Israel, and the elimination of the terrorist threat from various Palestinian factions. Should Israel achieve this, it would again gain

strategic depth through a peace agreement. The United States continues to play a large part in this process. It continues to be Israel's guarantor providing both military and economic aid. Additionally, the United States is both a facilitator and mediator in the Arab - Israeli peace process. It therefore provides strategic depth by both guaranteeing Israel's continued existence, and by facilitating the peace process.

However, because of its siege mentality born from its national psyche, Israel will still feel it necessary to provide its own solutions for security, especially if it were to return any further disputed territory that it continues to hold. For this it can rely on both strategic depth through technology, meaning nuclear weapons, and the maintenance of a monopoly on them, and by a return to a greater reliance on a policy of pre-emption. Israel is also committed to maintaining a nuclear monopoly over its Arab neighbours. By doing so Israel remains the only credible nuclear power in the region thereby ensuring deterrence and its strategic depth through technology.

Finally, Israel can re-vitalise its strategic triggers and thereby increase its readiness and willingness to maintain its policy of pre-emption. It is likely that Israel will move toward this, especially if it returns part or all of the remaining disputed territories. No matter how stable the region is, Israel will likely possess a certain degree of mistrust and is therefore compelled to maintain a policy of pre-emption.

Regardless of Israel's strategic options, it is a nation, which has difficulty trusting others. It continues to hold on to a siege mentality. It continues to demonstrate a lack of faith in international agreements and is very slow to warm to peace overtures. Given its violent history, this attitude is perhaps justifiable, however, given the changing nature of the international system, it becomes clear that peace is in the best interests of Israel. In order to realise a lasting peace it must overcome its mistrust to some degree and negotiate in good faith. It must feel that its security can be guaranteed without the need to hold the occupied territories.

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