"Lebanon Lite":
Lessons from the Operation in Gaza and the Next Round against Hizbollah

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Operation Cast Lead against Hamas in the Gaza Strip filled both the IDF and the Israeli public with a sense of success, and justifiably so – at least militarily speaking. In the course of the fighting, Israel managed to greatly reduce the rocket fire at the Israeli home front, with relatively little loss of life and property; the air force managed to render severe blows to the Hamas infrastructure in the Gaza Strip and eliminate senior operatives in the military and political wing of the organization; and the ground forces successfully fought in crowded urban areas saturated with enemy combatants. The civilian routine was affected in the south of the country, but local governments continued to function. Cooperation between the southern local governments and the army was far better than the situation in northern Israel during the 2006 Second Lebanon War.

A well known saying holds that armies tend to fight the next war on the basis of lessons learned from the previous one. There is often some truth to this. In the Gaza operation, the IDF, at times successfully, tried to implement lessons of the Second Lebanon War. The forceful opening blow, the relatively rapid entrance of the ground forces and the way in which they fought, the clear definition of objectives for the fighting units, the mobilization of the reserves and their refresher training at the start of the battle, the effective logistics and more were the result of lessons learned in a process undertaken by the IDF after the summer of 2006. The threat the IDF faced in the Gaza Strip was similar in essence to that posed by Hizbollah: attack on the Israeli home front with rockets, ground fighting, and infliction of casualties. The outcomes of the IDF's

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campaign in Gaza are liable to lead to the conclusion that the IDF has largely found the recipe to cope with this type of threat.[1] Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that the lessons of the operation will serve the military commanders as they plan the next battle against Hizbollah.

This article has two major objectives: first, to warn against directly linking the fighting in Gaza and its lessons to any future fighting in Lebanon; and second, to analyze which principles and lessons on the operative level can nevertheless be applied to the Lebanese arena and which are irrelevant. Clearly, military activity emerges from the definition of national and strategic interests and goals. The purpose of this article is not to deal with these interests and the extent of the IDF's success in attainting them in Gaza or in the future in Lebanon. The starting assumption underlying the analysis below is that in every military operation against a fighting model presented by Hamas or Hizbollah, the purpose of the military action will at the very least be to damage the enemy's capabilities, attain deterrence, and create conditions for a more favorable political settlement.

Applying Hizbollah's Model in the Gaza Strip

Hamas sought to build its military strength on the basis of the military model demonstrated by Hizbollah in Lebanon, which builds on the basic operating assumption that Israeli society is weak and incapable of handling an extended battle with many casualties.[2] Based on this assumption, a military approach was developed whose purpose was not to attain a military decision against Israel, rather to apply pressure on its civilian front by rocket fire aimed at populated areas and inflict as many casualties as possible on IDF ground forces. According to this logic, the time factor in war is detrimental to Israel. The longer the battle, the more the rocket fire persists, and the greater the number of soldiers killed in battle, the more public pressure will mount on the Israeli government to stop the fighting.[3]

Two fighting arrays helped realize these principles. The first was the rocket artillery array designed to fire a large number of rockets at Israel continuously over a long period of time. In order to prevent destruction of this system by the Israeli air force, Hizbollah deployed a large number of launch barrels over a vast geographical area. Thus the chances of identifying the rocket launchers before firing were reduced because of

the dispersed deployment of the IDF's intelligence gathering efforts. At the same time, given the large number of launchers, the IDF's ability to destroy some of them did not significantly reduce the amount of firepower against Israel. For example, in the summer of 2006 the air force managed to identify and destroy 33 launchers in the course of the fighting (50 additional launchers were destroyed during the opening strike). By contrast, the number of rockets fired into Israel hardly decreased, and averaged some 200 per day.[4] The second fighting array created by Hizbollah was a ground defense based on anti-tank positions, tunnels, and previously prepared booby traps. The purpose was twofold: to delay the attack by the ground forces and buy time to continue the rocket fire, and at the same time, to cause as many IDF casualties as possible. As became clear in the Second Lebanon War, conducting the battle on these principles did in fact greatly reduce the IDF's advantage and created great pressure on the Israeli home front.

Hizbollah's operative success caused Hamas to adopt a similar fighting model in the Gaza Strip, beginning with rocketry as the major component. Indeed, much of Hamas' efforts were dedicated to rocket improvement. Hamas developed Qassams early in the second intifada, and in 2001 the organization was already firing at Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip. After the disengagement from Gaza and particularly after Hamas took control of the Strip in June 2007, Hamas accelerated its force buildup. The freedom of action enjoyed by Hamas led to rapid improvements in the Qassam. The focus of the organization's efforts was to stockpile large numbers of rockets and extend their effective target range. By December 2007, six months after seizing power in the Gaza Strip, Hamas managed to overcome the technological problem preventing it from storing Qassam rockets over long periods of time.[5] The organization was able to hoard large numbers of rockets to realize the primary goal of its firepower: intensive, nonstop, and extended rocket fire at the Israeli home front.

In addition to stockpiling rockets, Hamas, using Iranian know how, managed to increase the Qassam's range from a few kilometers to thirteen. As early as the second half of 2007, improved rockets with this range were fired at Ashkelon.[6] Hamas was also laboring to smuggle into the Gaza Strip regular Grad rockets with a 20 km range and improved Grads with a 40 km range. These longer range rockets expanded the threat

to Israeli cities such as Ashdod and Beer Sheva. Israel's withdrawal from the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt in September 2005 made it easier for Hamas to bring these rockets into the Strip. Thus as early as March 2006, the first Grad rocket was fired at Ashkelon. In that instance Islamic Jihad was responsible for the actual firing, but from that point on Hamas stockpiled dozens or even hundreds of Grads.[7] Hamas fired the rockets with methods copied from the Lebanese model: barrels buried in the ground, small cells, timers, and more. These techniques were implemented long before the confrontation, and seemed to improve the survivability of Hamas firing cells in the different rounds of fighting with the IDF.[8]

Along with an improvement in its rocket capability, Hamas tried to apply the ground defense approach modeled by Hizbollah, i.e., relying on skilled personnel, organized along military lines, and based on defensive systems prepared in advance. Immediately after taking over the Gaza Strip, Hamas built its military mechanisms and instituted a military routine, including training, exercises, and ongoing security activities. Its fighting personnel were organized along a military hierarchy: platoons, companies, battalions, and brigades. By the start of Operation Cast Lead, Hamas had managed to build eight brigades. They were manned by relatively skilled personnel who had either trained in Iran or were trained by instructors trained in Iranian camps. Hamas relied on a defense that would cause a delay of the ground invasion and inflict losses on the IDF's ground forces. As in southern Lebanon, Hamas relied on booby trapped houses and entrances, underground tunnels, and sniper and anti-tank fire.[9] As Herzi Halevy, the commander of the Paratroopers Division, explained at the end of Operation Cast Lead: "There were tunnels, there were large explosive devices, there were booby traps such as a dummy of a Hamas fighter in front of an explosive device and a tunnel opening meant for kidnapping soldiers. Even I was surprised by the number of devices that awaited us. Entire streets were crisscrossed by barbed wire hooked up to explosives....The devices there were everywhere, even inside satellite dishes."[10]

The IDF and the Hizbollah Model in Gaza
Aside from the moral, political, and other issues raised during and after Operation Cast Lead, the IDF and the Israeli local governments coped

successfully with the Hizbollah model of war. The objectives that Hamas sought to achieve by applying this model failed to a large extent. The rocket fire, which Hamas hoped would exhaust the Israeli home front and indirectly pressure the Israeli government to end the fighting, was greatly reduced. Before the campaign Israeli intelligence estimates anticipated an average of 100 launches per day. In fact, Hamas managed to fire an average of 60 rockets per day during the first days of the fighting and on average only 20 rockets per day during the war's later stages.[11] Moreover, local governments in the south continued to function under fire; the physical damage inflicted was relatively limited, and thanks to early preparation by the Home Front Command and the civilian response to its instructions, casualties were few.[12] At the same time, Hamas' defenses, which were intended to cause heavy losses to IDF soldiers, did not achieve their goal. The IDF finished the fighting with ten dead soldiers, and the Gaza Strip was far from the "Israeli military cemetery" threatened by one Hamas spokesman.[13] Thus, the operation, until its last days, earned widespread legitimacy among the Israeli public. A poll taken shortly before the end of the fighting found that 78 percent of the public felt that the operation in Gaza was a success. The ceasefire announcement was even received with some disappointment in Israel, so much so that the number of those who thought the operation was a success fell and equaled the number of those who thought the opposite.[14] Accordingly, the Israeli government's freedom of decision and the army's span of legitimacy were not limited by public opinion.

The two necessary components for the success of the Hizbollah model – rocket fire at Israel and a ground defense – were neutralized by the IDF in a number of ways. First, the opening blow surprised Hamas, primarily by its timing. The massive air strikes took place after a ruse that convinced Hamas that Israel would finally agree to renew the ceasefire under conditions more favorable to the organization. In addition, the IDF also surprised Hamas by its choice of targets. In the first sorties, IDF planes not only attacked military targets and rocket launchers, but also Hamas symbols of government, institutions, and various offices. The intensity of the opening blow appeared to surprise senior Hamas officials.[15]

The second way the IDF coped with the Hizbollah model was by joint action of air-based launcher "hunts" and capture of swaths of

territory. Before the ground offensive, the IDF assembled many means of intelligence gathering and attack near the Strip. They subsequently helped damage the rocket system and reduce the number of launches. When the ground forces entered the Gaza Strip and occupied launching areas, especially around Gaza City, the maneuvering room of the rocket launchers decreased even further, and accordingly the number of rockets fired on Israel fell too.

The IDF responded to the challenge of Hamas ground defenses, prepared in advance and intended to take the lives of as many soldiers as possible, by applying high intensity fire from the air and the ground. According to an Israeli military commentator, the last operation employed a fire intensity never before used by the IDF fighting in urban areas. Division commanders were given the green light to destroy any house suspected of being booby-trapped. For example, every second house on average in Beit Lahiya was shelled. The military command instructed that massive fire be applied.[16] This was also the reason, according to the paratroopers commander, for the low number of casualties among IDF soldiers:

> The intensity with which we entered reduced the number of casualties...The force we applied in the attack did not let them use the means they were most prepared for. Even the noise before the entrance: when you hear noise like that, you don't want to be the enemy on the other side. It shook the entire area. Fighter planes, helicopters, artillery, tanks. I think that's what the enemy was feeling. We came at them from unexpected directions and with such intensity that the terrorists did not stay behind to set off the booby traps they had prepared for us...The intensity whith which we entered drove them off.[17]

The Israeli effort was also heavily directed at creating deterrence on the Palestinian side, and even perhaps with regard to Syria and Hizbollah. After the attack on government institutions in the Gaza Strip and because of the scope of the damage left by the army, one senses that in the operation in Gaza, the IDF, whether consciously or not, applied what GOC Northern Command Maj. Gen. Gadi Eizenkot has called the "Dahiya doctrine." Based on this idea, Eizenkot maintained a few months before the Gaza operation that "in every village from which they have fired at Israel, we will apply disproportionate force and cause

monumental damage and destruction. From our point of view, these are military bases."[18] According to this logic, instead of focusing on the hunt for rocket launchers, it is necessary to focus on creating deterrence by causing massive damage to the area from which rockets were fired.[19] For now, it is hard to tell if by using this approach, Israel succeeded in "teaching" Hamas a lesson just as, in Tom Friedman's terms, it succeeded in "educating" Nasrallah.[20]

Lebanon vs. Gaza: A False Analogy?

The Israeli public, and apparently also the IDF, viewed the operation in Gaza as a "corrective to the failure and humiliation of the Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006,"[21] and even "a redemption from the Lebanese trauma."[22] Yet even if the operation was militarily successful, this success must be taken with a grain of salt, and one cannot jump to the conclusion that the IDF has found the solution to dealing with the Hizbollah model or with similar approaches to warfare. Moreover, over-satisfaction from the success of Operation Cast Lead is liable to plant the seeds of failure in the next round with Hizbollah or other enemy basing itself on these principles. An in-depth look reveals that the major similarity between Lebanon and Gaza was Hizbollah's and Hamas' philosophy of war: exhausting the Israeli home front with rocket fire, while forcing a delay and causing losses to Israeli ground forces using a previously arranged defensive system. Beyond this, one may also point to similar internal circumstances: the existence of pro-Western elements opposing the terrorist organizations – Abu Mazen and Fatah in the Palestinian arena, and the March 14 camp headed by Saad al-Hariri in Lebanon. Other than these points, however, the differences between the two arenas vastly outweigh the similarities, to the point that one wonders whether they can be compared at all.

The Terrain: Size and Topography

The most striking differences in the two areas lie in the physical features of the terrains. The Gaza Strip covers some 365 sq km, while Lebanon is more than 10,000 sq km. The main area of the fighting – southern Lebanon – covers some 600 sq km. The addition of Beirut and the Lebanon Valley sectors, where it is safe to assume that fighting will take place at some level or another, extends the fighting arena to over 2,000 sq km. This is

of great significance, in particular with regard to the IDF's capability of concentrating intelligence and operational resources, thereby allowing it to achieve its technological advantages. Thus the small size of the Gaza Strip allows for a high concentration of resources, while in Lebanon the larger fighting area dictates that resources be diffused.

Aside from the size of the area, the topographies are highly different. The Gaza Strip is level and sandy, while southern Lebanon is hilly and in some places forested. The military implications of this are many, chiefly limits on the scope of maneuver and movement. The Lebanese terrain requires entrance and movement along a limited number of familiar longitudinal and latitudinal axes, critical crossing points, and areas impassable for regular and armored vehicles. This makes a defensive position easier and imposes difficulties on the attacking force. While the urban area of the Gaza Strip is also not convenient for the movement of large troops and maneuver, the outskirts of the city provide level and sandy plains that allow for quick, easy movement.

Gap in Operational Experience

Along with the respective ground conditions, the difference between Hamas' and Hizbollah's operational experience is highly pronounced. By the Second Lebanon War, Hizbollah had already experienced three rounds of fighting with the Israeli army (1993, 1996, 2002). The gaps between the fighting were long, providing Hizbollah ample time to learn lessons and test them in the next round. These lessons were central milestones in the process of constructing the regular force that the organization built with the close assistance of Iran. In other words, as of 2009, Hizbollah had 16 years of experience of building a regularized force based on lessons learned on the battlefield. In contrast, Hamas only began the process of constructing a force in June 2007, after the takeover of the Gaza Strip. Therefore, during Cast Lead, the military arm of the organization was young and operationally inexperienced. While it is true that Hamas could boast of many years of terrorist activity against the IDF in the Gaza Strip, they were unlike the challenges that Operation Cast Lead posed for the organization. In this sense, it is clear that compared to Hizbollah, Hamas' military was immature and inexperienced in the operation in Gaza.

Qualitative and Quantitative Gaps

It is hard to overstate the differences in the capabilities of Hizbollah and Hamas. This is especially true regarding the rocket array, in terms of quantity, launchers, and skilled manpower. When Operation Cast Lead began, Hamas had a few dozen rockets with a 40 km range. By contrast, according to Defense Minister Ehud Barak, Hixbollah has 40,000 rockets of different types that can reach most of the State of Israel.[23] The ground defenses prepared by the two organizations also differed both qualitatively and quantitatively in terms of the available resources. In southern Lebanon, Hizbollah prepared dozens of fortified villages, manned with relatively skilled operatives armed with modern weaponry. In the Gaza Strip, Hamas fortified a few neighborhoods and villages, in particular on the edges of the urban area. The fighters manning these locations were much less skilled and equipped than their counterparts in Lebanon.

The Strategic Home Front: Continuous vs. Discontinuous and Problematic

Another prominent − if not decisive − difference is the size of the strategic home front. Hizbollah enjoys a deep logistical and operational home front in the form of Iran and Syria. These countries continuously transfer military knowledge and equipment through the open border between Syria and Lebanon, including in wartime. Similarly, Hizbollah activists regularly depart for training in Iran.[24] This unbroken bond with the strategic home front has many implications − psychological, military (especially with regards to the quality of the arms), and relating to organization of the military force, the combatants' professionalism, and logistical stamina. Unlike Hizbollah, Hamas' link with its strategic and logistical home front − Iran and Syria − is fitful and problematic in light of the lack of direct geographical contiguity and the foiling activities undertaken by both Israel and Egypt.

The Strategic Context

Another important difference between the Gaza Strip and Lebanon lies in their strategic contexts in the international community − one is considered an illegitimate entity and the other is a recognized state. The West sees Hamas as an illegitimate element, standing in the way of the

peace process. Therefore, it is considered a legitimate target, and Israel immediately enjoyed great freedom in attacking targets in the Gaza Strip. By contrast, the Lebanese government is a legitimate entity in the eyes of the West. The coming elections for the Lebanese parliament that will take place in the spring of 2009 might increase the strength of the pro-Syrian faction, but because of the country's system of confessional distribution, pro-Western elements will remain relevant to Lebanese rule in some way or another. Western countries, led by the United States and France, would likely not allow the Israeli army free rein in destroying the infrastructures of the government. Moreover, the West has economic, cultural, and other interests in Lebanon. This kept the Israeli government from authorizing an attack against Lebanese infrastructures in the summer of 2006, and this factor will presumably figure in the next battle in Lebanon as well.

IDF Fighting in Gaza: What to Discard, What to Assimilate

The conclusion is that Operation Cast Lead was at most "Lebanon Lite" under favorable international conditions. In light of the many differences between the two arenas, it would be a grave error to apply blindly the principles of Operation Cast Lead to the next battle against Hizbollah. The assumption that whatever worked in the Gaza Strip against Hamas will also work in Lebanon will almost certainly be revealed as false. The size of the battlefield and the qualitative difference in the enemy's forces will require the IDF to use much larger forces spread over a much larger area. Assuming that long range rockets may be launched also from more distant areas, such as the Lebanon Valley, the challenge posed by Hizbollah's rockets to the Israeli army is incalculably greater than the challenge posed by Hamas during Operation Cast Lead. Therefore, applying the "strategy of crushing"[25] or the "Dahiya doctrine" to every location in Lebanon would be extremely difficult and would lead to a scattering of Israeli resources and to diminishing returns.

Regarding the time frame of the next battle against Hizbollah, the assumption that Israel would enjoy a similar political hourglass as it had in Gaza is also liable to be false. President Obama's administration differs from the Bush administration. The new winds blowing in Washington regarding the Middle East are likely to generate rapid pressure for a ceasefire. This pressure may also be affected by the response of the moderate Arab states, which may conclude that rounds of fighting by

the IDF against resistance organizations in Gaza and Lebanon are more destructive than helpful: they do not eradicate the resistance, yet they stir up the Arab street by casting Arab governments as collaborators with Israel and the West. Accordingly, the moderate Arab nations may increase their pressure on Washington to shorten the duration of the fighting.

The policy of attacking targets may also be different due to the international community's views regarding the legitimacy of the Hamas government and the Lebanese government, in addition to the new international circumstances created when President Obama took office. Under such international circumstances, Israel would find it difficult to attack civilian and government infrastructures in Lebanon, the way it did in the Gaza Strip. To the same extent, a ground maneuver directed at capturing territory in order to reduce the number of rocket launches, such as the one launched by the IDF in Gaza, might be ineffective in Lebanon because of the distant launch sites, Hizbollah's tight defenses, and a smaller window of opportunity for Israel to attack. Applying the "Gaza principles" to the next battle in Lebanon may reduce the number of launches, but because of the high number of rocket launches expected from Hizbollah, even a 60 percent reduction – such as was achieved in Operation Cast Lead – would still leave Israeli population centers under a daily barrage of rockets. There would be no practical difference between 300 and 30. Moreover, if Hizbollah has missiles that reach most of the State of Israel, paralyzing the country's political and economic center – the greater Tel Aviv area – can be achieved with just a few missiles a day.

Nonetheless, is there anything that can be learned from the operation in Gaza and applied to the coming battle against Hizbollah or other enemies fighting on the basis of the same model?

Coping Successfully with the "Hizbollah Model"

The basic and perhaps most important lesson is the understanding that it is possible to win a war against the Hizbollah model. After the Second Lebanon War, the feeling in Israel and in the army was that there was no effective response to a threat that combines ground fighting and massive rocket fire on the Israeli home front. Despite the differences between the two arenas, the operation in the Gaza Strip proved that even if the IDF has yet to discover the full formula for dealing with the Hizbollah model,

it has some understanding of how to solve the problem. A war against such a model, as demonstrated by the operation in Gaza on a small scale, must be waged at several levels, and each level must provide a response to a different goal.

Surprise as a Key Element

One of the keys to success is surprise. As was done before Operation Cast Lead, it is necessary to prepare some deception that will take the enemy by complete surprise. It is crucial to use this surprise to render a powerful opening blow, aerial or other, which would preferably neutralize Hizbollah's senior political and military echelon and thus damage the organization's strategic capabilities.

The Operational Level: Destroying the Enemy's Battle Plan and Focusing on the Ground Offensive

Due to the large size of the Lebanese battlefield and the enemy's dispersal within this area, it is necessary to concentrate IDF activity where it will have the greatest effect. Though Hizbollah is at times portrayed as a decentralized organization in which every fighting unit has full operational freedom, the Second Lebanon War proved otherwise. A study conducted by American researchers analyzing the organization's fighting in the summer of 2006 concluded that Hizbollah fought more like a regular military outfit than a decentralized guerilla organization. The determination to hold onto land, the digging into previously prepared positions, the firefights at close range, the centralization of forces, the use of ground conditions for camouflage, local counterattacks, and more all proved that Hizbollah's fighting style was closer to that of a conventional army than to the fighting style of a terrorist or guerilla organization. Three points are of key importance here: first, Hizbollah conducted its fighting through an organized, hierarchical command and control structure making decisions in real time; second, Hizbollah organized the fighting area on the basis of a particular logic intended to delay IDF forces from reaching the major launching sites in the south; and third, Hizbollah evinced strong discipline of fire whereby it successfully timed extensive barrages into Israeli territory and helped its forces with fire.[26]

If this is indeed the case, Israel's ground activity must be centered on specific areas, using powerful ground and aerial forces, as in

Operation Cast Lead. Instead of seizing land and damaging the enemy, the goals must be the quick neutralization of the command and control structure and access to the major launching sites, on the assumption that shattering Hizbollah's chain of command will also result in a significant decrease of fire into Israel. In this context, the IDF must prepare for an eventual ground maneuver into the depth of Lebanon, especially in order to neutralize Hizbollah's senior command and its capability of firing long range rockets towards the greater Tel Aviv area or other Israeli strategic targets.

The Strategic Level: Strengthening Deterrence and Prolonging Rehabilitation – Damaging the Civilian Organizational Infrastructure

One of the major goals of the Israeli army in the next battle against Hizbollah must be creating deterrence and damaging Hizbollah's capability to rebuild after the war. This goal may be achieved not through damaging government institutions or civilian infrastructures as was done in Operation Cast Lead, but more effectively and with a lower international price tag by damaging the civilian and economic infrastructures of Hizbollah itself. In fact, this infrastructure is a strategic asset of the organization, and though it was damaged in the Second Lebanon War, the damage was a side effect of attacking the military infrastructure. In this context, the large Shiite concentrations in the south, in the Beka'a, and Beirut must be considered prime targets. This is not to suggest conducting a war of total destruction of the Shiite community, but to achieve a forceful blow to Hizbollah's relations with the community and the means whereby the community recruits resources on behalf of Hizbollah. This is in addition to damaging the independent economic infrastructure of Lebanon.

The Political Level: Shortening the Duration of the Battle by Undermining the Connection between the Military Action and the Formulation of a Settlement [27]

Israel must understand that in the next battle in Lebanon, the IDF may have a far shorter period of time at its disposal than it had in the Second Lebanon War or in Operation Cast Lead. Therefore, the battle must be planned first and foremost in such a way as to achieve maximum results in a minimum amount of time. It cannot be assumed that the

fighting will last weeks. One way to shorten the duration of the fighting is to undertake diplomatic activity intended to find an exit strategy even before the start of the battle. Usually, such activity begins a few days after the outbreak of war. Stopping the activities of the Israeli army depends greatly on the outcome of diplomatic efforts rather than on operational considerations. In Lebanon, the principles of a settlement are clear, and it is possible to discuss them with the relevant parties even before the battle. Independent of the battle's outcome, the concluding mechanism must include a solution that offers a more effective closing of the Syrian-Lebanese border, prevention of the transfer of weapons from Iran, and removal of Hizbollah's presence from southern Lebanon. These and other principles, along with general understandings among the future partners to a settlement mechanism, may be formulated before a battle and thus make the expected diplomatic activity more effective. By doing so, it is possible to reduce greatly the interdependence of a settlement achievement and the duration of the fighting.

Conclusion

The operation in Gaza was successful primarily from the military – operational and tactical – point of view. At the same time, any attempt to draw far reaching conclusions regarding the next battle against Hizbollah from Operation Cast Lead is liable to be a grave error. The differences between the two arenas and the organizations are vast, and what is true for one may be false for the other. Blind application of the principles of Operation Cast Lead and self-satisfaction with its successes are liable to bear grave consequences both for building the force and for applying it in the next battle against Hizbollah. Nevertheless, the Gaza operation has taught that it is possible to respond successfully to the Hizbollah model and that it is important to plan for a battle that will lead to a clear cut victory. This must be done wisely, with respect for the enemy and an understanding of the limitations of the Israeli force.

Notes

1   The first harbinger of this process may be found in the profound satisfaction that seems to pervade among the senior military commanders of the operation. See Alex Fishman, "It's Not Such a Big Deal," *Yediot Ahronot*, January 30, 2009.

2   This military model is part of a broader outlook called *muqawama* (resistance). See Ehud Yaari, "The *Muqawama* Doctrine," *Jerusalem Report*, November 13, 2006.

3   An example of the principles of this approach may be found in Nasrallah's speech at the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, *al-Manar*, December 31, 2008. For more extensive treatment of the application of this model in the Second Lebanon War, see Amir Kulick, "Hizbollah vs. the IDF: The Operational Dimension," *Strategic Assessment* 9, no. 3 (2006): 29-33.

4   Alon Ben David and Yoav Limor, "Saddam and the Qassam," Ynet, April 17, 2008; and Yossi Melman, "The Next War will Look Like This," *Haaretz*, July 6, 2008.

5   Amos Harel, "Hamas Has Upgraded the Qassam Rockets, Can Launch Them in Large Numbers," *Haaretz*, December 7, 2007.

6   Avi Issacharof and Amos Harel, "Hamas Smuggled Information from Iran to Gaza to Improve Rocket Range," *Haaretz*, March 28, 2008; "Hamas Has Upgraded"; General Security Service, "Hamas: Growing Strength, Building Force," http://www.shabak.go.il/publications/study/Pages/gaza-hamas-terror-report.aspx.

7   Ari Shavit, interview with Amos Yadlin, the head of the Intelligence Division, in *Haaretz*, May 16, 2008; Amos Harel and Avi Issacharof, "Security Sources: Expanded Rocket Range Will Not Lead to Broad Operation," *Haaretz*, January 4, 2008; for a comprehensive survey of the development of the rocket threat in the Gaza Strip, see The Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "The Rocket Threat from the Gaza Strip: 2005-2007," at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/Hebrew/heb_n/pdf/rocket_threat.pdf.

8   Amos Harel and Avi Issacharof, "Qassam is Promoted to New Grade, Let's Hope Not in Our School," *Haaretz*, September 2, 2007; Amos Harel, "Hamas Has Improved Rockets and Use of Timer," *Haaretz*, January 18, 2008.

9   Amos Harel and Avi Issacharof, "How Hamas Army Is Preparing for War with the IDF," *Haaretz*, December 26, 2008; General Security Service, "Hamas: Growing Strength, Building Force," at http://www.shabak.go.il/publications/study/Pages/gaza-hamas-terror-report.aspx.

10 Interview with Col. Herzi Halevy, commander of the Paratroopers Division, *Yediot Ahronot*, January 23, 2009.

11 For data on the numbers of rockets fired at Israel, see Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, Operation Cast Lead, Updates 15, 18, http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/HebSite/html/search/asp.

12 For information about preparation and readiness of the Israeli home front during the fighting, see Meir Elran, "Operation Cast Lead and the Civilian Front: An Interim Assessment," *INSS Insight* No. 87, January 7, 2009.

13 *Al-Jazeera Magazine*, January 5, 2009.

14 Yossi Werter, "*Haaretz* Poll: 78% of the Public Think the Gaza Operation a Success," *Haaretz*, January 15, 2009; poll by Channel 10 News, January 18, 2009, at http://news.nana10.co.il/Article/?ArticleD=610572.

15 For the surprise among the commanders on the ground, see Chen Kottes-Bar, "Palestine," *Maariv*, January 16, 2009.

16 Alex Fishman, "Winograd, You're Free to Go," *Yediot Ahronot*, January 23, 2009.

17 Interview with Col. Herzi Halevy, *Yediot Ahronot*, January 23, 2009.

18 Interview with GOC Northern Command Maj. Gen. Gadi Eizenkot, *Yediot Ahronot*, October 3, 2008.

19 For more on this view, see Gabriel Siboni, "Disproportionate Force: Israel's Concept of Response in Light of the Second Lebanon War," *INSS Insight* 74, October 2, 2008.

20 Thomas L. Friedman, "This Is Not a Test," *New York Times,* January 24, 2009.

21 Amos Harel and Avi Issacharof, "Post-Mortem," *Haaretz*, January 23, 2009.

22 Also see Ofer Shelah, "War as You Wish," *Maariv*, January 16, 2009.

23 Barak's declaration during a tour of the south, Walla, August 7, 2008, http://euro.walla.co.il/?w=/21/1326281. For more on Hizbollah's rocket capabilities after the Second Lebanon War, see Amir Kulick, "The Next War with Hizbollah," *Strategic Assessment* 10, no. 3 (2007): 41-50.

24 *A-sharq al-Awsat*, July 16, 2006, cited by Roi Nahmias, Ynet, July 16, 2006, at http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3276355,00.html.

25 A term used by Harel and Issacharof to describe the IDF's fighting. See "Post-Mortem."

26 Stephen Biddle and Jeffrey A. Friedman*, The 2006 Lebanon Campaign and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy*, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, September 2008, pp. 35-73.

27 The idea for this paragraph is taken from a lecture given by Maj. Gen. (ret.) Giora Eiland at a conference held at the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv on January 27, 2009, to summarize the operation in Gaza.