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OPERATION PEACE FOR GALILEE

OPERATIONAL BRILLIANCE-STRATEGIC FAILURE

by

Bradley M. Jacobs

LCDR, USCG

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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On 6 June 1982, Israel invaded the neighboring state of Lebanon in Operation "Peace for Galilee". The planning and execution of this invasion is examined from an operational-strategic perspective. Tasked with carrying out the invasion, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) prepared detailed operational plans which used the principles of warfare to maximize Israel's advantages while minimizing its disadvantages. Upon execution of the plan, IDF units overran south Lebanon in a matter of days in spite of ardous terrain and stiff resistance. However, what was to have been a three day operation stretched into two months of combat followed by a bloody three year occupation of Lebanon. The strategic failure of the IDF despite the brilliance of its operational and tactical performance provides a number of valuable operational lessons. First, regardless of operational excellence, strategic success is unlikely when military operations fail to support policy. Next, a failure to match

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19. (cont) political and military objectives can cause major problems in the execution of military operations. Moreover, when using military force to deal with a primarily political problem, the identification of an enemy center of gravity based solely on military operations will preclude strategic success. Finally, failure to recognize the culminating point of victory in a military operation can lead to strategic overextension, exhaustion, and eventual defeat.

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I. INTRODUCTION

On 6 June 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon in what was publicly portrayed as a limited operation to drive the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) away from Israel's northern border. Tasked with carrying out the invasion, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) prepared detailed operational plans which maximized Israel's advantages while minimizing its disadvantages. Upon execution, Israeli units overran south Lebanon in a matter of days despite arduous terrain and stiff resistance. However, the actual purposes of the operation were much bolder than stated. Caught in a tangled web of conflicting objectives and hidden agendas, one of the world's finest military machines ground to a halt before achieving strategic success.

This strategic failure, in spite of brilliant operational and tactical performance, provides a number of valuable lessons in operational art. First, regardless of operational excellence, strategic success is unlikely when military operations fail to support policy. Next, a failure to match political and military objectives can cause major problems in the execution of military operations. Moreover, when using military force to deal with what is primarily a political problem, identification of an enemy center of gravity based solely on military operations precludes strategic success. Finally, failure to recognize the culminating point of victory in a military operation can lead to strategic overextension, exhaustion, and eventual defeat.

II. STRATEGIC BACKGROUND

In 1970, the PLO was driven from Jordan in the bloody fighting of "Black September." Fleeing to Lebanon, they established bases

in the southern portion of the country where, for the next few years, they raided Israel while expanding their control over the Lebanese. Fearful of growing PLO power and the increasing impotence of the Lebanese government, the Lebanese Christian community organized its own armed militia, the Phalange.[1]

In April 1975, civil war erupted in Lebanon between the Phalangists and the PLO resulting in the collapse of Lebanon's government and the disintegration of her army. Attempting to advance his hegemonic ambitions, Syrian President Assad used his army to intervene, first on behalf of the Phalangists and later on behalf of the PLO.[2] In an informal arrangement, Israel accepted the intervention provided Syrian troops stayed away from the Israeli border and didn't install surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) in Lebanon. When the fighting wound down in late 1976, Lebanon had ceased to exist as a nation; the PLO had a state-within-a-state in southern Lebanon; and the Syrian army dominated major portions of the remainder of the country.

As the civil war settled into sporadic skirmishing, the PLO increased the intensity of its raids against Israel. In response, Israel launched Operation "Litani" in March 1978 which seized a small strip of Lebanon to create a security zone against further PLO raids. After heated negotiations in the United Nations, Israel agreed to withdraw its troops. By June 1978, peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and Israeli-allied Christian militia replaced the last Israeli units.

Despite the presence of UNIFIL and the militia, PLO activities against Israel continued unabated as they clashed with the IDF in violent raids and counter-strikes. At the same time, the PLO built up its military capability by acquiring large numbers of heavy

weapons. Adding to the tension, Syria violated the tacit understanding with Israel by moving SAM batteries into Lebanon during April 1981 in response to increased Israeli air activity. The SAM crisis prompted U.S. President Reagan to dispatch Ambassador Phillip Habib who brokered a cease-fire thereby ending the fighting along the Israeli-Lebanese border.

The cease-fire had hardly gone into effect when a critical disagreement emerged concerning its terms. The PLO claimed it applied only to border hostilities and not operations inside Israel or in third countries; the Israelis insisted it applied to all hostilities. In the year between the cease-fire and the start of Operation "Peace for Galilee", the PLO continued raids against targets inside Israel and abroad, culminating in the assassination of the Israeli Ambassador to the United Kingdom. With its security still threatened by an aggressive and increasingly heavily armed PLO state in southern Lebanon, Israel decided to take action. Like the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914, Ambassador Argov's death provided the spark to ignite a war.

III. THE OPERATIONAL PLAN

A. Objective

To remove the militant threat from Israel's northern borders, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon and IDF Chief-of-Staff Rafael Eitan formulated three plans, each with different objectives. The first was a limited incursion similar to Operation "Litani" aimed at destroying the PLO in the border area. The IDF would avoid combat with Syrian forces and limit their advance to the Awali River line, approximately 40km into Lebanon.[3]

The second plan called for a slightly larger incursion whose objective was to destroy PLO forces in the southern sector of Lebanon. Again avoiding combat with Syrian forces, the IDF would advance to the suburbs of Beirut but would not enter the city. Instead, Israel's Phalangist allies would storm Beirut and crush the PLO.[4]

The third plan, known within the IDF as the "Big Plan", was the most ambitious. Its sweeping objectives included expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon, withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon, and establishment of a unified Lebanese government friendly to Israel.[5] To achieve this, IDF units would strike both PLO and Syrian forces, push all the way to Beirut, and enter the city in concert with Phalangist units.[6]

In Cabinet discussions following the Argov assassination, all three plans were presented. The majority of Israel's political leadership, including Prime Minister Begin, favored a limited incursion. They wanted a short, decisive war against the PLO which avoided conflict with Syria and urban combat in Beirut.[7] Defense Minister Sharon and senior members of the IDF, including Chief-of-Staff Eitan, argued for the adoption of the "Big Plan" which supported Sharon's publicly stated agenda of applying a military solution to the problem of the PLO. Sharon was overruled and authorized only to conduct a limited invasion. It is evident from the course of events that he decided to implement his "Big Plan" anyway by incrementally expanding military operations under the guise of protecting the IDF from PLO and Syrian attacks.[8]

For Sharon, military force was the panacea to Israel's political problems with the Palestinians. By manipulating the Israeli government in order to substitute his own agenda in place

of Cabinet policy, he widened the war into a conflict which was beyond Israel's means to conclude successfully. Military operations in pursuit of unlimited objectives contrary to those of the civilian government dragged Israel into conflict with Syria, bogged the IDF down in bloody street fighting in Beirut, and involved Israel in a war of attrition in Lebanon as an army of occupation. Instead of a quick, low cost three day operation, Sharon created a protracted and costly three year war.

The "Big Plan" was flawed for several reasons. The small, closely knit population of Israel could ill afford the casualties required to conduct a war of attrition. In only six weeks of combat and one year of occupation, the IDF suffered 3,316 dead and wounded. The cost in blood was demographically equivalent to the U.S. suffering 195,840 casualties in the same time frame.[9] The social structure could not sustain such losses in pursuit of interests which were not essential for the survival of the state of Israel.

Moreover, Israeli morale could not sustain a war fought on the questionable moral grounds of the "Big Plan." Once the troops passed beyond the publicly avowed objectives, a feeling that the goals no longer merited the cost pervaded the lower echelons of the IDF and resulted in much more cautious advances. The IDF's reluctance to conduct fast paced offensive operations as the war widened contributed greatly to the failure to crush the PLO in Beirut and decisively defeat the Syrians in the Bekaa Valley.[10]

The Cabinet was also unable to sustain the will to continue as they became convinced that Sharon was widening the war by misinforming them or presenting *faits accomplis*. Unwilling to acquiesce further in what many now saw as an immoral war, the

Cabinet placed such constraints on further operations that the PLO in Beirut could not be destroyed.[11] Eventually, rising civilian opposition and pressure to end the interminable and bloody occupation of Lebanon led to the complete and unilateral withdrawal of Israeli forces in 1985. Under the stress of fighting a war for dubious political interests rather than in response to survival interests, Israel's Clausewitzian trinity of government, military, and people crumbled.

Finally, the military instrument alone was not able to bring about a solution to the wider political problem of the PLO and Lebanon. Sharon incorrectly assumed the Lebanese were so tired of PLO-Syrian occupation, that simple Israeli success against the PLO's military center of gravity would sweep away years of internecine conflict and bring peace to Lebanon under a friendly Phalangist government.[12] Instead, the Phalangists were unable and unwilling to unite the war-torn country resulting in increased factional fighting, an ineffective and bloody Israeli occupation effort, continued terrorist violence against the IDF and Israel, and increased Syrian influence in Lebanon.[13] By not heeding the advice of Clausewitz, "... not to take the first step without considering the last", the Israelis chose a flawed theory of victory which led to defeat.[14]

The failure to match political and military objectives also led to major operational errors as Sharon attempted to conceal the scope of his true goals from the Cabinet. The offensive against the Syrian 1st Armored Division was kept on hold for three days in what appears as a deliberate attempt by Sharon and his IDF supporters to orchestrate military events to force a collision with the Syrians and contravene the head-of-state's authorization to

conduct a limited war.[15] As Israeli forces sat idle, hundreds of defeated PLO fighters escaped through Syrian lines. In addition, the wasted time resulted in the IDF failing to cut off the Syrian forces in the Bekaa before a cease-fire was imposed by international pressure.[16] Lack of a clearly understood objective led to failure to maintain the tempo of offensive warfare. Thus, neither the Cabinet's objective of destroying the PLO fighters in south Lebanon nor Sharon's objective of evicting the Syrians from Lebanon was accomplished.

A second operational error occurred when the IDF failed to immediately assault Beirut. Since Sharon could not conceal a direct assault on the city from the Cabinet, Israeli forces halted and began a slow siege of the city. This gave the disorganized and dispirited PLO-Syrian defenders the time they needed to solidify their defenses and hold out for a negotiated settlement.[17] Again, the lack of a clear, unified political-military objective caused abandonment of the offensive. Thus, Sharon's objective of capturing Beirut and destroying the PLO in Lebanon was not accomplished.

B. Center of Gravity

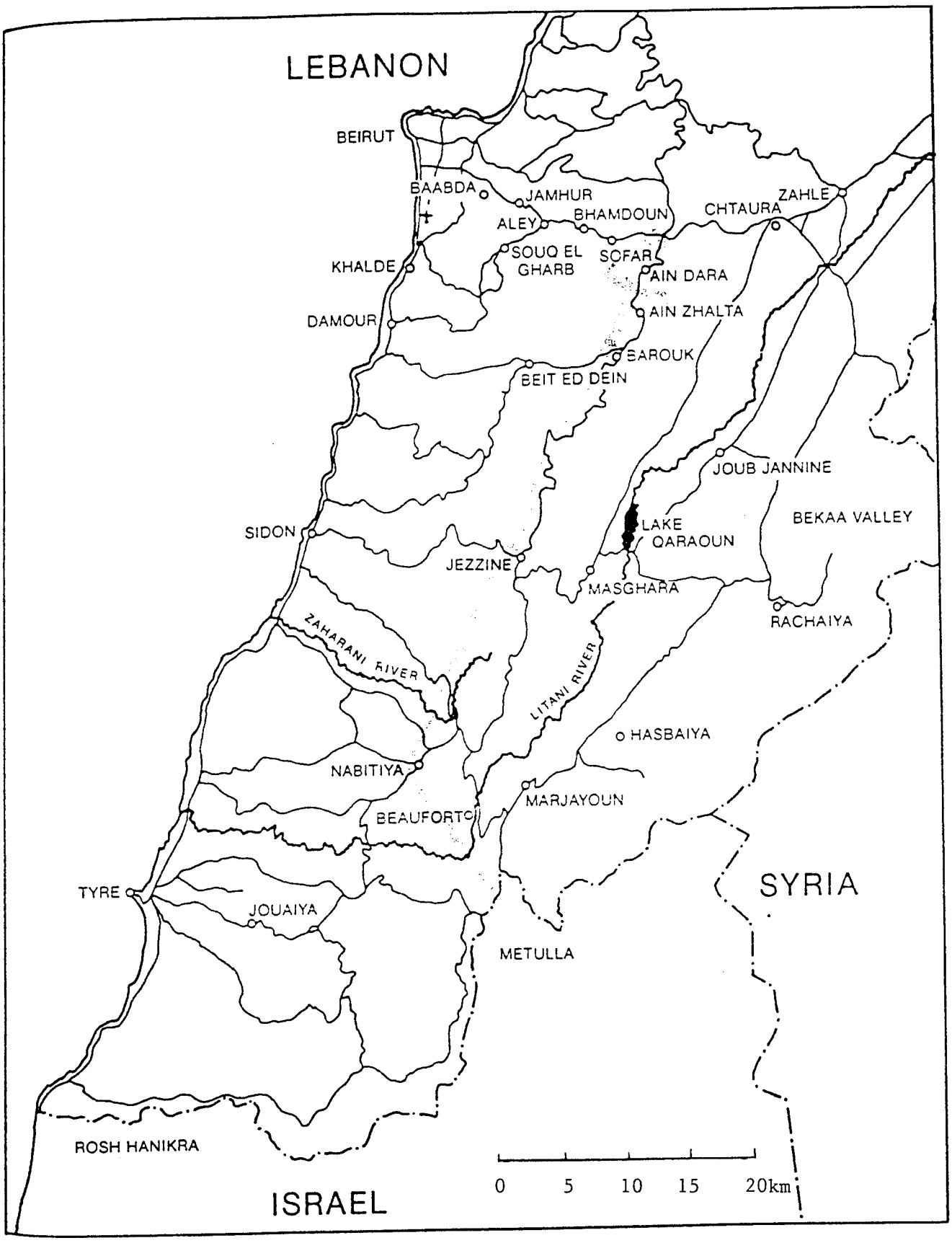
Having been given objectives contrary to those desired by Israel's political leadership, the IDF then selected a center of gravity which could not bring strategic success. Focused on conventional military operations like the United States in Vietnam, the IDF assumed that the military component of the PLO was its center of gravity. If it was destroyed, the IDF expected the entire organization to collapse, just like the Arab armies faced in the past.[18]

By only looking at the military variable, the IDF failed to understand that the PLO, like the Viet Cong, was primarily a political organization. A former IDF Chief of Intelligence had correctly analyzed the situation when he stated that, "... as a terrorist organization and political phenomenon the PLO could be controlled, but not destroyed; it could only be dealt with effectively through a political solution."[19] Given the pervasive nature of the PLO infrastructure in Lebanon, its primarily political nature, and the desire for a Palestinian homeland which could not be stamped out by military action, the IDF could not succeed in its main objective of crushing the PLO in Lebanon by attacking the military arm. In the end, despite the application of overwhelming military power which crushed the PLO military brigades and ejected them from Beirut, the PLO survived to reemerge in Lebanon, the occupied territories, and other Arab states to continue its relentless conflict with Israel.

C. Area of Operations

With the objectives of the attack set, the operational commander, Major General Amir Drori of the IDF Northern Command, began designing the operational plan. The first consideration was the geography of the area of operations. Only 50 kilometers wide and 80 kilometers long, south Lebanon is geographically divided by mountainous terrain into four narrow, parallel, north-south corridors: the Coastal Plain, the Lebanon Mountains, the Bekaa Valley, and the Anti-Lebanon Mountains. The road network is very poor and, except in the Bekaa Valley, the ruggedness of the terrain severely limits offroad movement by armored vehicles.

The narrow width of the front, the near complete separation of the geographic zones by mountains, and the poor road network



MAP 1 - LINES OF OPERATION

Western Force Central Force Bekaa Forces Group

limited the fighting to three parallel lines of operations; the Coastal Plain, the Lebanon Mountains, and the Bekaa Valley (see Map 1).[20] Also, the close proximity of the bases of operations in Beirut, Damascus, and Tel Aviv, deprived the Israelis of their usual advantage of operating on interior lines against widely separated opponents.[21] Thus, geography confined Northern Command to advancing along a predictable axis.

The geography of the theater not only forced set-piece lines of operations, it also committed the IDF to terrain totally unsuited for its armor-heavy conventional force. Used to high tempo, maneuver combat in the open terrain of the Sinai and Golan, the IDF had developed no straight-leg infantry capable of sustained combat in urban or mountainous terrain. Northern Command was forced to rely on massed armor backed by mechanized infantry to smash their way up the narrow mountain roads.[22] Throughout the operation, PLO light infantry would melt away into the countryside after being overrun by Israeli armor columns. Restricted to movement on the roads, except in the Bekaa Valley against the similar, armor-heavy conventional Syrian forces, the IDF was unable to pursue the defeated foe. Although the PLO lost large numbers of heavy weapons, the IDF failed to kill or capture a significant number of the PLO fighters in south Lebanon. Indeed, PLO casualties during "Peace for Galilee" turned out to be surprisingly low, only about 25% of the forces engaged.

D. The Plan

Restricted to predictable avenues of advance by terrain and tasked with the operational objectives of destroying the PLO and ejecting the Syrians, Northern Command developed an operational plan which consisted of a simple but massive three-pronged attack

up the major north-south arteries leading from the border to Beirut. The first prong of the attack consisted of the Western Force of 22,000 men and 220 tanks. It would advance up the Coastal Plain, take Tyre and Sidon, destroy PLO troop concentrations, and conduct a large amphibious landing north of Sidon to prevent reinforcements from reaching the south.[23] The use of operational maneuver to land a brigade of troops to isolate the enemy was a skillful move. Capitalizing on Israel's superior naval power, this bold move offset the restrictions to mobility and the predictable lines of operation caused by the terrain along the Coastal Plain.

The second prong of "Peace for Galilee" consisted of the Central Force of 18,000 men and 220 tanks. It would advance up the Lebanon Mountains, seize key heights overlooking the Bekaa Valley, destroy PLO troop concentrations, cut the Beirut-Damascus Highway, and send a task force to reinforce the Western Force at Sidon.[24] Again, Northern Command planned to use operational maneuver to isolate enemy forces. The task group reinforcing the Western Force, using one of the few east-west roads in the Lebanon Mountains, would complete the encirclement of the majority of PLO forces in the south. Taking the high ground in the Lebanon Mountains allowed the IDF to dominate the vulnerable flank of the Syrian positions in the Bekaa Valley. Seizing the Beirut-Damascus Highway would sever the vital line of communication to the Syrian base of operations and make Syria's position in Lebanon untenable. The Israelis designed a sequence of maneuvers by the Central Force to dislocate both the Syrians and the PLO to the maximum extent possible.

The third prong consisted of the Bekaa Forces Group (BFG) of 36,000 men and 800 tanks. They would advance up the eastern slopes

of the Lebanon Mountains, the Bekaa Valley and the western slopes of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, enveloping and destroying both PLO troop concentrations and the Syrian 1st Armored Division if it entered the fight.[25] The BFG also included the operational reserve of one division of 9000 men and 200 tanks. The main point of attack was in the Coastal Plain and Lebanon Mountains since 13,000 of the 15,000 PLO troops selected as the center of gravity were concentrated there. In order to mass overwhelming power at this decisive point, Major General Drori used economy of force in opposing the 29,500 troops and 570 tanks in the Bekaa Valley with only a slightly larger force.

The Israeli Air Force (IAF) was tasked with maintaining air supremacy, protecting Israeli air space, carrying out battlefield air interdiction, close air support, and providing helicopter lift.[26] Throughout the operation, the IAF was the primary instrument for conducting operational fires. The most devastating use of operational fires was the air strike on the Syrian SAM batteries which opened the BFG offensive on 9 June. Within a few hours, a coordinated attack by over 200 IAF aircraft wiped out the Syrian SAM system in the Bekaa Valley and left Syrian units and supply lines in Lebanon at the mercy of Israeli aircraft. After the SAM raid, the IAF provided operational fires to isolate the battlefield. Repeated air strikes hammered PLO rear troop concentrations and installations which effectively cut off PLO brigades in the south from their base of operations in Beirut. The IAF also mauled Syrian convoys on the Beirut-Damascus Highway, impeding reinforcement efforts in an attempt to isolate the Bekaa from the Syrian heartland.[27]

The Israeli Navy was assigned to maintain naval supremacy, protect Israel's coastline, provide naval gunfire support, and land the amphibious force tasked with cutting off the PLO at Sidon.[28] From the operational maneuver which landed a brigade of troops deep behind the PLO lines to the naval blockade of Beirut which cut off supplies from the besieged PLO and Syrian forces, the Israelis fully exploited their superior naval power.

To provide sufficient combat power to carry out the planned attack, the Israelis ordered a rapid partial mobilization. About 50% of Israel's reserve units were activated in only 12 to 18 hours. Simultaneously, the IDF's three regular divisions were moved from their garrisons in the Golan, West Bank, and south Israel to the Lebanese border.

The rapid mobilization of the IDF served two purposes. First, it concentrated superior mass against the enemy with 76,000 men, 1,240 tanks, and 1,500 armored personnel carriers (APCs) facing a combined Syrian-PLO force of 45,000 men, 680 tanks, and 150 APCs. Specifically, it concentrated superior force at the main point of attack against the PLO as the 40,000 men and 440 tanks of the Western and Central Forces stood ready to assault the 15,500 men and 110 tanks of the PLO-Syrian defenders opposing them (see Appendix A).

Additionally, it achieved strategic surprise against the PLO and the Syrians. Although both anticipated an Israeli invasion of Lebanon, they were totally unprepared for its magnitude. The PLO assumed the Israeli operation would resemble Operation Litani in 1978.[29] Caught expecting a short battle against a small force, the PLO had no battle plan to handle a large combined arms attack. Because of faulty prewar planning, PLO units ended up fighting

desperately in isolated groups with whatever supplies they happened to have on hand. The Syrians were surprised by both the scope of Israeli actions against the PLO and Israel's widening the operation to include attacking Syrian forces.[30] Not believing the Israelis would go to war with them, Syria delayed moving their reinforcement armored division into Lebanon in an attempt not to provoke Israel.[31] Thus, IDF units faced far fewer Syrian troops than they might have.

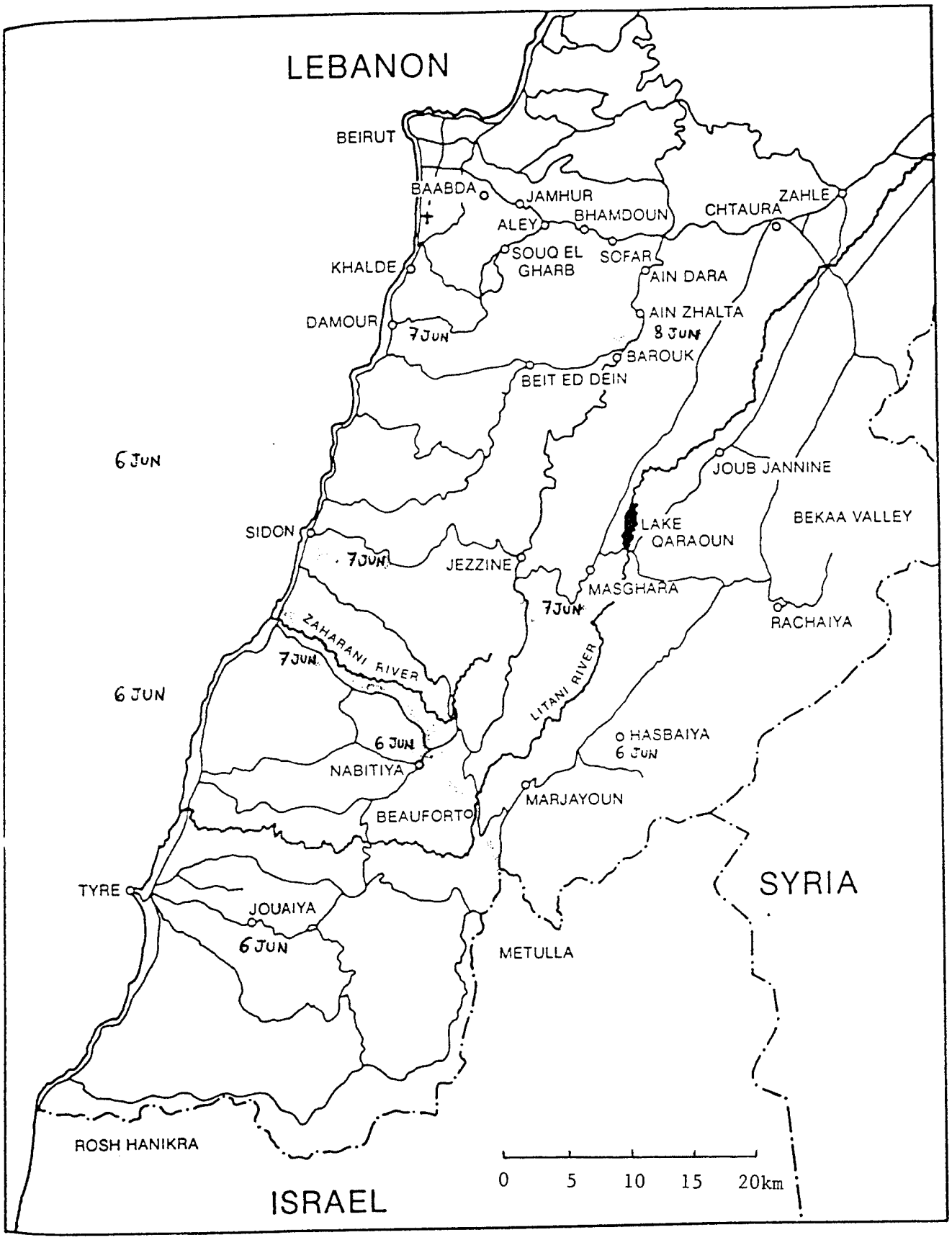
IV. EXECUTION

A. Phase I: The Opening Moves - 40 Kilometers Into Lebanon

Preceded by heavy artillery and air bombardments, the West and Central Forces of the Northern Command commenced their attack on the PLO at 1100 on 6 June 1982. Throughout the first phase of the war, the IDF conducted an offensive war of maneuver aimed at attacking weak points in the PLO-Syrian defenses whenever possible. Israeli spearheads repeatedly swept past enemy strongpoints using amphibious landings and overland movement along trails, allowing follow on forces to cover and reduce isolated enemy units.

By the morning of 7 June, organized PLO resistance in southern Lebanon had collapsed. Both Tyre and Sidon were isolated, and the northern point units of the Western Force had reached Damour, only 20km from Beirut. By 8 June, city clearing operations were underway in the Coastal Plain as Central Force units continued their drive for the Beirut-Damascus Highway until they were halted by stiff Syrian resistance at Ain Zhalta. The western and eastern wing of the BFG began to move forward along the slopes of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon Mountains to flank the quiescent Syrians.

Prior to the Israeli moves on 8 June, Defense Minister Sharon manipulated the Israeli Cabinet to widen the war to meet his own



MAP 2 - PHASE I: THE OPENING MOVES

Western Force Central Force Bekaa Forces Group

objectives. Using the reasoning that PLO units were sheltering behind Syrian lines in the Bekaa Valley, Sharon sought permission to supposedly move forces to flank the Syrians and force their withdrawal. However, by leaving the limits of the flanking movement undefined, he used the Cabinet's subsequent approval to launch the drive by the Central Force toward the Beirut-Damascus Highway. By flanking the Syrians and threatening their vital link to Damascus, Sharon probably hoped he could provoke the Syrians into attacking the IDF, thus providing an excuse for opening his planned offensive against them.[32]

B. Phase II: The War Widens - Attack in the Bekaa Valley

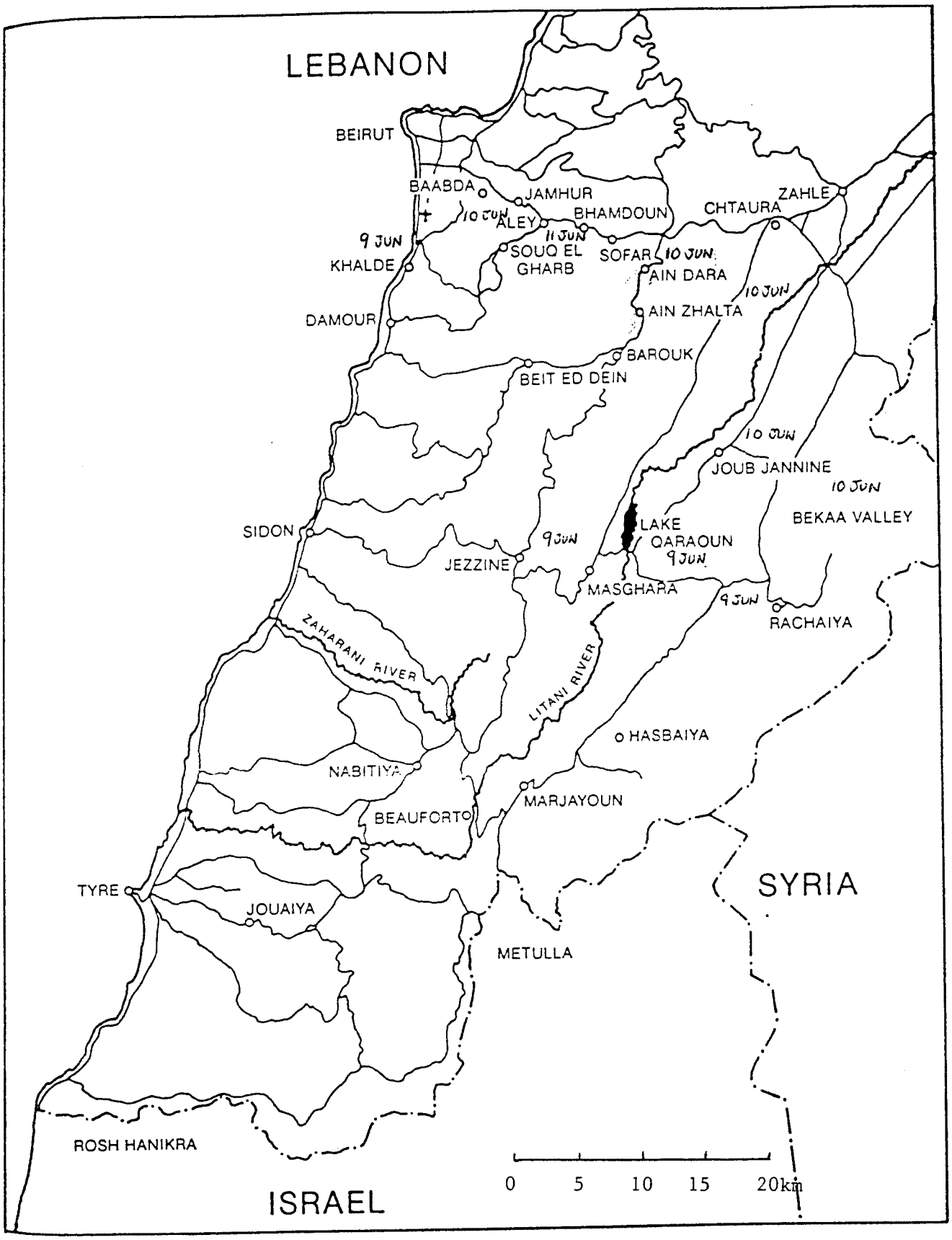
As the fourth day of the operation commenced, only Sidon remained unsubdued on the coast as Western Force units pushed closer to Beirut. The increasingly cautious Central Force remained stalled extracting casualties from Ain Zhalta. Concerned with the IDF drive to isolate the Bekaa Valley, Syria deployed additional SAM batteries and began to move ground units towards Lebanon hoping to deter the Israelis.[33] Despite the clear Syrian reluctance to engage the IDF, Sharon claimed their moves endangered the IAF's ability to protect the ground forces and obtained the permission he desired for an all out attack on Syrian forces in Lebanon.[34] The IAF attacked and destroyed the SAM batteries as well as large numbers of Syrian aircraft in a fierce battle above the Bekaa. Northern Command then activated the branch of its operational plan concerning conflict with Syria, and the BFG broke the forward defensive line of the Syrian 1st Armored Division.

With the attack on Syrian forces in the Bekaa, the war widened from the limited incursion initially approved by the Cabinet to Sharon's "Big Plan." In three days, Israel had achieved its avowed

political objectives at minimal cost. The forty kilometer zone was occupied by IDF units, PLO forces had been routed out of south Lebanon, major amounts of PLO heavy equipment had been captured, and only small scale encounters had occurred with Syrian forces.[35] All of this had been accomplished at the cost of only 25 dead, 96 wounded, and 7 missing.[36]

By provoking war with Syria, pushing onto Beirut, and committing forces to the meatgrinder of urban combat, the Israelis switched from fighting a short, decisive limited war to a war of attrition with no predictable end. Instead of simply creating a security zone, Sharon sought to establish a totally new government in Lebanon and completely rearrange the balance of power. It was here that Israel passed the culminating point of victory and strategically overextended herself. As Cordesman and Wagner argue, by manipulating a change from limited objectives to expanded, open-ended objectives, Ariel Sharon "rejected a basic strategic and operational principle that Israel had followed ever since 1948: He attempted to win an absolute victory over an Arab state [Lebanon], something that Israel simply lacks the political and military means to accomplish."[37]

On 10 June, as heavy fighting around Sidon continued, the Western Force slowly crept east to encircle Beirut. In the center, the IDF ground through the Syrian defenses at Ain Zhalta only to be stopped cold by heavy resistance at Ain Dara, still short of the critical Syrian line of communication -- the Beirut-Damascus Highway. In the Bekaa, the BFG punched through the main defensive zone of the 1st Armored Division but slammed to a halt when the spearhead was ambushed north of Joub Jannine. Syrian defenses then



MAP 3 - PHASE II: ATTACK IN THE BEKAA VALLEY

Western Force | Central Force | Bekaa Forces Group

stabilized as the first elements of the 3rd Armored Division arrived, hurt by IAF strikes but still functional.

By 11 June, the Western Force had expanded its ring around Beirut further to the east and north. Northern Command committed elements of the operational reserve to rescue the units trapped near Joub Jannine and restart the attack in the Bekaa Valley. Elements of the BFG pushed slowly north but were stopped again by the 3rd Armored Division. At 1200, increasing U.S. and international pressures finally resulted in a cease-fire between Israeli and Syrian forces which was extended to the PLO on the following day.

C. Phase III: War of Attrition - The Siege of Beirut

The day the cease-fire went into effect marked the start of two days of heavy fighting as IDF units linked up with Phalangist units to complete the ring around Beirut. Masking the movement of troops with vague words and creeping from one objective to the next, either without approval or by asking for a little more to "protect" the previous gains, Defense Minister Sharon led the IDF deeper and deeper into the quagmire of Beirut.[38]

Sharon was unwilling to flagrantly violate the cease-fire by conducting a major attack on Syrian positions overlooking the rear of the Israeli siege lines around Beirut. Instead, he simply had the IDF moved northward, hill by hill, pushing the Syrians back under the cover of improving positions in what became known as the "creeping cease-fire."[39] These piecemeal attacks expended men in return for negligible gains. Finally, falsely claiming that IDF forces were responding to Syrian attacks, Sharon ordered an unauthorized offensive which pushed the Syrians out of their positions to the east of Beirut on 22-24 July.

As the Israeli stranglehold tightened around Beirut, Sharon personally met with the Phalangist leader Bashir Gemayel in an unsuccessful attempt to get the Maronite militia to take the city. Deprived of a proxy assault force and, despite Sharon's urging, unwilling to pay the price in Israeli lives to storm the city, the Israeli Cabinet settled on breaking the PLO by nibbling away at the edges of West Beirut with IDF ground troops while conducting a steady air, naval and artillery bombardment.[40] Amid this hail of steel, the Cabinet sought a diplomatic solution through the efforts of U.S. envoy Habib to arrange a withdrawal of PLO forces. Despite the Cabinet's growing repugnance towards the war, military operations had committed them to achieving "victory" in the siege, for allowing the PLO to stay in Beirut once the IDF had encircled the city would be a political fiasco.[41]

Over the next three weeks the Israelis pounded Beirut. Accompanying the unrelenting bombardment, Israeli ground forces conducted bloody assaults into the outer edges of West Beirut. The vicious street fighting climaxed in a ferocious attack on 4 August which resulted in the heaviest single day's casualties of the war for the IDF.

Virtually abandoned by the Arab nations, cut off from resupply and facing increasing military pressure, the PLO accepted the Habib plan. In a last ditch effort to get the PLO out of Beirut through the application of Israeli power rather than U.S. diplomacy, Sharon ordered, without Cabinet approval, a massive air attack on 12 August which caused heavy damage and civilian casualties.[42] The appalled Israeli Cabinet had finally had enough. Abandoned even by Prime Minister Begin, the Defense Minister was stripped of his authority to conduct the war.[43] Under intense pressure from an

increasingly hostile U.S. government, Prime Minister Begin ordered an immediate cease-fire. The U.S. brokered PLO withdrawal plan was quickly approved, and on 22 August 1982 the first of the PLO contingents departed Beirut. Operation "Peace for Galilee" was over, but Israel's ordeal in Lebanon had just begun.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was carried out with consummate skill by the IDF. It was meticulously planned with near perfect adherence to the operational principles of mass, offensive, economy of force, maneuver, surprise, and simplicity. It was carried out with aggressive precision and superb coordination between all combat arms and services. Overcoming a lack of infantry units, the Israelis defeated all opposing forces and advanced some 75 kilometers through extremely difficult terrain in only three days.

Despite the superb operational performance of the IDF, Operation "Peace for Galilee" was fatally flawed. Ariel Sharon's substitution of his own military agenda for the policy and strategy approved by the head of state set the stage for eventual strategic failure. By ignoring the depth of Lebanese factionalism and the deep rooted Palestinian desire for a homeland, the IDF embarked an unattainable fantasy -- that it could solve Israel's security dilemma on the northern border and bring peace to Lebanon through purely military means. After three years of occupation, over 600 dead, nearly 4,000 wounded, the dismissal of Defense Minister Sharon and the collapse of Prime Minister Begin's government, the situation was even bleaker than before. Peace still eluded war-torn Lebanon. The PLO though temporarily displaced had survived

unbroken. Formerly friendly Lebanese Shi'as had turned on the occupying IDF, and Israel's foreign relations and public image, particularly with the United States, had suffered a grievous blow. For its toll in blood and money, Israel had gained very little and lost much.

By manipulating military operations to support his own political ends rather than the state's political policy, Sharon created a dichotomy between the political and military objectives of the war that ensured ultimate strategic failure. In an effort to conceal the differing objectives, decisions concerning the conduct of military operations were made which violated the principle of offense that the operational plan was based on. In addition, the ambiguous objectives of the war fostered confusion and lack of commitment among the lower levels of the IDF as the war pushed past its publicized and reasonable goals. These all contributed to turning the planned low cost, quick, decisive operation into a bloody, extended, and failed war.

Compounding the problem of policy-strategy mismatch was the identification of the wrong center of gravity by the IDF. Focusing on opposing military forces, they failed to recognize the political nature of the conflict with the Palestinians. By only attacking the perceived military center of gravity, the Israelis experienced what others throughout history had learned before: that military victory is a necessary but insufficient condition for war termination. The Israeli attempt to change the nature of the conflict into a conventional struggle which suited their forces made success impossible. In the end, the PLO survived to raise the banners of the Intifada and eventually win autonomy over Jericho and the Gaza Strip.

The final error which condemned Israel's Lebanon war to failure was the Israelis' inability to recognize their culminating point of victory. Carried away by his own grandiose plans of military victory, Defense Minister Sharon pushed the Israeli government and the IDF beyond the limited war they had conducted so successfully in the past into an unlimited war which was beyond their means and will to win.

Operation "Peace for Galilee" serves as a potent reminder to today's military planners that operational and tactical brilliance, in and of themselves, are not sufficient to guarantee strategic success. If a nation's policy and strategy is divorced from the conduct of its military operations, as it was in Lebanon in 1982, then in the words of Clausewitz, "... the many links that connect the two elements are destroyed and we are left with something pointless and devoid of sense."[44]

APPENDIX A
ORDERS OF BATTLE

ISRAEL:

WESTERN FORCE:

Task Force A:	Amphibious Task Force B:
91st Division*	96th Division
211th Armored Brigade	35th Paratroop Brigade

CENTRAL FORCE:

Task Force C:	Task Force D:
36th Division(-)	162nd Division(-)

BEKAA FORCES GROUP:

Task Force H:	Task Force V:
252nd Division	460th Armored Brigade
	1 Mechanized Brigade

Task Force Z:	Special Maneuver Force:
90th Division	2 Mixed Brigades

Operational Reserve:
880th Division

* Later reinforced by 1 armored brigade, 1 paratroop brigade, and 1 infantry brigade (approximately equivalent to an additional division of 9,000 men)

PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION:

Castel Brigade:
- Tyre - 2,000
- Litani-Zahrani - 1,000
- Sidon - 1,500
- Jouaiya - 700
- Nabitiya - 1,000

Yarmuk Brigade:
- Marjayoun - 500

Karame Brigade:
- Hasbaiya-Rachaiya - 1,500

Ain Jalud Brigade:
- Sidon-Damour - 1,000

Beirut Defense Forces:
- Beirut - 6,000

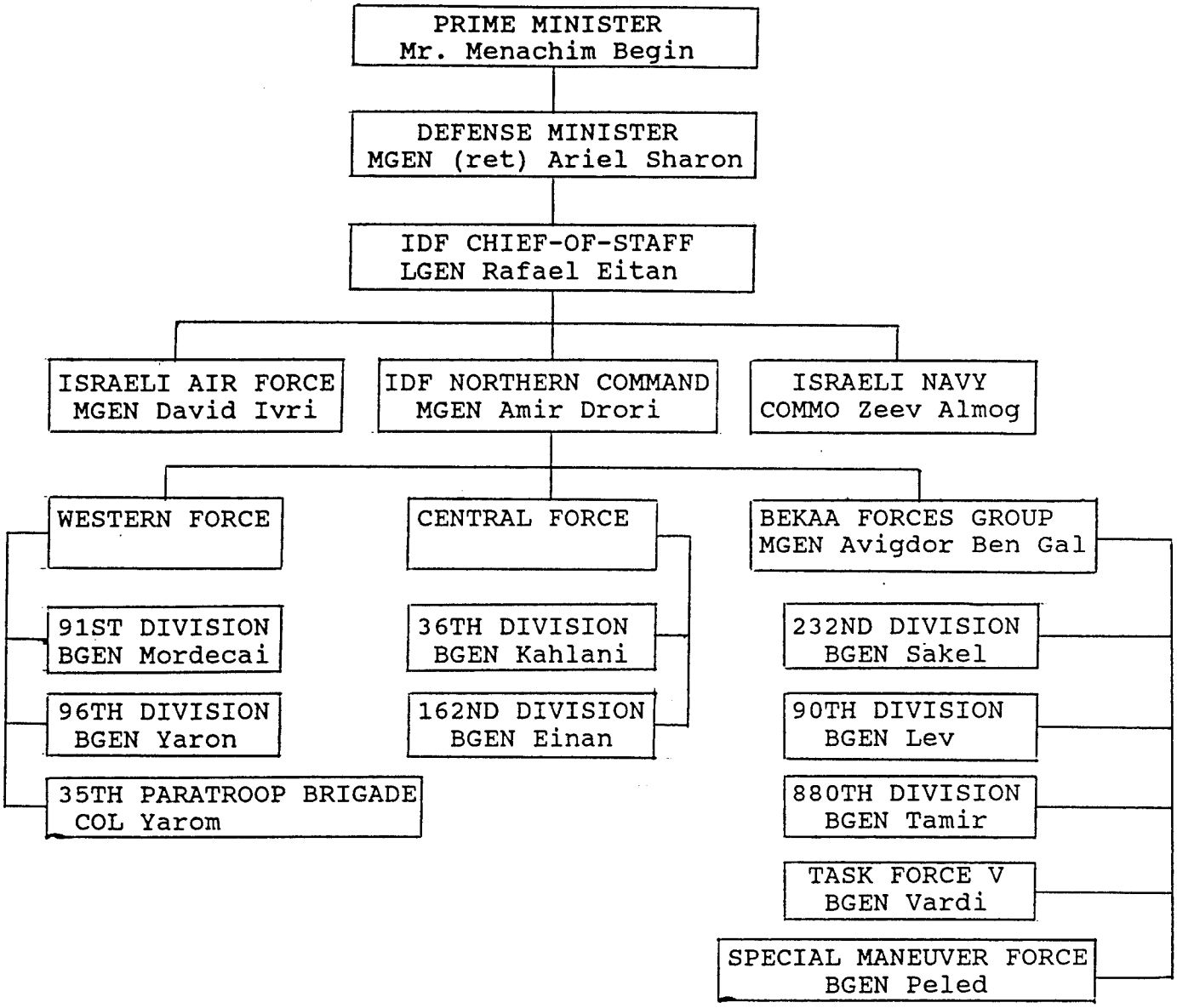
SYRIA:

Bekaa Valley:
- 1st Armored Division
- 62nd Independent Brigade
- 10 Commando Battalions

Beirut-Damascus Highway:
- 1 Tank Brigade
- 1 Infantry Brigade
- 20 Commando Battalions

Beirut:
- 85th Infantry Brigade

APPENDIX B
ISRAELI COMMAND STRUCTURE



NOTES

[1]John Laffin, The War of Desperation:Lebanon 1982-85 (London: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 1985), p. 10.

[2]Ibid., p. 12.

[3]Richard A. Gabriel, Operation Peace for Galilee: The Israeli-PLO War in Lebanon (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1984), p. 61.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Shai Feldman and Heda Rechnitz-Kijner, Deception, Consensus, and War: Israel In Lebanon (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), p. 12-18.

[6]Gabriel, p. 61.

[7]Ibid., p. 62.

[8]M. Thomas Davis, 40Km Into Lebanon: Israel's 1982 Invasion (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1990), p. 77.

[9]Gabriel, p. 176.

[10]Feldman and Rechnitz-Kijner, p. 66.

[11]Ibid., p. 38-41.

[12]Yair Evron, War and Intervention in Lebanon: The Israeli-Syrian Deterrence Dialogue (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 167.

[13]Syrian influence increased after the end of Operation "Peace for Galilee" as each of the sides engaged in the renewed factional fighting turned to President Assad for assistance in carrying on the struggle to control Lebanon. Assad was more than willing to lend assistance to any and all who asked. By playing the factions off against each other he became the power broker in what was left of Lebanon.

[14]Carl von Clausewitz, On War. eds. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 584. Although not specifically addressed in Clausewitz, a "theory of victory" is the assumptions that political and military leaders make about how the execution of military operations that they are planning will translate into the achievement of the desired political objectives.

[15]Gabriel, p. 68.

[16]Feldman and Rechnitz-Kijner, p. 69-70. The delay caused by Sharon's deception allowed the Syrians the time they needed to

reinforce their positions in Lebanon with the 3rd Armored Division. It also limited the time the IDF had to develop the assault against the Syrians to only a day and a half. Given the aforementioned reinforcement, the Israelis simply didn't have enough time and strength to reach the Beirut-Damascus Highway.

[17]Trevor N. Dupuy and Paul Martell, Flawed Victory: The Arab-Israeli Conflict and the 1982 War In Lebanon (Fairfax, VA: Hero Books, 1986), p. 152-153.

[18]Davis, p. 112.

[19]Ibid., p. 113.

[20]The lines of operations in each corridor led up the primary, and usually only, north-south roads: the Coastal Road in the Coastal Plain, the Nabitiya-Ain Zhalta road in the Lebanon Mountains, and the western, central, and eastern roads in the Bekaa Valley.

[21]The bases of operations for each side were; Beirut - PLO, Damascus - Syria, Tel Aviv - Israel.

[22]Gabriel, p. 192-193.

[23]Dupuy and Martell, p. 92-93.

[24]Ibid., p. 93.

[25]Ibid., p. 93-94.

[26]Ibid., p. 94.

[27]Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, Israel's Lebanon War (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1984), p. 168.

[28]Dupuy and Martell, p. 94.

[29]Ibid., p. 81.

[30]Schiff and Ya'ari, p. 155-156.

[31]Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, The Lessons of Modern War - Volume I: The Arab-Israeli Conflicts, 1973-1989 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), p. 151.

[32]Feldman and Rechnitz-Kijner, p. 31.

[33]Dupuy and Martell, p. 117.

[34]Gabriel, p. 65-66.

[35]Despite routing the PLO and fulfilling the objective of clearing south Lebanon, Israeli units were unable to destroy fleeing PLO forces. Thus, the Cabinet's hope that the PLO brigades would be annihilated, and not just eliminated as effective fighting units, remained elusive.

[36]Cordesman and Wagner, p. 148.

[37]Ibid., p. 149.

[38]Schiff and Ya'ari, p. 187-188.

[39]Ibid., p. 203.

[40]Ibid., p. 220.

[41]Ibid., p. 214.

[42]Davis, p. 100.

[43]Ibid., p. 65. Overawed by Sharon's military reputation, Begin had staunchly supported his incremental widening of the war and carried the rest of the Cabinet along by the force of his personality.

[44]von Clausewitz, p. 605.

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