

The Illusion of Victory: How War is Won or Lost in the Mind of the Observer!

By Squadron Leader Tim Fawdry-Jeffries

When a state embarks upon war it is essential at the outset to clearly articulate the desired objectives, both militarily and strategically. These objectives may evolve over the course of the conflict but they are, nonetheless, necessary in order to define the type of activity that will be engaged in and to persuade the public that this activity is, indeed, worthwhile. However, there is one objective that is eternal, immutable and prime over all others and yet rarely stated overtly; that objective is to win. The concept of winning in war is most usually characterised as victory, but what is victory and what is its relationship to objective reality? This paper seeks to demonstrate through a literature review that the concept of victory is a social construct that is only partially based upon the tangible outcome of war and, moreover, can be artificially engendered through a judicious combination of military power and information operations. This thesis is tested through a case study comparing the 2nd Lebanon War with the Gaza War where the outcomes of each conflict appear to contradict objective reality. In disentangling victory from the simple achievement of military and strategic objectives it becomes possible to determine its true value and to what extent it shapes the socio-political settlement that follows armed conflict.

Introduction

'You ask, what is our aim? I can answer with one word: It is victory.'¹

Some would like us to believe that victory in war is an anachronism and that it is now more appropriate to focus on tangible outcomes rather than something as nebulous as victory. David Cameron, for instance, has been accused of trying to 'redefine what winning means' in Afghanistan in order to ameliorate what is, in the words of one commentator, 'a complete and utter disaster.'² However, the idea and semantics of victory have tremendous resonance and the term is unlikely to fall from popular use even if our politicians increasingly balk at using it.³ But by what metrics is victory determined? Even following those wars popularly considered to be decisive there is still ambiguity over the outcome. Referring to the First World War Winston Churchill observed that 'victory was to be bought so dear as to be almost indistinguishable from defeat. It was not to give security even to the victors.'⁴ Words such as success, win and victory tend to be used interchangeably, with those using them clearly assuming that such elementary terms are self explanatory. Robert Mandel goes further; 'it is most common for the concept of victory to be bandied about quite loosely, with a tacit assumption that everyone understands what it means and yet without any precise definition at all.'⁵ Where a definition of victory is proffered it is usually the author's idealised conception of how victory *could* or *should* be measured often leading to gross discrepancies between the popular view and that of the author.

This paper seeks to understand how observers, and groups of observers, cognitively decide whether an antagonist has won or lost in war; this will be referred to as the *perceived outcome*. The central thesis of this paper is that the perceived outcome of war has as much, if not more, power to influence events than the objective outcome and that this perception is not simply a product of *what* is achieved so much as *how* it is achieved. In order to verify these assertions the paper is formed of two parts; a conceptual exposition followed by a comparative case study.

Part 1, the conceptual exposition, begins by citing a number of historical case studies to demonstrate that the perceived outcome is not necessarily synonymous with objective success or failure at any of the four levels of war. This is followed by a comparison of how the concept of victory has been rationalised by contemporary theorists including Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tearney in *Failing to Win*, Robert Mandel in *The Meaning of Military Victory* and Richard Hobbs in *The Myth of Victory*. Part 1 will finish by proposing a new model for victory and will explain why the perceived outcome of war is more important than ever.

Part 2, the comparative case study, seeks to verify and extrapolate the proposed model by using the Second Lebanon War of 2006 and the Gaza War of 2008-09 as detailed case studies. This paper argues that despite broadly similar objective outcomes the Second Lebanon War has been perceived as a defeat for Israel whereas the Gaza War has generally been perceived

as a victory. In order to explain these contradictory outcomes the military and political methodologies of Israel have been evaluated under five headings: the four levels of war followed by Information Operations (IO). For reasons of brevity the comparative case study largely omits activities undertaken by Hamas and Hezbollah, concentrating primarily on Israel as the common denominator in both conflicts.

Part 1 - Conceptual Exposition

Historically, there are a myriad of examples of formally agreed treaties where the question of victory has been settled fairly conclusively. In such cases the perceived outcome has usually been rendered synonymous with the military outcome. According to Clausewitz 'the ultimate object is the preservation of one's own state and the defeat of the enemy's; again in brief, the intended peace treaty, which will resolve the conflict and result in a common settlement'.⁶ Unfortunately, it is simply not credible that war with non-state or quasi-state actors such as Hezbollah or Hamas et al will always culminate in anything as convenient and gentlemanly as a 'peace treaty'.⁷ Victory in the discretionary conflicts of today and tomorrow is likely to be subjective, mutable and divisive. With belligerents unlikely to agree between themselves as to who is the victor, and with no trans-national body able or willing to arbitrate on their behalf, it is essential to understand how the perceived outcome is likely to be formed.

Perceived Outcome and the Levels of War

It is perhaps reasonable to assume that the perceived outcome is primarily derived from some aggregation of tangible outcomes. According to Clausewitz victory is simply 'the preservation of one's fighting forces and the destruction of the enemy's'.⁸ The Second World War offers a clear template of such a Clausewitzian victory whereby the Allies' military and industrial superiority resulted in victory both military and perceived. However, such an unambiguous correlation between the military outcome and perceived outcome is less common than one might suppose. The military and, indeed, political outcomes are most usually evaluated using the levels of war. British defence doctrine recognises three such levels; tactical, operational and strategic, with 'military strategy' being 'the military contribution, as part of an integrated approach, to the achievement of national policy goals'.⁹ The British distinction between 'military strategy' and 'national strategy' is often recognised in other models through the division of the strategic level into two distinct levels; military-strategic and grand-strategic.¹⁰ This paper will, therefore, consider four levels of war: tactical, operational, military-strategic and grand-strategic.

Plenty of historical examples demonstrate that objective success can be achieved at any, or even a combination of, the four levels of war without necessarily generating a perception of victory. In *Another Bloody Century* Colin Gray exhorts us to 'remember Indo-China! Recall Vietnam! And do not forget Algeria, where the French colonial army won the warfare, but lost the war and the subsequent peace'.¹¹ Gray's three examples have all been widely perceived as defeats for the US and France despite clear success at both the tactical and operational levels of war.¹² History is also rich with examples in which success at the military-strategic level has still not resulted in perceived victory. Most recently in the War in Afghanistan the military strategy of

the Coalition Forces has been extremely successful at disrupting and displacing Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, and yet it has not yielded anything like perceived victory for the Coalition Forces. This failure has been attributed to many factors including 'Icarus' like ambition and a vacillating grand-strategy.¹³ But, even success at the grand-strategic level of war is no guarantor of perceived victory as the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 demonstrates. In the aftermath of this conflict all levels of Japanese society viewed the outcome as a defeat despite the Imperial government clearly achieving its grand-strategic aims.¹⁴ Instead, the dominant perception of defeat was formed from a belief that the reparations extracted from the Russian Empire were not commensurate with the level of sacrifice endured.¹⁵ In his narrative of the conflict J.N. Westwood captures the Japanese national mood following the Russian surrender:

'Some newspaper offices put out flags bordered with mourning crepe. In Yokohama only two people were said to have hoisted flags to celebrate peace, and they were both Frenchmen.'¹⁶

The examples above demonstrate that there is no direct causality between any of the four levels of war and the perceived outcome. In fact, there appears to be no *objective* common denominator linking all perceived victories in war, other, perhaps, than an absence of failure at all levels. Even then, the Russo-Japanese war demonstrates that success can be achieved at all four levels and that a perception of defeat among some groups of observers can nevertheless ensue.

Three Models for Victory

The examples above indicate that the perceived outcome of war is not simply a product of either military or political success. This has become especially evident in light of ambiguous outcomes in Iraq, Afghanistan and, more recently, Libya. In *Failing to Win: Perceptions of Victory and Defeat in International Relations*, Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney identify that the perceived outcome of war often appears to bear little relation to any tangible outcome, stating that 'observer's perceptions of who won and who lost in a war or a crisis often diverge widely from the reality on the ground'.¹⁷ Their treatment of the subject focuses not simply on conflict but also on international relations, citing the Cuban missile crisis as one of a number of detailed case studies. This case study asserts that, objectively speaking, the Cuban missile crisis was 'a draw with gains and losses on both sides, but it was almost universally perceived as a triumph for the US'.¹⁸ Johnson and Tierney propose a compelling and detailed model for how such perceptions are formed, using sport as a useful analogy. Their model is a composite of two frameworks entitled 'scorekeeping' and 'match-fixing'; it is asserted that for any dispute one of these frameworks will be dominant. Where 'scorekeeping' is dominant the perceived outcome will be determined fairly objectively through a rational comparison of 'material gains and aims'.¹⁹ Conversely, where the 'match-fixing' framework is dominant, the perceived outcome will be skewed away from objective reality by psychological and sociological factors including 'mind-sets, salient events, and social pressures'.²⁰ Whilst the model is meticulously researched and extremely coherent it has aspects that remain problematic. First, the model

can be applied retrospectively to justify the outcome of almost any dispute; in this way it is self-fulfilling. For example, if the outcome is consistent with objective reality, then the score-keeping framework is said to be dominant; if not, then the match-fixing framework is said to be dominant. Johnson and Tierney propose so many factors in the match-fixing model that a dispute is practically guaranteed to display one or more factor, and hence the resulting perception will have been explained.

Second, the model seeks to act as a general dispute model and treats war as a dispute much like any other. In so doing it applies the same logic to war as it would, say, to a presidential election or foreign policy dispute. Consequently, neither the scorekeeping nor the match-fixing framework fully considers the *way* in which a military campaign is conducted, focusing instead on outcomes and whether these outcomes are subsequently skewed by sociological and psychological forces.²¹ Military methodologies are considered to be irrelevant to the scorekeeping framework as they are deemed 'important only inasmuch as they are a means to a material end, and it is this end that we evaluate'. Military methodologies are also largely excluded from the match-fixing model which concentrates on forces such as 'leader' and 'societal manipulation'.²² As such, *Failing to Win* largely disregards the visible way in which military activity is conducted and how this comes to be perceived by observers.

Johnson and Tierney's model is put forward as a 'complete theory' which seeks to explain the rationale behind any perceived outcome whether it reflects objective reality or not.²³ This marks a huge step forward in the understanding of how perceptions of victory and defeat may be formed but any claim that such perceptions can be fully rationalised is perhaps overstated. As Clausewitz noted 'the conduct of war branches out in almost all directions and has no definite limits; while any system, any model, has the finite nature of a synthesis. An irreconcilable conflict exists between this type of theory and actual practice'.²⁴

In *The Meaning of Military Victory* Robert Mandel also seeks to deconstruct what it means to win in war and how this can be achieved. However, Mandel takes a very different approach to Johnson and Tierney. Mandel also recognises that victory is measured subjectively; 'across time, circumstance, and culture, victory has had dissimilar and often unclear and contradictory meanings for winners and losers'.²⁵ However, whilst Johnson and Tierney focus on explaining how the perceived outcome is formed, Mandel seeks to cut through the 'definitional morass' by proposing his own authoritative definition of victory, splitting it into two components: military and strategic.²⁶ In this way his proposition is consistent with the view espoused by Brian Bond in *The Pursuit of Victory* that to triumph militarily, no matter how decisively, is of no value unless followed by political efforts to secure an enduring and advantageous peace settlement; even then the 'benefits may be disappointing or even illusory'.²⁷

Mandel associates military victory with 'war-winning' where 'a state attempts to bring a war to a successful military conclusion, affecting the mode of battle in terms of how one fights and whether one continues or ceases to fight'.²⁸ He goes on to associate strategic victory

with 'peace-winning' where 'a state attempts to reap the payoffs of war, affecting the mode of post-combat activities in terms of how one manages the transition afterward and whether one stays in or leaves the area where the fighting occurred'.²⁹ Mandel's attempts to objectively define victory provide useful metrics by which military and strategic success may be measured. However, the model, whilst coherent and methodical, is nevertheless Mandel's personal view of what constitutes military and strategic victory. It is, therefore, frequently not consistent with the judgement of history and sheds little light on perceived outcomes.

Mandel cites four recent campaigns, each of which he deems, using his parameters, to be military victories but strategic defeats: Operations Desert Storm, Allied Force, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Whilst his logic is sound he makes no attempt to explain the resultant dichotomy, namely that Desert Storm and Allied Force have both been widely *perceived* as victories for the US whereas Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom clearly have not. As noted by Sanu Kainikara in *Pathways to Victory*, 'no two conflicts follow the same model and, therefore, there cannot be a definition of victory that encompasses all variables'.³⁰ Mandel's definition of military and strategic victory are essentially synonymous with military-strategic and grand-strategic success respectively, but history shows that neither is always coincident with perceived victory. Mandel's own examples do, however, serve to demonstrate that the perceived outcome has the power to influence events often to a greater degree than the objective outcome, be it military or strategic. Mandel may be correct that Desert Storm and Allied Force were strategic failures but they have both been generally *perceived* by commentators, academics and the public alike as victories and this has resulted in very real (albeit in some cases short-lived) outcomes. These outcomes include the vindication of air power used for strategic effect and the justification of liberal interventionism. Conversely, popular perceptions of defeat in Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom have severely curtailed the appetite of the US and its allies to again commit military forces to open-ended operations or nation-building. Despite Mandel categorising each of the four operations as a military victory but strategic failure, it is clear that two have been *perceived* as victories and the other two as defeats. It is also clear that these perceived outcomes have had profound consequences.

Writing at the height of the Cold War Colonel Richard Hobbs sought to delineate between victory and total victory and concluded that both are as destructive to the victor as to the vanquished. In his polemical work *The Myth of Victory: What is Victory in War?* he asserts that during the 19th and 20th Centuries the rise of total war had been accompanied by a concomitant desire for total victory.³¹ This he sees as being typified by the Second World War, where the only outcome deemed acceptable to the Allied Forces was the 'unconditional surrender' of the Axis Powers.³² He concludes that 'as long as man tries to impose his will on his fellow man, there will be war. As long as there is war, there will be a quest for victory'.³³ However, he views victory itself as a 'siren drawing men onto the rocks of war' and victory in nuclear war, in particular, as 'a chimera'.³⁴ To him 'victory gained from pushing war to its upper limits is illusory and not commensurate with its terrible cost' and even in a guerrilla or limited

war it can be 'exorbitantly expensive'.³⁵ Hobbs asserts that 'through patient and sincere efforts, there can be peace without victory', but 'there is more apt to be victory without peace'.³⁶

It is clear that for Hobbs the term victory refers specifically to what Mandel defines as military victory. Like Mandel and Bond, Hobbs also concludes that victory through winning the war does not necessarily equate with winning the peace. Hobbs, however, goes further than Mandel by asserting that, as the totality of the military victory increases, so the likelihood of strategic victory actually diminishes. Hobbs does concede that 'to some extent, victory may be psychological' but he does not extrapolate this in the way that Johnson and Tierney do, by recognising that victory as it is perceived by the observer can be uniquely different from either military or strategic victory.³⁷ Hobbs asserts that war can be a necessary and worthwhile activity but that the quest for victory itself often has a deleterious effect on any potential benefits. Hobbs' view, however, is not consistent with history which demonstrates that being perceived as victorious does tend to confer benefits upon the victor. Nonetheless Hobbs highlights a profound truth: that victory of any sort is only valuable if it confers benefits upon the victor.

A New Model for Victory

The three models outlined above are, ostensibly, incompatible but they all share elements of commonality and can, therefore, be reconciled into one consistent model. First, all three models recognise that a better understanding of victory as a concept is important to the study of war. Second, they propose that victory takes more than one form. Third, they concur that victory has often been popularly accorded to actors despite objective outcomes to the contrary. Fourth, they identify that widely held perceptions can themselves generate real outcomes. These models can be reconciled first by acknowledging Mandel's assertion that military and strategic outcomes are different and can be measured objectively. However, it seems illogical to refer to military or strategic *victory* when this is so often at odds with the perceived outcome. Instead, the military and strategic outcomes would be more meaningfully referred to in terms of military and strategic success or failure. After all, it would be perverse to talk of military victory for an antagonist that was clearly deemed by the majority of observers to have generally 'lost' or been 'defeated': the US in Vietnam for example. The second way to reconcile the three models is to acknowledge Johnson and Tierney's assertion that the perceived outcome is discrete from the military and strategic outcomes and is, in essence, a social construct. It is reasonable to measure this perceived outcome in terms of *victory* and *defeat* as these terms are most often used when expressing this social construct. The third way to reconcile the models is to acknowledge Hobbs' assertion that victory of any form is only as valuable as the benefits that it confers upon the victor.

The new model, therefore, recognises three broad outcomes of war: military, strategic and perceived. The military outcome is an objective description of the achievement of military objectives and of military gains and losses. The strategic outcome is an objective description of the achievement of political objectives and of political gains and losses. The perceived outcome,

however, is a social construct and a description of how observers believe an antagonist to have performed. The first two outcomes are best measured on a scale ranging from failure to success and the third outcome is best measured on a scale ranging from defeat to victory. This model, therefore, asserts that the terms victory and defeat are only truly meaningful when used to describe the *perceived* outcome of war. Clearly the perceived outcome will be influenced by the military and strategic outcomes but the examples given in this paper demonstrate that it is not *only* a product of these outcomes. Instead, it is proposed that the perceived outcome is a product not only of *what* is achieved but also *how* it is achieved. In other words, the military and political methodologies applied.

In identifying three outcomes of war a further question is raised: which outcome is most important? This question can only be answered through recognising that the military, strategic and perceived outcomes are only important in terms of the benefits that they result in for the antagonist. Each outcome is likely to result in its own associated benefits (or, conversely, disadvantages) and it is ultimately for leaders to decide which benefits best serve the national interest. Indeed, Part 2 of this paper uses the Second Lebanon War and the Gaza War to show how in the latter conflict Israel's leaders appeared to specifically pursue perceived victory at the expense of greater military and strategic success. If this assertion is true then it can be deduced that those leaders considered that the disadvantages that would ensue from a perceived defeat would have outweighed any benefits that were likely to be gained from military or even strategic success. Such a decision is logical if deterrence is the primary benefit sought. Before considering this comparative case study, however, it is necessary to explain why the perceived outcome of war is growing in importance and through what media it is most influenced.

The Growing Importance of the Perceived Outcome

In *The Utility of Force* Rupert Smith is emphatic: 'however many tactical successes you achieve they will be as nought if the people do not think you are winning'.³⁸ If we are to conclude that perceived victory is valuable then we must concede that it is worth pursuing in conjunction with military and strategic success. In fact, historical trends indicate that the perceived outcome is not only *growing* in significance but is also becoming ever more difficult to control.

The invention of the semaphore visual telegraph by Claude Chappe in the late 18th Century enabled 'the transmission of information at a speed of over 500km/h'.³⁹ The advent of the electrical telegraph would, by the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861, make practically instantaneous communications a reality. However, whilst the speed of communication had reached its physical limit, the pervasiveness and sophistication of communications has continued to develop apace. During the siege of Constantinople in 1453, for example, it took weeks before the outcome was fully known by the then crowned heads of Europe; that the eastern bulwark of Christianity had fallen to Mehmet II then took months to filter down to the peasantry of Christendom.⁴⁰ Perhaps the first truly informed view of this epochal event was proffered over three centuries later in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

by Edward Gibbon; a man who had the means and time to examine records from multiple observers and set them within a broader historical context.⁴¹

Prior to the modern era persons empowered by the state had the time, means and influence to retrospectively mould the perceived outcome of war by promulgating whatever version of the truth was most beneficial to them and their cause. Over time the state's supremacy in influencing this perception has been usurped through innovations such as the printing press, newspapers, radio, television, the internet and, most recently, the smartphone. Today, the ability of the state to define perceptions *postbellum* is trivial compared with that of social media. As identified by Kanikara and Parkin 'victory is now a volatile combination of politics, economics, social and cultural needs, made ever more interconnected by dependence on the favourable perception of the watching world'.⁴² This development appears now to be approaching its zenith where practically every man, woman and, increasingly, child on the battlefield has the ability and means to communicate their views and experiences unfettered across the globe. Such views are cascaded ceaselessly, without verification or provenance and stripped of context. The perceived outcome of war, therefore, is no longer dominated by the reflective judgement of historians or governments, nor is it consumed credulously by the masses. Governments and strategists who once had the luxury of time and method with which to control perceptions must now accept that the perceived outcome should be considered as part of the campaign plan rather than as a post-conflict activity. As Sun Tzu noted in *The Art of War* 'victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win'.⁴³

Part 1 Summary

This paper asserts that war has three outcomes; military, strategic and perceived. The military outcome is an objective description of the achievement of military objectives and of military gains and losses. The strategic outcome is an objective description of the achievement of political objectives and of political gains and losses. The perceived outcome, however, is a social construct and a description of how observers believe an antagonist to have performed. This paper also asserts that the military and strategic outcomes are best measured on a scale ranging from failure to success, whereas the perceived outcome is best measured on a scale ranging from defeat to victory. It is also proposed that each of the three outcomes will result in benefits or, conversely, disadvantages for the antagonist and that understanding the likely benefits or disadvantages will help enable leaders to determine the best course of action. Finally, this paper has asserted that, due to the increasing pervasiveness and sophistication of communications technology, the perceived outcome is growing in importance and must, therefore, be considered at the earliest stages of campaign planning.

Part 2 - Comparative Case Study: The Second Lebanon War and Gaza War

Israel's activities in the 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War, more usually known as the Second Lebanon War, have become synonymous with military incompetence and strategic failure.⁴⁴ Military practitioners and academics (along with the Israeli authorities themselves) have queued

up to postulate where the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) went wrong, and how a quasi-state actor such as Hezbollah could triumph over the most competent and well equipped fighting force in the Middle-East.⁴⁵ Israel's performance has been decried variously as a failure of air power, doctrine, training, intelligence, leadership (both military and political) and more besides.⁴⁶ The ensuing perception of defeat within Israel led to national introspection accompanied by a palpable loss of national confidence and prestige.⁴⁷ Indeed, shortly after the war the heads of Mossad and Shin Bet, Meir Dugan and Yuval Diskin respectively, told the Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, that 'the war was a national catastrophe and Israel suffered a critical defeat'.⁴⁸ Hezbollah, on the other hand, was elevated to an almost mystical level of military competence being heralded as nothing less than the prototype of a 'modern Hybrid challenger' with its Secretary General, Hassan Nasrallah, ordained as 'the most popular Arab leader since Nasser'.⁴⁹

Less than three years after its 'defeat' at the hands of Hezbollah, Israel was once again at war; this time with Hamas in Gaza. Much as in its previous engagement in Lebanon, the IDF was pitted against a radical Muslim quasi-state actor which had the very destruction of Israel as one of its avowed aims.⁵⁰ The enemy, again enmeshed amongst civilians, sought to emulate Hezbollah's success by mimicking its Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs) and deploying much the same military materiel.⁵¹ The operating environment was, if anything, even more complex, described by Ron Tira in *The Nature of War* as 'one big minefield, IEDs, traps and tunnels in almost every block'.⁵² It appeared that Israel was about to stumble into yet another costly military misadventure. However, just three weeks after it had began, the Gaza War culminated in what has subsequently been viewed as a landmark victory for the IDF.⁵³ Those same voices that had lambasted the IDF after the Second Lebanon War now heralded its latest triumph as a paragon of institutional learning and urban warfare.⁵⁴

Closer inspection of the two conflicts, however, unmask a quandary. When viewed objectively the outcomes of the Second Lebanon War and Gaza War were scarcely different and, it could be argued, actually more favourable to Israel following the earlier conflict. In both conflicts neither Hezbollah nor Hamas had been destroyed or even fatally disrupted, and the rocket attacks that had precipitated both conflicts continued to emanate from Gaza but practically ceased from Lebanon. In fact, attacks by Hamas returned almost to pre-conflict levels within three years, whereas those by Hezbollah have been negligible. According to figures released by the IDF, annual rocket attacks from Gaza peaked at 3278 in 2008 reducing to 774 in 2009 and reducing further in 2010 to 231.⁵⁵ However, these attacks then increased to 627 in 2011 and again in 2012 to 2248, resulting in the Israeli reprisal operation, Pillar of Defence.⁵⁶ Conversely, following the Second Lebanon War the 'once volatile border has enjoyed the longest period of relative calm in four decades'.⁵⁷ Moreover, Hezbollah opted to stay on the sidelines during the Gaza War. What is clear is that Israel's *perceived* defeat in the earlier conflict resulted in very real outcomes including a raft of high profile resignations including those of the Defence Minister, IDF Chief of Staff and Israeli Navy Commander-in-Chief. So why were the perceptions so different despite similar objective outcomes? Moreover, is it possible to emulate

the success enjoyed by the IDF in the Gaza War simply by pursuing perceived victory at the expense of greater military and strategic success? In answering these questions the four levels of war will be used to evaluate some significant aspects of Israel's *modus operandi* in Lebanon and Gaza. In addition, Israel's approach to Information Operations (IO) will be considered. First, however, it is necessary to demonstrate that the Second Lebanon War has, indeed, been perceived as a defeat for Israel and the Gaza War perceived as a victory.

Assessing the Perceived Outcomes of the Second Lebanon War and the Gaza War

This paper asserts that for the Second Lebanon War the dominant perception is that Hezbollah were victorious and Israel defeated. It also asserts that the perceived outcome of the Gaza War is that Israel was deemed to be victorious and Hamas defeated. In order to support these broad assertions a literature review was conducted, the results of which are summarised in Annex A. This literature review covered 30 sources in which some assessment of the outcome of the two conflicts is made; these sources include books, journals, articles, papers and reports both in printed and electronic forms. For each source and for each war an assessment has been made as to whether the author(s) deemed the outcome to be positive, negative or unclear for each of the antagonists. An assessment was also made as to whether the author(s) acknowledged, even tacitly, a dominant perception of the outcome against which their own judgement was framed.

In the case of the Second Lebanon War, 50% of sources concluded that Hezbollah had achieved a positive outcome compared to just 3% for Israel. In contrast, no source was found to consider that Hezbollah had achieved a negative outcome, whereas 47% considered that Israel had suffered a negative outcome. Moreover, 90% of sources acknowledged a dominant perception that Israel had suffered a negative outcome, with none acknowledging a dominant perception that Hezbollah had achieved a negative outcome. Conversely, no source was found to acknowledge a dominant perception that Israel had achieved a positive outcome, with 90% acknowledging a dominant perception that Hezbollah had achieved a positive outcome. 33% of sources considered that the outcome for Hezbollah had been unclear and, likewise, 33% considered that the outcome for Israel had been unclear. In several instances no discernible opinions on the outcome or perceived outcome could be identified and these were classified as 'no opinion'.

In the case of the Gaza War no source was found to consider that Hamas had achieved a positive outcome compared to 69% for Israel. In contrast, 75% of sources were found to consider that Hamas had suffered a negative outcome whereas none was found to consider that Israel had done so. Moreover, only 6% of sources acknowledged a dominant perception that Israel had suffered a negative outcome, with 75% acknowledging a dominant perception that Hamas had done so. Conversely, 75% of sources were found to acknowledge a dominant perception that Israel had achieved a positive outcome with just 6% acknowledging a dominant perception that Hamas had achieved a positive outcome. 6% of sources considered that the

outcome for Hamas had been unclear and 12.5% were deemed to consider that the outcome for Israel had been unclear. Again, in several instances no discernible opinions on the outcome or perceived outcome could be identified and these were classified as 'no opinion'. It must be conceded that an element of subjectivity was used in assessing the views of the authors. However, in most cases the views are unambiguous and where ambiguity exists an unclear outcome was recorded.

The results of this literature review overwhelmingly indicate that the Second Lebanon War was deemed by commentators and academics alike to have resulted in an unclear or positive outcome for Hezbollah and an unclear or negative outcome for Israel. It also shows that the Gaza War was deemed to have resulted in a clear positive outcome for Israel and a clear negative outcome for Hamas. Strikingly, almost all sources acknowledge a dominant perception that Hezbollah had achieved a positive outcome in Lebanon and Israel a negative outcome. Similarly, almost all sources acknowledge a dominant perception that Israel had achieved a positive outcome in Gaza and Hamas a negative outcome.

A study of relevant opinion polls would also be illuminating; however, this paper has chosen to avoid such sources as they are only likely to indicate the views of specific groups of observers such as the Israeli or Lebanese public. Instead, a literature review was chosen so that an aggregated international view could be identified.

Israel's Grand Strategy in Lebanon and Gaza

This paper takes the definition of grand strategy to be synonymous with that of the strategic level of war as given in British Defence Doctrine. Here it is defined as 'the level at which national resources are allocated to achieve the Government's policy goals'. In order to dissect, therefore, the grand strategy of Israel during the Second Lebanon War and Gaza War it is essential to first understand Israel's national policy goals at the time of each conflict.⁵⁸

In the case of the Second Lebanon War the Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, stated in a speech to the Knesset that his goals were to include (but were not restricted to) 'the return of the hostages', 'a complete ceasefire' and 'expulsion of Hezbollah from the area'.⁵⁹ Conversely, the stated objective of Israel in the Gaza War was 'to strike a direct and hard blow against the Hamas while increasing the deterrent strength of the IDF; in order to bring about an improved and more stable security situation for residents of southern Israel over the long term'.⁶⁰ The stated aims of Israel during the two conflicts were markedly different in their character despite describing similar outcomes. The Lebanon statement consisted of measurable and ambitious objectives which provided ample opportunity for demonstrable failure. Conversely, the Gaza statement consisted of modest and difficult-to-measure objectives such that any accusations of failure would be easy to refute. For example, in Lebanon an avowed objective was to 'expel Hezbollah' whereas in Gaza the comparable objective was 'to strike a direct and hard blow against the Hamas'. It was practically inconceivable that Hezbollah would be expelled in toto from Lebanon, having, as it did, popular support in the region and representation within the

legitimate Lebanese government.⁶¹ On the other hand it would be relatively straightforward for the IDF to strike a 'direct and hard blow against Hamas.'

In his Lebanon statement Olmert went on to say that Israel would 'insist on' the 'deployment of the Lebanese army in all of southern Lebanon'.⁶² Again, this augured poorly for the IDF which was unlikely to achieve such a radical outcome. In the Gaza statement, however, the equivalent objective was to 'bring about an improved and more stable security situation for residents of southern Israel over the long term'. No mention was made of socio-political change within Gaza and it stressed that the *improved* situation would be 'over the long term' rather than immediately. The final, and perhaps most foolhardy, objective of Israel in the Second Lebanon War was to secure 'the return of the hostages'. Hezbollah simply had to retain the two kidnapped soldiers in order to demonstrate Israel's failure. In fact, it later transpired that both soldiers, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, had been killed or fatally wounded at the outset of the conflict.⁶³ Olmert had unwittingly set an objective that was actually impossible to achieve, thus assuring failure against his own yardstick.

Israel's stated objectives for the Second Lebanon War, being quantitative yet wildly unrealistic, sowed the seeds of perceived defeat at the very outset of the campaign. Moreover, their inevitable and ongoing lack of fulfilment probably protracted Israel's involvement until the UN intervention in the form of Security Council Resolution 1701. This UN brokerage exacerbated the already fermenting perception that Israel had once again become 'bogged down' in Lebanon and was, as such, unable to cease hostilities on its own terms.⁶⁴ The Gaza objectives, on the other hand, being qualitative and achievable, provided Israel with the latitude to announce a unilateral ceasefire after just three weeks, confident that its stated objectives had been satisfied and even exceeded. In limiting the duration of military activity as far as possible and avoiding external arbitration, Israel precluded any accusations of being 'bogged down' in Gaza.⁶⁵ Terminating the Gaza campaign in this way implied that Israel had already achieved its national goals; in other words, victory.

To summarise, at the grand-strategic level the objectives set by the Israeli government set the conditions for defeat in Lebanon and victory in Gaza. By setting quantitative and unrealistic objectives in Lebanon the bar was set high; too high in fact. But by setting qualitative and achievable objectives in Gaza the bar was set low and was easily exceeded. The objective outcomes of both wars were largely similar, but for the observer the outcomes were not compared against each other but, rather, against the objectives set at the outset of each campaign.

The IDF's Military Strategy in Lebanon and Gaza

British Defence Doctrine disentangles military-strategy from strategy per se by defining the former as 'the military contribution, as part of an integrated approach, to the achievement of national policy goals'.⁶⁶ It has been shown how the grand strategy employed by Israel in the Gaza War enabled the IDF to cease military activity at a time of its own choosing. Conversely, in

Lebanon the IDF was saddled with unrealistic objectives which necessitated tangible outcomes before victory could be convincingly claimed. Seen in this light it becomes clear why the military-strategy employed in Lebanon appeared to vacillate compared to that employed in Gaza, which seemed to be executed without deviation. Even the operational monikers selected by the Israeli Operations Directorate acted to reinforce this perception. In Lebanon the Israel Air Force (IAF) began the conflict with Operation Specific Gravity but this was swiftly superseded by Operation Change of Direction.⁶⁷ As the campaign ground on, and with victory looking ever more elusive, operational plans were updated until, finally, the ill-fated Operation Change of Direction 11.⁶⁸ The name 'Change of Direction' was intended to convey the notion that the direction of events in the Middle East would change in Israel's favour but instead it conveyed the notion that Israel's campaign plan had changed direction as much as eleven times. In the Gaza War, however, the Operations Directorate assigned the name Operation Cast Lead, never adding any numerical suffix, referring instead to stages 1, 2 and (the never initiated) 3.⁶⁹ This conveyed a notion of certainty and continuity, almost as if the strategy itself was figuratively 'cast in lead'. Indeed, the fact that the entire three-week campaign was characterised by just one operation created the perception that the plan required no refinement; many authors even refer to the entire war as Operation Cast Lead, signifying the IDF's dominance over events.

Even when one disregards the unfortunate choice of operational names it is clear that Israel's military strategy in Lebanon was one of constant change. In Gaza, by contrast, the IDF appeared to enact a well-rehearsed military set-piece from beginning to end. In fact, this is exactly what it did do. Unencumbered by bothersome measurable objectives and given the limited timeframe of just three weeks, the IDF could operate in Gaza with minimal improvisation. In the run-up to the Gaza War IDF soldiers trained in a mock Arab city built on a base in southern Israel. To add realism and to test asymmetric principles, role players were used for civilians, combatants and the media.⁷⁰ Ron Tira cited 'training, training, training' as being essential to Israeli success in Gaza but perhaps 'rehearsal, rehearsal, rehearsal' would be a more apt description.⁷¹

It has been reported that during the Second Lebanon War at least 900 Lebanese civilians and 500 Hezbollah fighters were killed as well as 119 Israeli service personnel and 42 Israeli civilians.⁷² During the Gaza War, by comparison, at least 700 Palestinian civilians and 225 Hamas fighters were killed, in addition to around 230 Palestinian policemen; Israeli losses were reported to be 10 service personnel and 3 civilians.⁷³ These figures demonstrate that Hezbollah and Hamas losses in the two conflicts were remarkably similar, as too were Lebanese and Palestinian civilian fatalities. It is notable that Israeli losses in Lebanon were significantly higher than in Gaza and, it must be conceded, this will have made a significant contribution to the ensuing perceptions.

To summarise, at the military-strategic level the IDF appeared in Lebanon to be shambolic and incoherent whereas in Gaza it appeared to be ultra-competent and unified. This was due, in part, to the operational names chosen but, even more, to the levels of improvisation required

in the two campaigns. In Lebanon, activities were extended further and further into Lebanon in a futile attempt to satisfy the unachievable objectives. Conversely, in Gaza a well-rehearsed plan was executed almost flawlessly. In both conflicts the IDF achieved military successes but in Lebanon it *looked* bad whereas in Gaza it *looked* good.

The IDF's Operations in Lebanon and Gaza

British Defence Doctrine gives the operational level of warfare as the 'level at which campaigns are planned, conducted and sustained, to accomplish strategic objectives and synchronise action, within theatres or areas of operation'.⁷⁴ It has been shown how Israel divided its effort in Lebanon into a number of operations including Specific Gravity, Just Reward and Change of Direction. This reflected the changing strategy beginning on 13 July 2006 with an exclusive air power campaign using Effects Based Operations (EBO) principles similar to those applied by NATO in the Kosovo war.⁷⁵ When this offensive did not yield the desired results on 17 July 2006 the IDF launched land operations in a number of border towns, with the intent of engaging and suppressing the enemy.⁷⁶ On 31 July 2006 the Israeli Cabinet approved a plan to establish a security zone several kilometres wide along the Israeli-Lebanese border and on 11 August 2006 this was extended to include incursions towards the Litani river.⁷⁷ Meanwhile the IAF continued to engage strategic targets such as Katyusha rocket launchers and tunnel networks in the forlorn hope that this would significantly reduce rocket attacks and critically disable Hezbollah.⁷⁸

The use of air and land components in Lebanon as largely disparate elements fomented the growing perception that the IDF was not operating as a coherent force.⁷⁹ This view was exacerbated by the fact that the Israeli reserve forces were not called up until 21 July 2006 and even then their mobilisation was 'handled chaotically'.⁸⁰ An impression grew that the air offensive was intended to be decisive, that it had failed and, as a result, an *ad-hoc* ground offensive had been initiated. However, the perceptions created by the way in which operations had been managed somewhat clouded the truth. The air operations in Lebanon were actually hugely successful, with practically all Zelzel rocket launchers, firing medium to long range missiles, destroyed within a few days.⁸¹ Kainikara and Parkin point out that:

At the operational level, the IAF excelled. They flew in excess of 8000 fighter sorties and 2000 attack helicopter sorties without any combat loss. Tactically they were extremely effective and the weapon delivery accuracy was reported to be approximately 10 metres. There is unanimous agreement from the land forces that close air support was very responsive and well coordinated with artillery support.⁸²

In fact, initial air operations in Lebanon were objectively no less successful than in Gaza which also began with an air campaign. Not only was the initial air offensive in Gaza similar in length to exclusive air operations in Lebanon (7 days as opposed to 4) but also, as in Lebanon, once complete, 'rockets and mortars continued to strike Israel'.⁸³ However, whereas the initial air campaign in Lebanon was conceived and viewed as a stand alone operation, the air offensive

in Gaza was pointedly described by Ehud Olmert as 'just the first of several stages'.⁸⁴ As such, despite the initial air-only phases in Lebanon and Gaza having similar durations, objectives, TTPs and levels of success, the former was perceived to be a failure and the latter a success simply due to the way in which they were framed within the overall campaigns.

At the end of the first stage of Cast Lead an Israeli communiqué was released which reiterated the overall goals, summarised the activity to date, outlined stage 2 and its objectives, prepared the home front and issued a warning to would-be 'terrorists' in Gaza.⁸⁵ This communiqué was a masterful example of shaping the narrative and in one fell swoop precluded any perception of the 'fecklessness' that had dogged the IDF in Lebanon.⁸⁶ The communiqué stated that 'a short while ago IDF forces began to implement the second stage of Operation Cast Lead. Land forces have begun to manoeuvre within the Gaza Strip'.⁸⁷ It also outlined the various land forces that would take part and that they would be supported by 'the IAF, Israel Navy, Israel Security Agency and other security agencies'.⁸⁸ The inescapable perception created by this communiqué was that Israeli forces were operating as a coherent entity and that the campaign plan was proceeding in a business-like fashion. Objectively, however, the situation was much the same as it had been at the equivalent point in Lebanon.

To summarise, at the operational level IAF was, objectively speaking, outstanding in both Lebanon and Gaza, achieving as much, if not more, than could have been reasonably expected. However, in Lebanon there was, from the outset, an expectation that an air-only campaign could achieve decision, whatever that might look like against a hybrid adversary. In Gaza, however, the Israeli government was very clear from the outset that the initial air offensive was a precursor to joint operations, thereby precluding any similarly unrealistic expectations. When the air offensive in Gaza achieved similar results to those in Lebanon, it was, consequently, deemed to be a great success rather than a 'failure of air power'. Similarly, the tardy call-up of the reserves in Lebanon created the perception that things were not going well, whereas the early call-up in Gaza precluded such perceptions.

The IDF's Tactics

British Defence Doctrine gives the tactical level of war as 'the level at which formations, units and individuals ultimately confront an opponent or situation within the Joint Operations Area (JOA)'.⁸⁹ It may appear initially that the determination of victory owes more to the strategic and, perhaps, operational levels of war than the tactical level; after all, even the most adroit tactical performance in battle is unlikely to ameliorate a poorly conceived military or grand strategy. The perceived outcome, however, being a subjective and abstract conception, is formulated in the mind of the observer, and is based upon any salient information assimilated. Today this information is likely to have been promulgated largely through newspapers, television and, increasingly, the internet. The type of equipment and munitions used, and the manner in which they are deployed, is likely to have a significant bearing on how a campaign is portrayed and, therefore, perceived. An outstanding example of this occurred in the Second Lebanon War during a televised speech given by Hezbollah Secretary General, Hassan

Nasrallah.⁹⁰ A UN observer, Augustus Richard Norton, recalls 'Nasrallah invited listeners to look to the sea, and with perfect theatrical timing an explosion on the horizon rocked the Israeli Naval Ship (INS) *Hanit*, an Israeli naval vessel that was hit by an Iranian-produced C-802 guided missile'.⁹¹ Four crew member of the INS *Hanit* were killed in the attack but the notional effect went far beyond this, raising as it did the spectre of a naval blockade on Israel.⁹² Nasrallah had demonstrated how one weapon, skilfully used, could, with the help of the media, provide a significant fillip to a perception of victory.

In the Gaza War the IDF deployed a raft of new vehicles and weapons, some of which were not simply novel but unique.⁹³ Furthermore, this materiel was not used haphazardly and ineffectually, as new equipment so often is, but with considerable expertise and confidence. The press and, latterly, military writers could not help but be awed by the *hutzpah* of the IDF.⁹⁴ Novel weapons were accompanied by proven technology used in new and imaginative ways. For instance, militarised Caterpillar D-9 bulldozers were used to demolish obstructions in built-up areas, thereby creating new routes of infiltration into the dense urban environment.⁹⁵ These enabled the IDF to bypass likely areas of ambush or Improvised Explosive Device (IED) emplacements, putting Hamas squarely on the back foot.⁹⁶ Whilst drawing criticism from some quarters as being heavy-handed, the D-9, and its remote-controlled counterpart 'Black Thunder', visibly demonstrated that the IDF had the tools, ingenuity and, more importantly, the resolve to make contact with the enemy in its own stronghold.⁹⁷ The D-9 was further supplemented by anti-structure munitions such as the shoulder-launched Man-portable, Anti-Tank, Anti-DOoR (Matador) weapon.⁹⁸ This was used primarily for wall breaching in order that doors and windows could be avoided.⁹⁹ When access had been gained, specially trained dogs in 'Oketz' units were often used to secure the building prior to ingress.¹⁰⁰ Robotics were also used to further enhance situational awareness. One such device was the 'Bulls Island', a self-righting camera mounted inside a transparent ball able to relay panoramic imagery to nearby portable terminals.¹⁰¹ All of these capabilities not only enhanced the effectiveness of the IDF but were also lauded by those commentating on the war, acting as totemic examples of Israel's military superiority; some commentators even likening them to those used by James Bond.¹⁰² Of course, not everything employed by Israel acted to engender positive perceptions; the acknowledged use of White Phosphorus and the alleged use of Dense Inert Metal Explosive (DIME) munitions, in particular, continue to court controversy.¹⁰³

To summarise, at the tactical level the IDF used mostly conventional TTPs and material in Lebanon against what has latterly been described as a hybrid adversary. This resulted in accusations of an 'ends/means mismatch' and has been cited by many as being instrumental in the IDF's 'poor performance'.¹⁰⁴ Conversely, in Gaza the IDF very visibly used myriad novel TTPs and equipment which not only improved its objective performance but also became totemic examples of Israeli superiority and institutional learning. In fact, it can be argued that the image of those totems became more powerful than their actual contribution to the outcome.

Israeli Information Operations in Lebanon and Gaza

Not only did the IDF procure novel equipment and revamp its TTPs in the period between the two conflicts but it also completely overhauled its approach to Information Operations (IO). Cognisant, perhaps, that in Lebanon the narrative had been dominated by Hassan Nasrallah, in Gaza the IDF went to extraordinary lengths to influence perceptions across all forms of media.¹⁰⁵ Following the Second Lebanon War the Winograd Commission had been highly critical of the extent to which sensitive information had leaked from IDF personnel to the press and directly onto other platforms.¹⁰⁶ It found that a dearth of policy on the use of modern communications had resulted in information incontinence.¹⁰⁷ Not only was information on military operations leaked but so too were the views and experiences of military personnel, many of which were unfavourable or inconsistent with the desired narrative.¹⁰⁸ The ubiquity of smart phones and pervasiveness of social media led some to believe that it would be impractical to take any meaningful action but the IDF nevertheless took draconian steps to maintain Operational Security (OPSEC) in Gaza. According to Michael Snyder, 'the Israelis sealed off Gaza to the press, tightly regulated the interaction between soldiers and the media, and banned the use of cell phones by the military'.¹⁰⁹ But Israel was to go much further than simply maintaining OPSEC, seeking not just to restrict the release of information but also to co-opt modern communications in order to promulgate its own narrative. The Directorate of National Information was created on 8 July 2007 and given a mandate to use all forms of media in order to collect, manage and disseminate information which accorded with Israel's strategic message or 'hasbara', Hebrew for 'explaining'.¹¹⁰ Social media, websites and blogs were extensively used to court the growing demographic who shun traditional media in favour of sources such as YouTube and Facebook.¹¹¹ IDF Combat Camera teams were deployed into Gaza and their (carefully vetted) footage was uploaded along with footage from Remotely Piloted Air Vehicles (RPAV).¹¹² The result was total Israeli dominance within the information domain. This, however, was not to be achieved without criticism.¹¹³ The decision to restrict the press from Gaza in particular served only to exacerbate already existing enmity between reporters and their hosts; this is likely to have manifested itself in less favourable reportage in the international press.¹¹⁴

To summarise, in Lebanon Israel's strategic message or narrative was weak, inconsistent and compromised; it was, therefore, overwhelmed by that of Hezbollah which combined message discipline with adept use of new media. In Gaza, however, Israel took extraordinary steps to purify its strategic message and saturate all forms of media both new and traditional. It did this by centralising into one government body the responsibility for managing and promulgating information and limiting the effect of any competing sources. The resultant effect was that, regardless of what was happening on the ground, it was Israel's version of events that was being consumed by the majority of observers.

Israel's activities during the Second Lebanon War and Gaza War have been analysed under five headings; the four levels of war and Information Operations. Using the model proposed in Part 1 of this paper a number of assertions can be now made. First, looking at the military outcomes Israel was militarily more successful in the Gaza War than in the Second Lebanon

War as similar losses were inflicted upon the enemy in a shorter time-span and with far fewer friendly losses. In short, the level of disruption suffered by Hamas was similar to that suffered by Hezbollah but at lower cost to Israel. Second, looking at the strategic outcomes, Israel was strategically more successful in the Second Lebanon War than in the Gaza War as Hezbollah proved to be objectively less active than Hamas did in the years following the conflicts. In short, the primary strategic objective of both campaigns was to eliminate or reduce rocket attacks upon Israel; this was achieved for Lebanon but patently not for Gaza. Third, looking at the perceived outcomes, Israel was indeed victorious in the Gaza War but defeated in the Second Lebanon War simply because this is clearly the dominant belief amongst the majority of observers. The perception of victory in Gaza was carefully and skilfully cultivated by the Israeli authorities and those who were responsible deserve credit for actively managing an outcome of war that has previously been left largely to chance. There is much to learn from their success. However, the model described in Part 1 also asserts that it is not really the three outcomes that are important but the benefits or disadvantages that each outcome results in for the antagonist. It is difficult to assess which of the two wars has been most *beneficial* for Israel; the Second Lebanon War resulted in greater security for many Israelis whereas the Gaza War resulted in the IDF once again being seen as competent and effective. Perhaps only the leaders of Israel can say which of these is most beneficial.

Conclusions

The ideas of victory and defeat in war have a persistence that is unlikely to diminish. Those who wage and prosecute war may come to the conclusion that victory per se is immaterial; however, the observer and, ultimately, history will always seek a victor. This perceived outcome is likely to result in benefits or disadvantages for the antagonist, just as the military and strategic outcomes do. There have been numerous attempts to rationally define what it means to win in war but no objective definition can always concur with the judgement of history. In this paper it is argued that the terms victory and defeat are essentially social constructs and, as such, only truly meaningful when used to measure the *perceived* outcome of war. Furthermore, it is argued that the military and strategic outcomes can only be meaningfully measured in terms of success or failure. For example, the Coalition Forces may have achieved objective military success in Afghanistan but it would be perverse to talk about military *victory* when the dominant perception is that the Coalition has failed. This paper demonstrates that neither military nor strategic success necessarily leads to perceived victory. Instead it asserts that perceived victory is a product of not only *what* was achieved but also *how* it was achieved.

In the Second Lebanon War Israel suffered what has been described as a 'national catastrophe' whilst in the Gaza War it rediscovered its sense of military superiority and reaffirmed its policy of deterrence. This paper asserts that these perceived outcomes were largely a product of the military and political methodologies applied rather than the objective military and strategic outcomes which were, in any case, broadly similar.

The Second Lebanon War provides a salutary lesson on how unachievable objectives, bungled Information Operations and vacillating strategy can engender an inescapable perception of defeat. Conversely, the Gaza War is an exemplar of how modest objectives, total dominance of the information domain and politico-military cohesion can conspire to foment an irresistible perception of victory in spite of questionable achievements.

It is an inescapable fact that war is now fought not just on the battlefield but on television and across all forms of new media. These 'information' and 'cognitive' domains are the crucible in which perceptions are formed and in these domains the *truth* is often subservient to *belief*. In this paper it has been demonstrated that victory is an abstraction; an illusion which defies any method of objective measurement. But this illusion of victory is a powerful one and one which has the power to influence opinions, policy and, ultimately, events.

Annex A

Title of Source	Type of Source Newspaper, book, journal, website	Year Published	Second Le	
			Author's perception of outcome	
			Outcome for Israel	Outcome for Hezbollah
			Positive / Unclear / Negative / No opinion / N/A	Positive / Unclear / Negative / No opinion / N/A
Pathways to Victory: Observations from the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah Conflict	Book	2007	Unclear	Unclear
Lessons of the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War	Book	2007	Unclear	Unclear
The 33-Day War: Israel's War on Hezbollah in Lebanon and its Aftermath	Book	2007	Negative	Positive
The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict	Journal	2007	No opinion	No opinion
The 2006 Israeli War on Lebanon: Analysis and Strategic Implications	Paper	2007	No opinion	No opinion
Diving Victory: Airpower in the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War	Book	2007	Unclear	Unclear
34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah, and the War in Lebanon	Book	2008	Negative	Positive
The 2006 Lebanon Campaign and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defence Policy	Book	2008	No opinion	No opinion
We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War	Paper	2008	Negative	Positive
The Israel Defence Forces in the Second Lebanon War: Why the Poor Performance	Journal	2008	Negative	Positive
Hard Lessons Learned: A Comparison of the 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War and Operation Cast Lead	Book Chapter	2009	Negative	Positive
Hamas and Hezbollah: A Comparison of Tactics	Book Chapter	2009	Unclear	Unclear
The Tactics of Operation Cast Lead	Book Chapter	2009	Negative	Positive
Information Strategies Against a Hybrid Threat: What the Recent Experience of Israel Versus Hezbollah/Hamas Tell the US Army	Book Chapter	2009	No opinion	No opinion
Winning the Media War	Newspaper	2009	Unclear	Unclear
Learning to Leverage New Media: The Israeli Defence Forces in Recent Conflicts	Journal	2009	Unclear	Unclear

Libanon War		Gaza War			
Reference to dominant perception		Author's perception of outcome		Reference to dominant perception	
Outcome for Israel	Outcome for Hezbollah	Outcome for Israel	Outcome for Hamas	Outcome for Israel	Outcome for Hamas
Positive / Unclear / Negative / No opinion / N/A	Positive / Unclear / Negative / No opinion / N/A	Positive / Unclear / Negative / No opinion / N/A	Positive / Unclear / Negative / No opinion / N/A	Positive / Unclear / Negative / No opinion / N/A	Positive / Unclear / Negative / No opinion / N/A
Negative	Positive	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
No opinion	No opinion	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Negative	Positive	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Negative	Positive	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Negative	Positive	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Negative	Positive	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Negative	Positive	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
No opinion	No opinion	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Negative	Positive	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Negative	Positive	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Negative	Positive	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Negative	Positive	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Negative	Positive	Positive	Negative	No opinion	No opinion
Negative	Positive	No opinion	No opinion	Positive	Negative
Negative	Positive	No opinion	No opinion	Positive	Negative
Negative	Positive	No opinion	No opinion	Positive	Negative

Title of Source (cont'd)	Type of Source	Year Published	Second Le	
			Author's perception of outcome	
	Newspaper, book, journal, website		Outcome for Israel	Outcome for Hezbollah
Israel's Wars in Lebanon, 1982-2006: An Ends / Means Mismatch	Paper	2009	Negative	Positive
Variations on a Theme: Israel's Operation Cast Lead and the Gaza Strip Missile Conundrum	Journal	2009	Negative	Positive
The Nature of War: Conflicting Paradigms and Israeli Military Effectiveness	Book	2010	Negative	Positive
Beware of Small States: Lebanon, Battleground of the Middle East	Book	2010	Unclear	Unclear
Glory Restored?: The Implications of the 2008-2009 Gaza War in Times of Extended Conflict	Journal	2010	Negative	Positive
Hard Fighting: Israel in Lebanon and Gaza	Book	2011	Negative	Positive
Air Operations in Israel's War Against Hezbollah: Learning from Lebanon and Getting it Right in Gaza	Book	2011	Positive	Unclear
The 2006 Lebanon War: A Short History Part II	Journal	2012	Unclear	Positive
Forging Jointness Under Fire: Air-Ground Integration in Israel's Lebanon and Gaza Wars	Journal	2012	Unclear	Unclear
Israel's War in Gaza: a Paradigm of Effective Military Learning and Adaptation	Journal	2012	Negative	Positive
Deterrence by Default?: Israel's Military Strategy in the 2006 War Against Hezbollah	Journal	2012	Unclear	Unclear
Capturing Contemporary Innovation: Studying IDF Innovation Against Hamas and Hezbollah	Journal	2012	Negative	Positive
Southern Lebanon War	Webpage	2013	No opinion	No opinion
Military Strategy and the Conduct of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War	Journal	2013	Negative	Positive

Libanon War		Gaza War			
Reference to dominant perception		Author's perception of outcome		Reference to dominant perception	
Outcome for Israel	Outcome for Hezbollah	Outcome for Israel	Outcome for Hamas	Outcome for Israel	Outcome for Hamas
Positive / Unclear / Negative / No opinion / N/A	Positive / Unclear / Negative / No opinion / N/A	Positive / Unclear / Negative / No opinion / N/A	Positive / Unclear / Negative / No opinion / N/A	Positive / Unclear / Negative / No opinion / N/A	Positive / Unclear / Negative / No opinion / N/A
Negative	Positive	Positive	Negative	No opinion	No opinion
Negative	Positive	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Negative	Positive	Unclear	Negative	No opinion	No opinion
Negative	Positive	Unclear	Unclear	Negative	Positive
Negative	Positive	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Negative	Positive	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Negative	Positive	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Negative	Positive	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Negative	Positive	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Negative	Positive	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Negative	Positive	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Negative	Positive	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
No opinion	No opinion	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Negative	Positive	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Notes

¹ Winston Churchill, "Blood, toil, tears and sweat" (House of Commons debate, London, 13 May 1940), Hansard, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1940/may/13/his-majestys-government-1>.

² Douglas Murray, "David Cameron rebrands failure in Afghanistan as victory." *The Spectator*, December 16, 2013, accessed February 28, 2014, <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/coffeehouse/2013/12/david-cameron-rebrands-failure-in-afghanistan-as-victory/>.

³ "Obama: 'Victory' Not Necessarily Goal in Afghanistan." Fox News. Last modified July 23, 2009. <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/07/23/obama-victory-necessarily-goal-afghanistan/>.

⁴ Richard Hobbs, *The Myth of Victory: What Is Victory in War* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1979), 477.

⁵ Robert Mandel, *The Meaning of Military Victory* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), 3.

⁶ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 484.

⁷ Whilst this paper tends to use the spelling Hezbollah there a number of other acceptable spellings in use, the most common alternative being Hizbollah. This alternative spelling has been included in some quotations and citations. The direct translation of Hezbollah / Hizbollah is 'party of God'.

⁸ Clausewitz, *On War*, 484.

⁹ Ministry of Defence. *Joint Doctrine Publication 0-01: British Defence Doctrine* (Swindon: Defence Concepts and Doctrine Centre, 2011), 2-8.

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¹¹ Colin S. Gray, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare* (London: Phoenix, 2006), 391.

¹² Richard M. Nixon, *No More Vietnams* (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1986), 97-165.

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¹⁴ J. N. Westwood, *Russia against Japan, 1904-05: A New Look at the Russo-Japanese War* (London: Macmillan Press, 1986), 161.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Dominic D. P. Johnson and Dominic Tierney, *Failing to Win: Perceptions of Victory and Defeat in International Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 94 - 126.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 286.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

²² *Ibid.*, 70-75.

²³ *Ibid.*, 79.

²⁴ Clausewitz, *On War*, 134.

- ²⁵ Mandel, *The Meaning of Military Victory*, 1.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Bond, *The Pursuit of Victory*, 199.
- ²⁸ Mandel, *The Meaning of Military Victory*, 13.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Sanu Kainikara and Russell Parkin, *Pathways to Victory: Observations from the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah Conflict* (Tuggeranong: Air Power Development Centre, 2007), xv.
- ³¹ Hobbs, *The Myth of Victory*, 135.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Ibid., 510.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Ibid., xv.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 510.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Penguin, 2006), 391.
- ³⁹ J.M. Dilhac, "The Telegraph of Claude Chappe: An Optical Telecommunication Network for the XVIIIth Century." *Institut National des Sciences Appliquées de Toulouse*, accessed January 15, 2014, <http://www.ieeeeghn.org/wiki6/images/1/17/Dilhac.pdf>.
- ⁴⁰ John Julius Norwich, *Byzantium: The Decline and Fall* (London: Penguin, 1995), 438.
- ⁴¹ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: Everyman's Library, 2010).
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