

ISRAEL

On May 14th, 1948, Israel, the first Jewish State in nearly two millennia, declared its independence. To Jews all over the world, the founding of Israel represented a fulfillment of a historic ideal, and the traditional Jewish belief in God's promise of the land of Israel to the "people of Israel". This term is somewhat confusing to many non-Jews, as the population of Israel includes hundreds of thousands of immigrants, mostly from Central and Eastern Europe. Many were survivors of Nazi-German persecution or victims of anti-Semitism elsewhere, and not from "Israel" at all. But, to quote Zionist sources, "The Nation of Israel is not defined by a line drawn upon the ground somewhere on the Eastern Shore of the Mediterranean. It exists as long as the Jewish people exist, wherever two or three Jews can gather around a table; there is Israel!". In spite of hostile relations between Israel and neighboring Arab states, literally from the day of its founding, this small nation, poor in natural resources and forced to fight endlessly for its merest survival, appears to thrive, both economically and culturally. This is no mean feat when you consider its history!

Between 1922 and 1939, the Jewish population in Palestine rose from 83,790 to 445,457, representing nearly thirty-percent of the total inhabitants and Tel Aviv had become a Jewish city with a population of 150,000. Limits on immigration set in the 1939 British "White Paper" were soon rendered moot. As Eastern Europe fell under German domination and the systematic slaughter of European Jews began in 1942, many sought refuge in Palestine by means of illegal immigration. Despite British efforts to re-impose controls on immigration after World War II. (Anybody seen the movie Exodus?), the number of refugees seeking to enter Israel continued to increase. As a consequence, the Jewish population in Palestine continued to grow at an alarming rate and the nature of Zionist activity in the British "Protectorate" began to change, tending more toward violence.

As early as 1920, an underground army called the "Haganah" (Defense) had been formed. Until 1936 Haganah restricted itself to purely defensive action, but during the years of the Arab revolt it became more aggressive. It scored a major coup when the British administration formed the "Jewish Settlement Police", drawn exclusively from Haganah ranks, under British command. In 1931 a covert organization representing the extreme wing of the "World Zionist Organization" was formed. This became known as the "Irgun Zvai Leumi" (National Military Organization). During the early part of WWII, the Irgun followed the lead of the "Jewish Agency" and went along with the more powerful Haganah. This couldn't last, however. Desperate Jewish refugees freshly arrived from Poland joined its ranks and quickly took control. The new leadership was convinced Britain had betrayed the Zionists. Another extremist organization, the "Stern Gang", agreed. The Stern Gang was the creation of Abraham Stern, a Zionist "hard man" killed in a British police raid in 1942. Toward the end of the war, the Irgun and the Stern Gang intensified their "terror" campaign against British occupation forces in Palestine.

The Jewish Agency, under such leaders as Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion, tried to maintain a show of goodwill by offering help to the British war effort. They proposed the formation of a "Jewish Legion" that would undertake the defense of Palestine against pro-Nazi Arab sympathizers. Though reluctant to sponsor a Zionist force, the British army eventually formed a brigade of Jewish volunteers that was later to see action against the Nazi's in Africa and Europe.

Meanwhile, a Zionist conference was held in May 1942 at the Biltmore Hotel in New York City. The policy formulated at this conference called for unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth there. By war's end, American Zionists succeeded in winning government support. Britain, unable to resolve the Palestinian predicament on its own, had to accept American involvement. With the war drawing to a close, the Jewish Agency addressed a memorandum to Britain demanding the full and immediate implementation of the Biltmore Resolution. In May of that year, the Nazi's surrendered unconditionally, and the war in Europe ended. Immediately, the world at large was treated to the spectacle of the handful of pitiful survivors and abandoned Nazi installations at Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Dachau, Buchenwald, and other horrific evidence of the "Final Solution". With the Western world's collective stomach turning, it was time for the Zionists to make their move.

The Jewish Agency decided to send a second memorandum in June 1945. This demanded immediate immigration visas for 100,000 European Jewish refugees awaiting admission to Palestine. By the time Japan surrendered in September, Haganah had formed a short-lived alliance with Irgun and the Stern Gang. Although this alliance dissolved in 1946 over a Jewish Agency call to end attacks on British targets, the united front it presented had the desired effect on the British administration and world Zionism. The Jewish Agency now stood ready to form a provisional government for a "Jewish" state. In this, they were assisted by the almost complete absence of any sort of unified Arab independence movement in Palestine. Neighboring Muslim countries reacted to local disinterest by proclaiming their intent to further the, largely non-existent, Arab cause. Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen quickly formed the "League of Arab States" and drummed up support for an "Arab" Palestine. In the United States, President Harry S. Truman took up the Zionist cause and urged that European Jews be immediately admitted to the country.

The British were at their wits' end. In desperation they formed another commission, the "Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry", which published its conclusions in April 1946. Among its recommendations was the immediate admission to Palestine of 100,000 Jewish refugees from Europe, the withdrawal of all restrictions on Jewish purchase of land, and the eventual incorporation of both the Arab and Jewish communities in a "bi-national" state under United Nations trusteeship. The British government refused the central and immediate demand, admission of the 100,000 refugees, and suddenly found itself at war with the Jews in Palestine. Britain was now in the unenviable position of having to maintain a large and costly overseas military establishment at a time when its electorate was demanding immediate demobilization and an easement of crippling wartime taxes. They threw up their hands in disgust and referred the whole question to the United Nations.

The General Assembly voted on May 15, 1947, to create a "Special Committee on Palestine" (UNSCOP). This committee was tasked with submitting "such proposals as it may consider appropriate for the solution of the problem of Palestine." When it arrived in Jerusalem, UNSCOP was boycotted by the Arabs but actively aided by the Zionists. Few issues had been more studied than Palestine, and UNSCOP found nothing new but urgency. According to the committee, "Partition" appeared to be the only solution.

War!

The UN decision was a major Zionist victory. Not only did it affirm their right to establish a Jewish state in Palestine, but it also gave that state a territory far larger than the relative numbers of Jews to Arabs warranted. It comprised more than half the territory of Palestine, including the greater part of the valuable coastal area. The Arabs were left with the narrow coastal strip of Gaza, half of Galilee, the Judean and Samarian uplands, and a bit of the Negev Desert. Arab reaction should have been predictable. Shocked and angry Arab leaders refused to recognize the validity of the UN decision and declared their determination to oppose it by force.

By January 1948, volunteers were arriving from the Arab countries to help the Palestinian Arabs, but they were soon overwhelmed. By May 13th, Zionists had secured full control of the Jewish share of Palestine and captured important positions in the areas allotted to the Arabs. Next day, the State of Israel was proclaimed and immediately recognized by the Soviet Union and the United States. The British followed up quickly by announcing the end of their mandate in Palestine. Troops of the Transjordanian army, the Arab Legion, and others from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq entered the country. The Arab forces, which at this point were vastly better equipped than the Israeli forces, occupied areas in the south and east, which were not yet controlled by the Jews, and laid siege to Jewish Jerusalem. (*For more on the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, see the sections on Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.*) The United Nations appointed Count Bernadotte of Wisborg as mediator to bring about a settlement. He obtained a brief cease-fire in June and a second one in July. Bernadotte was assassinated by Israelis in September, and was succeeded by his deputy, Ralph J. Bunche, an American. All parties scrupulously ignored UN cease-fire demands.

Surprisingly, Bunche, through sheer perseverance and staying power, secured separate armistice agreements between Israel and Egypt, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Syria between February and July 1949. These agreements left Israel in possession of all the areas it had won by conquest, establishing a dangerous and long-standing precedent. The territory in question included the whole of Galilee, the whole of the Palestinian coast minus a reduced Gaza Strip (occupied by Egypt), all of the Negev, and a strip of territory connecting the coastal region to the western section of Jerusalem. The remaining parts of Jerusalem (including the Old City), along with what remained of the Arab share of Palestine, were taken over by Transjordan, which then became the "Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan". No entity remained that was officially called Palestine. The departure of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs had meanwhile left Israel with a substantial Jewish majority. This was due in no small part to a common Israeli practice during the war of burning down Arab dwellings and even whole villages to encourage the inhabitants to abandon them. Therefore, the Israelis themselves must shoulder part of the blame for the festering refugee problem in the Middle East.

Egypt and the other bordering Arab states felt that to assimilate these refugees would weaken their position, vis-a-vis their ultimate return to an Arab Palestine, so various locations close to the Israeli border, especially South Lebanon, the "West Bank", and the Gaza Strip, grew into permanent refugee enclaves. The displaced populations in these enclaves formed the cadre from which the current Arab "terrorist" organizations evolved. No solution to the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict can ever be fully realized until the ultimate fate of this frustrated and restive population is determined to the satisfaction of all parties. They remain an explosive factor in any Arab-Israeli equation into the foreseeable future.

Still, to many Jews throughout the world, the very existence of the State of Israel symbolized their hopes and aspirations as a people. To its neighbors, Israel remained an alien presence forcibly established on Arab soil and consequently unacceptable. Hostility festered between the Israelis and their neighbors over the next several years. In particular, Israel felt threatened by the buildup of Egyptian military forces by Gamal Abdel Nasser and the support provided him by the Soviet Union. In 1956, after Nasser seized the Suez Canal in violation of international agreements, France and Britain decided to bring Israel into their plan to attack Egypt

War! - Again!

The "Sèvres" Agreement, formulated in France, promised British and French support for Israeli combat operations against Egyptian forces in Sinai. But, there were serious complications involved. The Europeans did not want to "appear" to be the aggressors, and needed a rationale for an invasion of Egypt that would be acceptable internationally, especially to the Americans. They jointly explained to the Israelis that it would be necessary for them to bring on the conflict by "threatening" the Suez Canal. This would justify the arrival of a joint Franco/British expedition to "protect" it, without appearing to be enforcing an imperialist policy. The fact that this was exactly what they were doing doesn't seem to have discouraged anyone!

Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion was not all that keen on Israel making the first move, and having to wait for the British and French to make good on their promises. (He was familiar with their track record concerning diplomatic reliability!) It was Major General Moshe Dayan who came up with the ingenious solution to his quandary. He suggested that an Israeli parachute battalion be landed at Mitla Pass, about twenty miles from Suez. The Europeans could then react with shock and deliver an ultimatum to the Israelis and Egyptians demanding that both sides withdraw their forces at least ten miles from the canal. The Egyptians couldn't possibly agree to this demand without relinquishing control of the canal and allowing Israel an opportunity to take Sinai away from them. Their refusal to go along with this cynical piece of political chicanery allowed Britain and France to justify an Israeli invasion of Egypt, land their own expeditionary forces in the Canal Zone, and eventually bomb Egyptian airfields without fear of censure.

Operation "Kadesh"

The Israeli operations plan, "Operation Kadesh", was actually formulated before the Sèvres conference, with Dayan making last minute changes to it on his return from France on October 25th. "Phase 1" involved the parachute drop on Mitla Pass during the afternoon of October 29th. The rest of the 202nd "Para" Brigade, under Ariel Sharon, along with a tank company, would rush across the "Southern Route" which actually passed through "Central" Sinai to link up with them. This was aided, inadvertently by the Egyptians, who had withdrawn their *2nd Division* back from its positions in this part of Sinai to be closer to the canal, in expectation of a Franco/British invasion. Only a small covering force made up of a few infantry companies now guarded the southern route. "Phase 2" also swung into motion as, on the morning of October 30th, the 9th Brigade began its long march south to Sharm al-Sheik. At the same time the 38th "Ugdah" (Division Task Force) crossed the border at Qusaymah, about forty-five miles south of Gaza. Their mission was to occupy enemy positions east of Um Qatef by nightfall and capture Abu Ageila, an important Egyptian blocking position, the next day, October 31st.

In "Phase 3", the 11th Brigade would take out Gaza, while the 77th "Ugdah" would take the "Northern Route" along the Mediterranean shore west of there, assaulting Rafah and Al-Arish along the way. The whole plan would culminate in a general advance to Suez, thus fulfilling Dayan's three campaign objectives. In his own words:

- 1) "Create a threat to Suez by seizing territory in close proximity to it."
- 2) "Break the Egyptian naval blockade of the Strait of Tiran by capturing Sharm al-Sheik."
- 3) "Confound the organization of the Egyptian forces in the Sinai and bring about their collapse."

The "fly" in this otherwise potent ointment was the very structure and organization of the Israeli army. Success in the 1948-49 War had shown them that victory had been primarily due to their troops' overall tactical superiority. A second lesson learned from success in 1948 was the relative unimportance of armor in the fighting. The '48 war was fought in a close environment of walled

villages, olive groves, and city streets. This, combined with Arab ineptitude in the use of tanks, made the development of a cumbersome and expensive tank arm unnecessary in Israeli (and especially in Moshe Dayan's) eyes.

This ongoing debate had plagued the IDF in the years between 1948 and 1956. Dayan was an infantry advocate. He had read little military history and, at thirty-seven years of age, was arguably lacking in the broad range of experience necessary to fulfill his duties as "Chief of the General Staff". Dayan planned to build a new "Israeli Defense Force" (IDF) around a core of professional infantry based on the 202nd Parachute Brigade. His eventual goal was to take the lessons learned and professionalism achieved in this brigade and standardize them throughout the IDF. His view of tactics revolved around the use of mobile infantry. His idea of a perfect combined-arms team consisted of a motorized infantry battalion, reinforced by a tank company and some artillery. The role of tanks was to be purely one of "support". He considered them too expensive and mechanically unreliable to form the spearhead of any offensive.

The opposition in this debate centered on Brigadier Haim Laskov. Laskov was not only an experienced tankerman and a strong advocate of close air support, but he was also an avid reader of military history. He believed that infantry and artillery would be best utilized in breaking through enemy fortified positions and holding the ground gained. Tanks, he believed, should be cut loose to swarm over the enemy rear, cutting off reinforcements, destroying supply lines, and smashing communications. His philosophy closely paralleled that of U.S. General George Patton, of whom he was an admirer. As a protégé of Ben-Gurion, Dayan's view prevailed.

"Operation Kadesh", committed the "cream" of the Israeli army to a purely "political" objective (The Mitla Pass), while the decisive battles around Al-Arish and Abu-Ageila were left to less effective infantry reservists. To compound the problem, secrecy required these reservists to be given only forty-eight hours rather than the normal seventy-two hours to prepare for action. The result of all this was unnecessarily high casualties at Abu Ageila and elsewhere. A collection of well dug-in and sighted Egyptian positions around Um Qatef combined with Israeli "tentativeness" and questionable resource allocation to turn an operation that should have been over in a few hours into one that took several days to successfully complete.

The basic problem arose from Ben-Gurion's determination not to commit his army to a major battle in the Sinai before the French and British had fulfilled their promise to attack Egyptian airfields. To this must be added the forty eight-hour delay in opening the assault on Abu-Ageila caused by the requirement to secure Qusaymah first. This action alerted the Egyptians to Israeli intentions, and robbed them of the advantage of surprise. Next, at least part of the Israeli 4th Infantry Brigade had to be sent off to the Mitla Pass to help rescue the paratroops. Unexpectedly strong Egyptian counterattacks had made their position precarious, and Sharon was having difficulty in crossing the Negev desert (a "howling" wasteland of man-killing desolation!) to relieve them. Finally, Dayan had withheld the 7th Armored Brigade until the 31st, which reduced the Israeli's armor advantage. Indecision on the part of the Israeli high command allowed units to be fed into the battle piecemeal, in contravention of the most basic rules of warfare.

(The battle of Abu-Ageila, and a scenario recreating it, is featured in "TacNews", published by "GHQ" as a customer service.)

The devastation wrought on the Egyptian air forces by British and French bombers destroyed most of Egypt's planes on the ground. These losses meant that supply lines east of the canal were now impossibly vulnerable. Nasser was also concerned that Franco/British columns striking south along the canal would cut off a large portion of his army. His only real option was to abandon all Sinai to the Israelis and defend the heartland of Egypt from what he saw as a certain British, French, and Israeli invasion. Nasser ordered his forces in Sinai to withdraw to the West Bank of the Suez Canal including the force still holding out at Um-Qatef.

Nasser's dream of Egyptian hegemony over the Middle East was never to be realized and Egyptian arms had suffered a major defeat. However, it had taken the combined strength of Britain, France, and Israel to do it. Egypt, bitter over what it correctly perceived as a Zionist/Imperialist conspiracy, would now turn to the Soviet Union as its new patron. Israeli leaders, for their part, realized they could not count on the help of Western allies in future conflicts, and prepared to fight the next war alone. In spite of a good deal of confusion and casualties from "friendly" fire, General Dayan had been impressed by the ability and dash of his tank commanders, and abandoned his rigid "anti-armor" philosophy. Both sides had learned important lessons, and now settled down to the task of regrouping and rebuilding for the next round, only a little more than ten years later.

War! - Yet Again!

The Six-Day War of June 1967 was, in a profound sense, a continuation of the wars of 1948-49 and 1956. Its immediate causes included Syria's unconfirmed announcement in May 1967 that Israel was massing troops on its border. Seizing the opportunity to become involved, Egyptian President Nasser began massing troops along the Israeli border, and closed the Strait of Tiran to Israeli shipping once again. On May 30th, King Hussein of Jordan signed a mutual defense pact with Nasser. This convinced the Israeli cabinet that war was now imminent. Israel's answer was a preemptive air strike launched on June 5th. The Israeli air force caught the Egyptian air force on the ground once again; largely destroying what had become the Arab world's most effective air arm.

Next came the turn of the Egyptian "ground" forces. Since his defeat in 1956, Nasser had been leaning more and more toward the Soviet Union. After all, had Britain, France, and the U.S. not betrayed him to the Israelis? With the "Cold War" raging, Nasser found the Soviets a ready source of aid, both economic and military. Along with Soviet arms came Soviet advisors. The Egyptian General Staff became unquestioning advocates of Soviet tactical doctrine. This doctrine, characterized by rigid tactics and ponderous command structures, gave little encouragement to individual initiative. When this was set against Israeli "dash" and tactical innovation, the result was catastrophic! Egyptian reactions to Israeli moves were slow and spasmodic. Egyptian troops often fought with admirable courage, but were slaughtered in ill-timed and ill-supported attacks against outnumbered, but tactically superior, Israeli forces. The Israelis also consistently outmaneuvered the Egyptians, not being hamstrung by a top-heavy command structure and rigid "rules of engagement".

On the eastern front, the Jordanians fought with skill and courage around Jerusalem, but with additional Israeli forces released by the Egyptian collapse in Sinai, the loss of East Jerusalem and the West Bank was inevitable. Syria was next. The IDF first brought all Syrian attacks to a halt then launched a frontal assault that pushed through the Golan Heights and sped on, through shattered pockets of Syrian resistance, toward Damascus. By the time the UN Security Council managed to effect a cease-fire on June 11th, Israel had won a spectacular military victory over all three of its opponents, gaining by its success a new sense of security as well as a certain level of arrogance. This arrogance would prove costly six years later.

Peace!

Israel was quick to capitalize on its success by annexing the Old City of Jerusalem. The Arabs who lived there were free to accept Israeli citizenship if they wished, or remain Jordanians. Almost no one took the Israeli option. In the West Bank and Gaza, Israel established a military administration. One of the first acts of this administration was to begin construction of a series of paramilitary

compounds that were later converted to civilian use by Jewish settlers. The number of Jewish immigrants entering Israel increased rapidly in the period following the 1967 War, and there was considerable pressure to increase the number of these settlements. This was done, and Israeli "settlement" policy has been a continuing source of conflict ever since.

In the profound shock following Arab defeat in the 1967 War, the Palestinians (who were only now beginning to see themselves as a people) concluded that only they could regain what they now viewed as their homeland. The "Palestine Liberation Organization" (PLO) began making raids into Israel and Israeli-occupied territory. Israeli forces retaliated by attacking the "host" countries, basically Jordan and Lebanon. Since the Palestinians increasingly insisted on their right to act independently, Jordan became an armed camp in which the royal government was but one among several powers. In the infamous "Black September" operation of 1970, King Hussein's army wiped out the Palestinian military. Surviving PLO members collected themselves together in various Lebanese refugee camps to regroup and renew their resistance efforts.

Israel's conquest of Sinai had left it with a previously unforeseen problem. Having conquered the territory, they were required to hold it! The solution was a defensive work along the east bank of the canal known as the "Bar Lev Line". This line consisted of a sand rampart twenty feet high covered by forty "strongpoints". These strongpoints were set deep in the sand, reinforced with concrete and steel, and bomb-proofed. The main line was backed up by twenty more strongpoints, sighted for mutual support, and connected by a hard-surface road, allowing for quick response by an armored reserve deployed farther to the rear. Although an admirable effort, it was destined for the same sort of success as the "Maginot Line" with which it has often been compared.

Israel soon found itself fighting a prolonged "war of attrition" along the Suez Canal during 1969 and 1970. Nasser, despite his relative military impotence, initiated a series of artillery and rocket attacks against the "Bar Lev Line", aimed at inflicting unacceptable casualties on Israeli forces. By this means, he hoped to influence a war-weary Knesset to order an Israeli pullback from a portion of their conquests in Sinai. The Israeli's responded with retaliatory air attacks (surprise!) which penetrated Egyptian defenses and caused many deaths, especially among civilians. The Egyptians pleaded with the Soviets for assistance and received increased numbers of first-line Soviet SAMs, interceptors and the latest in Soviet Anti-Aircraft artillery. Soon Israeli aircraft began suffering unacceptable losses as well, and the whole front settled into a heavily armed stalemate.

Israel now turned its attention to the PLO in Lebanon. Israeli strategy here was to induce the Lebanese to crush the PLO in their country as King Hussein had done in Jordan. This policy did not succeed, because of the weakness of Lebanese armed forces and the deep divisions among the Lebanese population over what constituted an appropriate reaction to Israeli pressure.

War! - Again!

Gamel Abdel Nasser's death in 1970 brought his successor Anwar el-Sadat to international prominence. Sadat, frustrated by his inability to change the diplomatic situation, decided that a limited war with Israel would be the only way to break the deadlock. By 1972, there were a total of forty-four Jewish settlements in Sinai. It had become clear to all parties that Israel was never going to return this conquered territory, no matter how long negotiations dragged on. By the end of June 1973, Sadat and President Hafiz al-Assad of Syria completed plans for a coordinated surprise attack, supported by six other Arab states. Actual fighting started on both the Syrian and Egyptian fronts on October 6th of that year. This date was significant for both Jews and Moslems. For the Jews it was "Yom Kippur", the "Day of Atonement" and holiest day in the Jewish calendar. For Muslims, the 10th day of Ramadan was the anniversary of a crucial battle fought by the Prophet Muhammad.

Sadat was determined not to make the same mistakes that had cost the Arabs, and particularly the Egyptians, so many lives and caused so much humiliation in past conflicts with the Israelis. To begin with, the wars of 1956 and 1967 had opened with smashing preemptive Israeli air attacks. These had destroyed the bulk of Arab air forces on the tarmac, leaving their ground forces helpless against Israeli tactical air support. This situation would have to be turned around! Next was the pronounced Israeli tactical superiority, especially in tank warfare. This would have to be negated as well! With these priorities in mind, the Egyptian General Staff went to work and came up with a solution that was both simple and imaginative.

When confronted by the Egyptian plan, the Soviets balked. They would have none of it. They believed their position within the Egyptian army and government was now secure. Any drastic change in the existing equation would only destabilize their slow and methodical absorption of the Egyptian body politic. Sadat was furious! He complained that Soviet weapons supplied to him were second rate, and rejected constant interference in Egyptian affairs by an army of over 20,000 Soviet military advisors. He expelled the lot of them, which dried up his supply of spare parts! In spite of this falling-out, he secured Syria's continued support and convinced the Soviets that even without the "help" of their advisors, an Arab victory in the Middle East would serve their purposes.

The Plan!

Sadat's plan was based on several correct assumptions concerning the Israelis. He knew, for instance, that Israel was well aware of the massive buildup of Egyptian forces along the canal. In answer, he never concealed this buildup. He maintained his troops at a high level of readiness, constantly maneuvering them and running large-scale training exercises throughout the summer of 1973. As time passed, Israeli observers became accustomed to this level of activity and lulled into a false sense of normalcy. Thus, when the Egyptians made their move, it came as a surprise, in spite of the fact that all preparations had been made in full view.

Next, the enormous power of the Israeli air force had to be neutralized. The solution to this problem came to the Egyptians from lessons learned in the "War of Attrition". By turning the sky over their combat units into "killing zones", saturated with SAM and AA artillery fire, they believed they could significantly reduce the effectiveness of Israeli air power. American ECM technology had made Israeli planes nearly invulnerable to normal AA tactics. The Egyptians believed if they could fill the air with SAMs and Flak, the resulting "shotgun" effect would overwhelm this defensive advantage.

The third Israeli advantage to be overcome was their legendary superiority in armored tactics. Sadat's staff came up with an imaginative solution to this problem as well. Egypt's inferior tank forces were not to spearhead the initial attack in Sinai. They were to be held back as an exploitation force. Instead, the inevitable Israeli armored counterattack was to be met with infantry armed with enormous numbers of ATGMs (Particularly the man-packed AT-3 "Sagger"). Protected from air attack by the SAM umbrella and dug in against Israeli tank fire, Egyptian infantry was expected to break up this counterattack allowing Egyptian armor to be set loose among the now exposed Israeli infantry and logistic elements.

To all this must be added the limited nature of Egyptian and Syrian war aims. They did not intend to conquer Israel in 1973. Egypt's sole intent was to cross the canal in force, grab as much of the territory lost in 1967 as possible, and repel the expected Israeli

counterattack. Syria's goals were equally modest. They intended to retake the crest of the Golan Heights, especially around Mount Hermon. The main limiting factor in both countries' calculations was to be the effective limit of their anti-aircraft "umbrella".

Crossing the Canal!

As planned, the Egyptian attack in Sinai and the Syrian attack in Golan commenced simultaneously at 1400, on October 6th. The Egyptian cross-canal assault was a masterpiece of pre-planning. Egyptian frogmen were the first across, and were undetected. They planted explosives both to assist in the crossing and to block the Israeli oil pipeline running along the "sand" wall. Part of the Israeli defensive plan had been to open the valves on this pipeline in the event of just such an attack, turning the sand wall into a flaming inferno! Next, giant water cannons mounted on barges hosed down the sand wall, tearing gaps in it. Fifty pontoon ferries were swiftly converted into ten bridges, providing the equivalent of a multi-lane highway for Egyptian troops and supplies to cross the canal. Across this highway poured three Egyptian mechanized infantry divisions carrying thousands of "Sagger" ATGMs and "SA-7" SAM launchers.

Most of the Bar Lev strongpoints were overrun in the first few hours. Israeli artillery attempted to engage the bridgehead but was smothered by ferocious Egyptian counter-battery fire. But it was when the Israelis sent in their air force, that they met their first serious setback. Although the SA-7 proved to be somewhat ineffective, other Egyptian SAMs and the Soviet, radar guided, ZSU-23/4 self-propelled anti-aircraft gun system caused heavy losses among attacking Israeli fighter-bombers. In the first twenty-four hours the bridgehead was three kilometers deep and over five hundred tanks had safely crossed the canal.

Israeli armor now confidently swept forward to crush the Egyptians in their traditional manner, but instead ran straight into swarms of Egyptian infantry "tank-killer" teams. The Israeli's had forgotten a cardinal rule of combined arms warfare. They had allowed their tanks to advance without adequate infantry or artillery support. "Dug-in" Egyptian infantry made poor targets for Israeli tankers and, without infantry or artillery to assist them, Egyptian ATGMs shot Israeli tanks to pieces. The Israelis suffered crippling losses while causing few casualties among their opponents. Israeli tank losses on October 6th alone came to over 50% of their total tank losses for the entire campaign! But the slaughter didn't stop there. At Qantara and other places over the next several days, unsupported Israeli tank assaults were torn to shreds!

By October 8th, Egyptians and Israeli's had attacked and counterattacked all along the bridgehead. The front had now stabilized at approximately eight kilometers deep everywhere but in the center. Here, a dangerous gap had been left in the Egyptian lines east of the Great Bitter Lake, which was to be of immense significance later. The IDF staff now decided that the Syrian threat in the north was of greater consequence than the threat in Sinai and transferred most of their reserves to the Golan front.

The Golan Heights!

Israeli positions along the Golan Heights included two weak points at Quneitra and Rafid. These were to be where the Syrians struck on October 6th. Their attack began with a massive artillery bombardment and a series of air strikes. The object of these attacks was to cover the advance of their engineers. The engineers quickly cut through Israeli barbed wire, cleared Israeli minefields, and threw temporary bridges across Israeli anti-tank ditches. Next came two Syrian infantry divisions, who pinned down Israeli defenders and held open the gaps created by the engineers. Through these troops rushed two Syrian armored divisions to widen the gap and create havoc in the Israeli rear, a total of 1,300 tanks in all! At the same time, a Syrian helicopter-borne commando raid seized the Israeli observation post on Mount Hermon, capturing sixty prisoners.

The Israeli's inflicted heavy casualties on the Syrians despite being taken by surprise and heavily outnumbered. But the Syrians advanced with courage and determination regardless of casualties and soon broke through the Israelis, hammering on toward the southwest. The Israelis countered by a tenacious holding action all along the line and calling for reinforcements. The 7th Armored Brigade was concentrated against the Quneitra thrust and the "Barak" Armored Brigade against the Rafid breakthrough. Here too, as in Sinai, concentrated Arab anti-aircraft fire caused severe losses among Israeli supporting aircraft. And, as in Sinai, the fact that the Syrians had attacked by surprise prevented the Israelis from taking out Syrian anti-aircraft assets by a series of preemptive air strikes.

Tank battles raged up and down the line with a fierceness not seen before in the Middle East. Tank fought tank at ranges of less than two hundred meters! Israeli tanks were simply overwhelmed by waves of determined Syrians and their traditional tactical superiority and sophisticated weaponry could not prevail in such a maelstrom. In a few short hours, the "Barak" Brigade went down in a welter of blood and iron! The Syrian advance continued unabated. Soon, they began to encounter Israeli reserve units, which had been thrown into the battle piecemeal in a desperate effort to slow the Syrian "steamroller". By now, the Israelis had abandoned their strongholds in the southern Golan and the Syrians were less than a mile from the Sea of Galilee.

But here the Syrian advance ground to a halt. Israeli reserve units were arriving in strength now, and the exhausted and decimated Syrians could do no more. Their forward elements were driven back. The tide had turned. Two Israeli armored divisions arrived at the apex of the Syrian advance near Galilee late on October 7th, and began to prepare a counter-offensive. This counter-offensive reached the 1967 cease-fire line by October 10th, but could advance no farther. The Syrians evacuated Quneitra and the Israelis began to advance into Syria the next day.

The Syrians were spent. Their SAM umbrella had simply shot off most of its ammunition, and the Israeli air force began to shut it down. The Syrian defense system, built since the 1967 War, ran from Mount Hermon in the north to Roked Canyon in the south and was well built, well sighted, and constructed in depth, but it was only partially manned. Syrian units, falling back to occupy it, had suffered heavily in the Golan battles. On October 11th, the Israelis pierced this line at both its north and south ends and advanced through heavy opposition. On October 12th, they encountered two Iraqi mechanized brigades, turned to face them, and bloodied them severely on October 13th. Except for the Israelis retaking the Mount Hermon position, and various inconclusive Arab counterattacks (Arab forces at this stage included Iraqis, Jordanians, Saudis, and Moroccans) between October 13th and 24th, the Golan Front had stabilized.

Chinese Farm!

Meanwhile in the Sinai, on October 9th, an Israeli recon unit reached the Eastern Shore of the Great Bitter Lake and reported no enemy forces there. A quick commando raid by Israeli recon troops using captured Egyptian PT-76 tanks verified that the western side of the lake was unoccupied as well. This meant that there was a huge gap in the Egyptian line, right at its center between the Egyptian 2nd and 3rd Armies! By October 14th, with Israeli troops rushing south from the stable Golan front, the stage was set for an Israeli counter-offensive. This counter-offensive began at 1700 hours on October 15th with Israeli paratroops crossing the canal by rubber boat and seizing a three square kilometer bridgehead. Egyptian reaction was immediate. Both 2nd and 3rd armies were ordered to cut off this

bridgehead and ran headlong into three Israeli tank brigades from Sharon's division on October 16th in the battle of "Chinese Farm". This battle raged until October 18th, when Sharon took the "Farm" and the Israeli bridgeheads were secure.

As Israeli forces crossed the Suez Canal and moved to surround the Egyptian Third Army, the United States and the Soviet Union traded charges and countercharges. Before they knew it, they found themselves on the verge of nuclear war. Fortunately cooler heads prevailed and a compromise was worked out between the two superpowers. A UN-monitored cease-fire took effect on October 24. On the Syrian front, a similar cease-fire arrangement proved more difficult and did not become a reality until May of 1974. As a result of the fighting, Israel gained additional territory along the Suez Canal (Egyptian armed forces were present on both sides of the canal as well), and Israel took more land from Syria beyond the cease-fire lines of 1967, drawing ever closer to Damascus. It was the United States that brokered the disengagement agreements between Israel, Egypt and Syria. In compliance with these agreements, Israeli forces withdrew from certain designated territories, Egyptian or Syrian forces moved forward in limited numbers, and UN forces were stationed between them.

Lessons

Egyptian and Syrian courage were no longer in question. Their ability to fight tenaciously when well led and well motivated had been proven beyond doubt. They were still awkward at mobile, combined-arms operations, but had improved considerably since 1967. Poor tactics and inferior equipment still dogged them, however, and they were simply no match for the Israelis in anything like a fair fight. The Israelis, for their part, had allowed themselves to be surprised, but responded quickly and decisively. Their most serious failure had been to grow over-confident (even arrogant) from repeated success in earlier conflicts. They ignored the basics and paid heavily for it.

	<u>Estimated Casualties</u>					
	Killed	Wounded	Captured/Missing	Tanks	Fighter Aircraft	Ships
Israel:	2,812	7,500	531	840	120	Nil
Egypt:	12,000	30,000	9,000	650	182	4
Syria:	7,000	21,000	?	600	165	7
Iraq:	125	260	18	80	21	Nil

Peace?

In 1977 the new U.S. President, Jimmy Carter, issued a joint note with the Soviet Union outlining a basis for peace in the Middle East that ignored both Israeli and Egyptian sovereignty. To Sadat and Begin this was the final straw. Neither was prepared to leave the future of his country in the hands of foreigners. Both leaders finally took the necessary steps to end three decades of war, culminating in the historic visit of President Sadat to Israel in November of that same year. In his address before the Israeli "Knesset" (parliament), Sadat stated his belief that peace could be established by breaking the psychological barriers of suspicion and fear between the two nations. Menachem Begin, the new Israeli Prime Minister and leader of the Likud bloc, endorsed the concept of peace through mutual reconciliation. In September 1978, a framework for peace, was announced at Camp David, Maryland; the "Camp David Accords".

"Camp David" gave Israel a respectability it had never before achieved, and a real chance for peace. The accords provided for full diplomatic recognition of Israel by Egypt and limited Egyptian forces in the Sinai. In return, they gave Egypt the opportunity of reoccupying its territory lost in 1967, requiring Israel to withdraw from its settlements there, and also provided for the creation of a self-governing authority for Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. To the West, the accords appeared a reasonable solution to a complicated problem. But most Arab countries opposed them, pointing out the fact that they allowed for an indefinite Israeli presence in the occupied territories, which they found unacceptable. They were furious over Israel's refusal to halt the expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. And, of course, the PLO continued to oppose Israel's right to exist at all!

The assassination of President Sadat on October 6th, 1981 caused considerable consternation and raised fears that the new relationship between Egypt and Israel would be endangered. The new Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, proved to be a reasonable and intelligent man, and the peace process continued. This was greeted with widespread relief in the West, and Israel wisely adhered to the terms of "Camp David" by returning the last segment of the Sinai Peninsula to Egyptian control in April 1982. But at the same time, Israel quietly removed elected Arab mayors from office in West Bank towns, annexed the Golan Heights, and declared the now undivided Jerusalem as Israel's permanent capital. To the rest of the Arab world, the new peace appeared to apply only to Israel and Egypt, and not to them.

War! - "Sort-of"

In the years since the 1973 war, Israel's northern border had become a running sore. Hardly a week would pass without salvos of rockets crashing into Israeli border towns from Palestinian "refugee" camps in southern Lebanon. The situation had become intolerable. Prime Minister Begin and Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon decided on a bold solution. Israeli troops would invade Lebanon in an operation aimed at disemboweling the PLO organization there. This would be followed by the selection of a new Lebanese president who would sign a peace treaty with Israel along the lines of "Camp David". "D-Day" was set for June 6, 1982.

The invasion was supported by the "al-Kataib al-Lubnaniyya", or Lebanese "Phalange", the largest and most important Christian-Maronite party in Lebanon in 1982, dedicated to the preservation of a Christian Lebanon. The invasion met with considerable initial success. Israeli troops and Phalangists soundly defeated local PLO Forces, along with their Syrian allies, and assorted Lebanese leftist groups. Next, they encircled West Beirut, trapping PLO fighters inside, and forced the Syrians to leave the city.

Then things began to go wrong. The pro-Israeli Lebanese president-elect, Bashir Gemayel was assassinated, provoking Israeli troops to move into West Beirut, where they failed to halt a Phalangist massacre of more than one-thousand Palestinian civilians in two refugee camps. This was followed on August 25th by the deployment of eight-hundred U.S. Marines to Beirut with the goal of separating Israelis and Arabs long enough to allow the PLO to evacuate West Beirut in safety, thereby preventing further civilian massacres. By the following year the Marine effort had increased to a force of 1,600 men and fourteen ships (including the super-dreadnought, USS New Jersey). On October 23rd, 1983, a Shi-ite Muslim guerrilla in the service of Iranian leader and religious-crusader, the Ayatollah Khomeini, drove his truck past the guard at the Marine airport compound and detonated an explosive charge with the force of six tons of TNT under the Marine barracks. The building was completely gutted and the final Marine death toll came to two hundred forty-one souls.

The United States peace mission had proved a failure, and US forces began to withdraw. Their evacuation was complete by February 1984. Israel finished its own slow retreat from most of Lebanon by June 1985, but retained a small sphere of influence in the extreme southern part of the country for many years after. Lebanon slid ever further into chaos. True, Israel had succeeded in forcing the PLO out of most of Lebanon. But, the Israeli-Lebanese troop-withdrawal agreement of May 1983 (ostensibly a peace treaty) failed, because the Syrians and many Lebanese violently opposed it, and proceeded to ignore its provisions. Even the new Lebanese president, the Israeli puppet Amin Gemayel, backed away from it, although that wasn't enough to save him.

Peace?

In 1985, the PLO and Jordan advanced a peace plan based on direct talks between Israel and a joint Palestinian-Jordanian negotiating team, in which Washington served as the intermediary. These continued for about a year, but they finally collapsed. This was due mainly to the fact that Israel refused to negotiate directly with anybody remotely connected with the PLO and Yasir 'Arafat's refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist. Raids and counter-raids continued. The most spectacular of these were the Israeli attack on PLO headquarters in Tunis on October 1st, 1985, and the hijacking of the cruise ship "Achille Lauro" by the "Palestine National Front" six days later.

War! - With Rocks!

A large-scale uprising by the Palestinians in the occupied territories began on December 8th, 1987 called the "Intifada" (shaking up). This came after twenty years of Israeli occupation and was sparked by widespread unemployment among Palestinian Arabs. The Intifada took a number of forms. There were boycotts of Israeli goods, attacks against Israeli civilians and settlers, demonstrations to show public support for Palestinian nationhood, and large numbers of Palestinian young people threw a lot of rocks at Israeli soldiers. Israel's reaction was (surprise!) armed suppression, including the use of lethal weapons. The severity of the Israeli response was condemned not only by the Palestinians, but also by many Israelis, appalled at the mounting numbers of youthful casualties.

While deadlocked on peace proposals and many other issues, the Israeli Labor and Likud parties agreed that the Intifada must end before changes could take place in the status of the occupied territories. King Hussein of Jordan did not wait to see the outcome of the Intifada, however. He announced on July 31st, 1988, that Jordan was renouncing its official claims to the West Bank and East Jerusalem. On November 15th, the PLO National Council voted to declare the establishment of "a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital," despite actual Israeli control over the territory claimed by the new state. Israel was finally able to suppress, but not eliminate the Intifada. Although the negative impact of the uprising on the economy was slackened, the measures needed to cope with the Palestinians, combined with budgetary cutbacks to reduce inflation, led to greater increases in unemployment.

Peace! Again?

On September 13th, 1993, after earlier deadlock, Israel and the PLO signed a "Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government" for the occupied territories, which included a schedule for Israeli disengagement from the areas in question. The signing of this agreement, which signaled mutual recognition of the PLO and Israel, provided for a transitional period of self-rule that began in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank area of Jericho in May 1994.

The biggest Israeli peace breakthrough in 1995 was with the Palestinians. On September 28th, two years and two weeks after their historic handshake on the White House lawn, Rabin and PLO leader Yasir Arafat signed an agreement to extend Palestinian self-rule from the Gaza Strip and Jericho to the rest of the West Bank. This second agreement provided for Israeli withdrawal from seven West Bank towns, prepared the way for Palestinian elections, and set in motion the machinery for ending Israel's twenty-eight year military occupation. Implementation began almost immediately. In November the Israeli army withdrew from Janin and then in December from Tulkarm, Nablus, Qalqilyah, Ram Allah, and Bethlehem. Hebron was due to be evacuated in March 1996.

Then, on November 4th, 1995, a Jewish religious fanatic gunned down Prime Minister Rabin. The killing shocked Israel to the core and made mockery of a widely held belief that "Jew would never kill Jew over politics". The confessed assassin, Yigal Amir, said his motive was to destroy a peace process that violated religious law. Extremist rabbis ruled that the Prime Minister "deserved to die" because the Israeli-Palestinian accords entailed giving up parts of the "sacred" land of Israel and put Jewish lives at risk. Rabin's death convinced the Syrians of the genuineness of Israel's peacemaking overtures. The new Prime Minister, Shimon Peres proposed a "grand peace" based on Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights in return for full normalization of relations with Syria and the rest of the Arab world. On December 11th, Peres spelled out his ideas at a summit with President Clinton. After receiving a positive response from Assad, Clinton pledged intensified U.S. involvement in the peacemaking process.

FOREIGN WEAPONS

105mm/155mm M107, 120mm Brandt Mortar, AMX-13/75, R-40 - FR; 110mm LARS - GE; 65mm Mountain Gun - IT; 160mm M160, 240mm BM-24, T-62 - RU; 40mm L/60, 6lbr ATG, 25lbr, Cromwell, Centurion, "Milan" ATGM - UK; All other foreign weapons - US

TABLES OF ORGANIZATION AND EQUIPMENT

"The following information only begins to cover the actual organization, weapons, and equipment of the IDF during its turbulent history. There are those of you who have invested considerable time and energy in the study of this army, and know a great deal about it. We regret that time and space constraints have made it impossible to cover this topic in the kind of detail many of you would feel appropriate. We also realize that purchasing and painting the myriad of weapons listed in the TO&Es below may seem daunting to anyone wishing to wargame the Arab-Israeli Wars for the first time. This does not have to be the case. We recommend that you start with the 1973 "Yom Kippur War". The most significant Israeli vehicles at that time were the Centurion tank, the M48/M60 tank, and the M113 APC. These vehicles, some infantry, and a few artillery pieces and mortars will provide you with many hours of fun and excitement. It is not our desire to overwhelm you with minutia. Our primary goal, as ever, is to entertain." (JF)

ISRAELI FORCES: 1948-1949

Generation: II, Air Superiority Rating: 30, Class: Conscripts, Base Determination Factor: 40%

Motorized Infantry Company: 2xTL1 Infantry(D)/Halftrack, 1xTL1 Infantry(D)/"Armored" Truck, 1xM3 "Scout Car"[R]

"Stern Gang" Company: 6xTL1 Infantry(R)/Jeep/LMG, 1xTL1 Infantry(R)/"Armored" Truck
 1st "Tank" Company: 3xH-40
 2nd "Tank" Company: 1xCromwell or M4A3 "Sherman", 1x105mm M4A3(1)
 3rd "Mech" Company: 3xTL1 Infantry(D)/M3 "Halftrack", 1x"Support" Halftrack

89th Motorized Battalion: 1xTL1 Infantry(D) HQ/Halftrack, 1x"Support" Halftrack, 2xMotorized Infantry Company, 1x"Stern Gang" Company
 82nd Tank Battalion: 1st "Tank" Company, 2nd "Tank" Company, 3rd "Mech" Company

8th Armored Brigade: 1xTL1 Infantry(D) GHQ/Truck, 1xM3 "Scout Car"[R], 82nd Tank Battalion, 89th Motorized Battalion, 2x65mm Mountain Gun(2)/Truck

Notes: 1) Israeli M4A3 "Shermans" did not have AP ammunition in 1948. Reduce their "AP" value to "2" and their cost to 52 points.
 2) Israeli Infantry Battalion TO&E's were modeled on British WWII Infantry Battalions.
 3) Halftracks are U.S. "M3" types.
 4) The Israelis captured much British equipment in the 1948 war, including "Bren" Carriers, 2lbr ATGs, and armored cars.
 5) "Armored" trucks used "welded" sheet steel. These are listed under Israel in the "Consolidated Weapons Data".

ISRAELI FORCES: 1956

Generation: II, Air Superiority Rating: 50, Class: Conscripts, Base Determination Factor: 35%

Infantry Company: 3xTL1 Infantry(C)/Truck, 1xTL1 Infantry Support(A)/Truck
 Mechanized Infantry Company: 3xTL1 Infantry(C)/Halftrack
 Tank Company(A): 3xM4A3 "Sherman"
 Tank Company(B): 3xM4A3E8 "Easy Eight"
 Tank Company(C): 3xAMX-13/75
 Recon Company: 2xJeep/HMG[R], 2xTL1 Infantry(R)/Halftrack[R]
 Artillery Battery: 2x25lbr/Mk 2(2)/Truck or 105mm M2A1(2)/Truck

Infantry Battalion: 1xTL1 Infantry(A) HQ/Truck, 3xInfantry Company, 1x6lbr ATG/Truck, 1x81mm M1 Mortar(2)/Truck
 52nd Mechanized Battalion: 1xTL1 Infantry(A) HQ/Halftrack, 3xMechanized Infantry Company, 1x6lbr/Halftrack, 1x81mm M21 Mortar(2), 1xJeep/HMG[R]
 79th Tank Battalion: 1xAMX-13/75 (HQ), 3xTank Company(C)
 82nd Tank Battalion: 1xM4A3 (HQ), 2xTank Company(A), 1xTank Company(B)

7th Armored Brigade: 1xTL1 Infantry(A) GHQ/Halftrack, 82nd Tank Battalion, 79th Tank Battalion, 52nd Mechanized Battalion, "61st" Infantry Battalion, 1xRecon Company, 1xArtillery Battery, 1xM16 MGMC
 Infantry Brigade: 1xTL1 Infantry(A) GHQ/Truck, 3xInfantry Battalion, 1xArtillery Battery

Available Support Units: (One or more of these units, or parts thereof, may appear in a particular action at your discretion.)
 Heavy Mortar Battalion: 3x120mm "Brandt"(3)/Truck
 Heavy Artillery Battalion: 3x155mm M1e 50(3)
 Self-Propelled Artillery Battalion: 3x105mm M1e 50(2)
 Anti-Aircraft Battery: 1x40mm/L60 "Bofors"/Truck

Air Support: U.S. B-26s, P-51 "Mustangs", Czech Avia C-210s, and U.K. Gloucester "Meteors"

Notes: 1) The 37th and 27th Armored Brigades used a similar TO&E to the 7th Brigade.
 2) The 202nd Parachute Brigade had 3xInfantry Battalion (Parachute), 1xAMX-13/75 Tank Co, and 1xRecon Co with Jeeps.
 3) Although the M50 "Super Sherman" arrived before the 1956 War began, only a few were in action before hostilities ended.
 4) An Israeli battalion is called a "GDUD", a brigade is called a "HATIVA", and a Division "Task Force" is called an "UGDAH".
 5) The Avia C-210 was an "improved" WWII German Bf-109 equipped with a much more powerful engine and armed with 4x20mm cannon. Built by the Czechs and sold to Israel, it was fast and well armed, but not popular. Pilots called it the "Mule" due to its tendency to flip over onto its back during takeoff.

ISRAELI FORCES: 1967

Generation: II, Air Superiority Rating: 80, Class: Conscripts, Base Determination Factor: 35%

Motorized Company: 3xTL2 Infantry(B)/Truck, 1xTL2 Infantry Support/Truck
 Mechanized Company: 3xTL2 Infantry(B)/Halftrack, 1xTL2 Infantry Support/Halftrack
 Tank Company: 3xTank
 Recon Company: 2xJeep/HMG[R], 2xTL2 Infantry(R)/Halftrack[R]

Motorized Battalion: 1xTL2 Infantry(A) HQ/Truck, 3xMotorized Company, 1x90mm/M3 "Portee" or 106mm/M40RcR/Jeep, 1x81mm M21 or "Soltam" Mortar(2)
 Mechanized Battalion: 1xTL2 Infantry(A) HQ/Halftrack, 3xMechanized Company, 1x90mm/M3 "Portee" or 106mm/M40 RcR/Jeep, 1x81mm M21 or "Soltam" Mortar(2)
 Tank Battalion: 1xTank (HQ), 3xTank Company

Mortar Battalion: 2x120mm M65/M3 Mortar(3)

Armored Brigade: 1xTL2 Infantry(B) GHQ/Halftrack, 2xTank Battalion, 1xMechanized Battalion, 1xMortar Battalion, 1xRecon Company

Mechanized Brigade: 1xTL2 Infantry(B) GHQ/Halftrack, 1xTank Battalion, 2xMechanized Battalion, 1xMortar Battalion, 1xRecon Company

Infantry Brigade: 1xTL2 Infantry(B) GHQ/Halftrack, 3xMotorized Infantry Battalion, 1xMortar Battalion, 1xTank Company, 1xRecon Company

Available Support Units: (One or more of these units, or parts thereof, may appear in a particular action at your discretion.)

Heavy Mortar Battalion: 3x160mm M160/M4(2)

Artillery Battalion: 3x105mm M1e 50(2)/Truck or 3x105mm M7(2)

Heavy Artillery Battalion: 3x155mm M1e 50(3)/Truck or 3x155mm Soltam/L33(20)

Anti-Aircraft Battery: 1x40mm/L60 "Bofors"/Truck or 1xM55 .50cal "Quad"/Truck

Air Support: Primarily French "Mirage", "Super Mystere", and U.S. A-4 "Skyhawk"

Notes: 1) Israeli tanks include Centurion Mk3, AMX-13/75, M4A3 "Sherman", M50 "Super Sherman", M51 "Isherman", and M48A2.
2) The 90mm/M3 "Portee" may be broken down into a towed U.S. 90mm ATG and M3 "Halftrack" prime mover if desired.

ISRAELI FORCES: 1973

Generation: III, Air Superiority Rating: 60, Class: Conscripts, Base Determination Factor: 35%

Motorized Company: 3xTL2 Infantry(B)/Truck, 1xTL2 Infantry Support/Truck

Mechanized Company: 3xTL2 Infantry(B)/M113A1, 1xTL2 Infantry Support/M113

Engineer Company: 3xTL2 Engineer/Truck

Tank Company: 3xTank

Recon Company: 1xTank[R], 2xM113 (Cav) [R]

Motorized Battalion: 1xTL2 Infantry(B) HQ/Truck, 3xMotorized Company, 1x81mm (SP) Soltam Mortar(3), 1x106mm/M40 RcR/Jeep

Mechanized Battalion: 1xTL2 Infantry(B) HQ/M113, 3xMechanized Company, 1x81mm (SP) Soltam Mortar(3), 1x106mm/M40 RcR/Jeep

Tank Battalion: 1xTank (HQ), 3xTank Company

Recon Battalion: 1xM113 (Cav) HQ[R], 3xRecon Company

Engineer Battalion: 3xEngineer Company

Mortar Battalion: 3-4x120mm M65/M113 Mortar(3) or 120mm M65/M3 Mortar(3)

(SP) Artillery Battalion: 3-4x105mm M52(3) or 155mm Soltam/M71(3)

Armored Brigade: 1xTL2 Infantry(B) GHQ/M577, 3xTank Battalion, 1xMortar Battalion, 1xRecon Company

Mechanized Brigade: 1xTL2 Infantry(B) GHQ/M577, 3xMechanized Battalion, 1xMortar Battalion, 1xRecon Company

Infantry Brigade: 1xTL2 Infantry(B) GHQ/Truck, 3xMotorized Battalion, 1xMortar Battalion, 1xTank Company, 1xEngineer Company, 1xRecon Company

Armored Division: 2-3xArmored Brigade, 0-1xMechanized Brigade, 1x(SP) Artillery Battalion, 1xRecon Battalion, 1xEngineer Battalion

Mechanized Division: 2-3xMechanized Brigade, 0-1xArmored Brigade, 1x(SP) Artillery Battalion, 1xRecon Battalion, 1xEngineer Battalion

Available Support Units: (One or more of these units, or parts thereof, may appear in a particular action at your discretion.)

Heavy Mortar Battalion: 3x160mm M160/M4(2)

Artillery Battalion: 3x105mm M1e 50(2)/Truck

Heavy Artillery Battalion: 3x155mm M1e 50(3)/Truck

Anti-Aircraft Battery: 1x40mm/L60 "Bofors"/Truck or 1xU.S. "Hawk"

Air Support: U.S. A-4 "Skyhawk", F-4 "Phantom", French/Israeli Mirage III "Kfir", French "Mystere", and "Super Mystere"

Notes: 1) Tanks include Centurion Mk13, M60A1, M60A3, "Magach", TI-67(105), M50 "Super Sherman", and M-51 "Isherman" types.
2) Israeli "Reserve" armored units continued to field vehicles from their 1967 and 1956 arsenals.
3) Reserve units had no M113s and continued to make do with U.S. M3 "Halftracks".
4) Armored Battalions sometimes contained four tank companies.
5) The Israeli Air-Superiority number should rise to 80% after the first six days of the fighting.

ISRAELI ARMORED/MECHANIZED DIVISIONS: 1982+

Generation: III, Air Superiority Rating: 80, Class: Conscripts, Base Determination Factor: 30%

Mechanized Company: 3xTL3 Infantry(B)/M113J "Zelda"

Mechanized Support Company: 1xM901, 1x81mm M125(4), 1xM113J "Support Zelda"

Engineer Company: 3xTL3 Engineer/M113J "Zelda"

Assault Engineer Company: 2xCenturion AVRE or M728 AEV, 1xM9 A.C.E

Tank Company: 3xTank

Recon Company(A): 3xTL3 Infantry(R)/RBY-1

Recon Support Company: 1xRBY-1/TOW, 1x81mm Soltam/RBY-1(4)
 Recon Company(B): 1xTank, 2xTL3 Infantry(R)/M113J "Zelda", 1x81mm M125(2)
 Anti-Tank Company: 3xM901

Mechanized Battalion: 1xTL3 Infantry(B) HQ/M113J "Zelda", 3xMechanized Company, 1xMechanized Support Company
 Engineer Battalion: 1xAssault Engineer Company, 2xEngineer Company
 Tank Battalion: 1xTank (HQ), 3xTank Company, 1xTL3 Infantry(R)/M113J "Zelda"
 Division Recon Battalion: 1xRBY-1 HQ[R], 3xRecon Company(A), 1xRecon Support Company
 Mortar Battalion: 4x160mm M160/M4(2)
 Artillery Battalion: 3x155mm M109A1 or M109A2

Armored Brigade: 1xTL2 Infantry(B) GHQ/M577, 3xTank Battalion, 1xMechanized Battalion, 1xMortar Battalion, 1xRecon Company(B), 1xAnti-Tank Company, 1xEngineer Company
 Mechanized Brigade: 1xTL2 Infantry(B) GHQ/M577, 3xMechanized Battalion, 1xTank Battalion, 1xMortar Battalion, 1xRecon Company(B), 1xAnti-Tank Company, 1xEngineer Company

Armored Division: 3xArmored Brigade, 1xMechanized Brigade, 3xArtillery Battalion, 1xRecon Battalion, 1xEngineer Battalion
 Reserve Armored Division: 2-3xArmored Brigade, 1xMechanized Brigade, 3xArtillery Battalion, 1xRecon Battalion, 1xEngineer Battalion

Available Support Units: (One or more of these units, or parts thereof, may appear in a particular action at your discretion.)
 Rocket Battalion: 3x110mm LARS(8) or 3x240mm BM24(8)
 Heavy Artillery Battalion: 3x175mm M107(3) or 3x203mm M110A1(2)
 Anti-Aircraft Battery: 3xM167 SP "Vulcan", 3xM730 'Chaparral', or 1x"I-HAWK"
 Attack Squadron: 3xAH-1G, AH-1S, 3xAH-64 Apache" (1992), or 3xHughes "Defender"
 Transport Flight: 2xCH-53
 Transport Squadron: 3xSA321 "Super Frelon" or 4xUH-1 "Huey"

Air Support: U.S. A-4 Skyhawks, F-4E Phantoms, F4/2000s, F-15s, and F-16s as well as Israeli Kfirs.

- Notes:**
- 1) Israeli tanks in "Regular" units include Centurion "Sh'ot", "Magach-7", M60A3, "Sabra", and Merkava I/II
 - 2) Israeli tanks in "Reserve" units may also include "Magach", M60A1, T1-67(105), and T-62.
 - 3) "Reserve" units continue to field vehicles from the 1967 and 1956 arsenals.
 - 4) Merkava IIIs may be used after 1994.
 - 5) "Sabra" listed is the most recent variant and was not available until the mid-1990s.
 - 6) You may not form mixed tank battalions.
 - 7) One mechanized company per brigade may be equipped with the "Achzarit" Heavy APC. After 1989, one battalion per Brigade may be so equipped.
 - 8) One stand per mechanized company may contain an attached "Dragon"/"Milan" team (MP), and one may contain a "Redeye"/"Stinger" team (MP).
 - 9) From 1995, the Israeli army is a "Generation IV" force.

TACTICAL NOTES

The Israeli army has been involved in five major wars and at least as many lesser combat actions since the nation was founded in 1948. More than any of the other countries born out of the ashes of WWII, the history of Israel is the history of its army. This army has consistently dominated Israel's enemies throughout this history, and Israeli tactics invariably reflect this. Israeli forces should always enjoy a greater cohesion than almost any Arab force you pit them against. Even the 1973 Egyptian offensive was successful, primarily because the Egyptian "General Staff" plan took Egyptian tactical inferiority into account.

This being said, battles between Israeli and Arab forces need not always be one-sided. An unbiased reading of Middle-Eastern military history reveals the fact that Arab troops do not lack either courage or determination. The battle of Abu-Ageila in 1956, the Jordanian defense of Jerusalem in 1967, the initial Israeli counterattacks in Sinai in 1973, and the Syrian offensive in the Golan Heights that same year, are classic examples of the consequences attendant on underestimating this courage.

Encounters between the Israelis and their Arab enemies take on the aspect of a classic "Bear and Wolf" struggle. The Arab "Bear", should it ever get its teeth into the Israeli "Wolf" and bring its full weight into play, would tear it to pieces. But this almost never happens. The Israeli "Wolf" constantly leaps and dodges the bulk of its enemy, darting in to slash and rip at any exposed weak-spot, but never with enough strength for a decisive victory. In the end, the Arab "Bear" is forced to withdraw, torn and bleeding, but not fatally injured. In time, it always recovers...and returns! Miniature battles between these antagonists should reflect this reality.

To enhance the excitement and tactical originality in your games, experiment with improved Arab military cohesiveness, or enhance their ability to work toward a common goal. We've already put together a mini-campaign that takes place in 2004 where a latter day "Saladin" inspires the Arabs to overcome their petty political squabbles, leading them on a "Jihad" to rid the Arab world of both Zionism and self serving nationalism. The "real-world" political consequences and the human cost of such an event are too appalling to imagine, but the wargaming opportunities of such a "catastrophe" are practically unlimited.

Israeli Nomenclature

Achzarit (Heavy APC built on T-55 chassis) - Feminine of Achzaro meaning without mercy, cruel, or hard (evil bitch).

Magach (Upgraded M-48A5) - From "Nun-Gimel-Chet", to "ram", as in horned animals butting heads. The following quote from Steven Zaloga's book Tank Battles of the Mid-East Wars (1) "1948-1973" is also relevant: "...Magach is actually a Hebrew acronym (Ma-Ga-Ch) from the Hebrew letters "Mem" and "Chaf", which stand for "48" and the middle letter of "Gimel" standing for Germania [or Germany] since the first vehicles were received from West German stores..."

Merkava (Israel's main battle tank) - "War Chariot", usually of iron (Exodus 15, V. 4).

Sabra (M-60 upgraded with improved armor and sights) - Derived from "Tzabar" meaning "cactus". A Sabra is a native born Israeli, supposedly hard on the outside and mushy on the inside.

Shoet (Wheeled APC) - To "gallop" or "run fast".

Sh'ot (Upgraded Centurion Mk 13) - Might be spelled "Schot", and means "scourge" or "whip".

TI-67 (Upgraded Israeli T-55) - Given a NATO 105mm gun as these became available.

Zelda (Israeli M-113 APC) - A woman's name, a term of affection for this reliable workhorse. May also be called "Nagmash'ot" (troop carrier), not to be confused with "Sh'ot" above.

(Special thanks to Ezra Tishman and Vince Stella for their assistance with the translations above.)

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

A severe shock went through the Israeli military in June of 2000, when the "South Lebanon Army" (SLA) came apart in little more than forty-eight hours, forcing the Israelis to abandon their last footholds in that country by July 7th of that year. Many issues remain undecided, however, and serious fighting could once again break out without warning. Israeli soldiers stationed along their northern border at the time were told by IDF Chief of Staff, Shaul Mofaz, that they were "in a new reality". Shortly thereafter, Israel instituted a new approach to local defense called "A Ladder of Responses". This approach included programmed responses to likely scenarios. Everything from increased Hezbollah infiltration to rocket attacks on Israeli border communities were planned for. Currently, Israeli forces are forbidden to fire on Hezbollah troops on the Lebanese side of the border, Israeli fighter patrols in Lebanese airspace, and naval patrols in Lebanese waters have been discontinued.

Israel has become, to a large extent, self-sufficient in the manufacture of weapons systems in recent years and has also become an active arms exporter. However, shrinking defense budgets and lowered military spending among Israel's "traditional" military customers, especially in Western Europe, has forced the country to make major cutbacks in its state-controlled armaments industry. Recently the increased level of combat operations in the "West Bank" has offset this. Like practically everything else in the Middle East lately, the jury is still out on this situation.

In January of 1999, former Defense minister Yitzhak Mordechai authorized the first long-term acquisition program for the IDF, including a wide-ranging modernization program. One of the cornerstones of this program was the purchase of large numbers of U.S. F-15 and F-16 "Block 60" aircraft along with an additional AH-64 "Apache Longbow" squadron. This squadron will be added to the current Israeli "Apache" inventory, twelve of which are being re-manufactured to "Longbow" standards. In the end Israel would like to see all its forty-plus AH-64s brought up to this same technology level. The S-70 "Blackhawk" has also been delivered, giving Israel a powerful one-two punch of attack and assault-transport helicopters. Israel's purchase of 241,000 155mm artillery shells and 301 MLRS rocket-pods from the U.S. in 2000 rounded out an arms deal worth more than US\$300 million.

On the subject of armored vehicles, the fourth generation Merkava MBT has completed its final testing and is due to become operational in 2003. According to the Israelis, this vehicle will incorporate an all-around protective suite to enhance its survivability against both horizontal and vertical attacks. The expected 140mm smoothbore gun will not be installed. Instead, the same 120mm smoothbore found on the Merkava Mk3 will be used, with a new "compressed-gas" recoil system. It also possesses a deadly new anti-personnel weapon, a wire guided missile that can deliver a load of sub-munitions capable of piercing most body armor over a wide area. Combine this with improved armor piercing ammunition and you've got a terribly dangerous, if very expensive, all-around weapons system. To this must be added the "Sabra". This upgraded M-60 will now sport a 120mm "tank-killer" gun and improved turret design, making it a competent stable-mate for the Merkava.

To support this new tank, even before it arrives, the Israelis deployed the first of their "Achzarit" (Evil Bitch) heavy APCs in 1997. These vehicles are derived from the chassis of captured T-55 tanks and were issued to mechanized units in the Golan Heights. Israeli sources claim that the mass-production model, the Achzarit Mk II, has an 850 HP Detroit Diesel and a heavy duty "Allison" transmission. Equipped with two remote-controlled machineguns, two more standard mounts, and carrying an impressive weight of armor, the Achzarit should more than live up to its name.

The "Gil" and "Spike" ATGMs, were first reported in 1998. Accurate "confirmed" performance data on these weapons is not yet available. The "Gil" is a "fire and forget" missile with a maximum range of 2.5 km. The "Spike" ATGM, is said to use a fiber-optic guidance system, and have a range of 4 km. Lastly, the IDF claims to have a new helicopter and vehicle mounted ATGM called the "Dandy", which they claim was first used in Lebanon in 1999. This missile has a reported maximum range of 6 km.

The political ramifications incumbent on the recent rash of suicide-bombings and Israeli retaliatory raids against supposed PLO targets in the West Bank and Gaza remain confusing, dangerous, and unpredictable. The delicate balance between war and peace in the Middle East slips, first one way, then another. Given the Machiavellian nature of Arab-Israeli relations over the past fifty-odd years, why should this be a surprise? Stay tuned!

2002 ISRAELI ARSENAL

Vehicles:	1,000+Merkava Mk1/Mk2/Mk3, 1,400 M-60, 600 M-48, 200+T-55, 50+T-62 MBTs, 400xRBY and BRDM 1/2 Scout Vehicles, 5,000+APC's (M-113, OT-62, BTR-40/-50/-60/-152, "Walid", "Shoet"), 300+"Achzarit"
AT Weapons:	84mm Carl Gustav, 250x106mm M40 RcR, 780xDragon, 200xTOW/Milan, 50+ AT-3 "Sagger" ATGMs
Artillery:	70x105mm M101(Towed), 100x122mm D30(Towed), 155mm "Soltam" M68/71 (Towed), 200x175mm M107(SP), 300x155mm "Soltam" L33(SP), 300x155mm M109(SP), 200x203mm M110(SP)
MRLs:	122mm, 135mm, 240mm, 290mm Multiple Rocket Launchers, 48xMLRS Systems
Anti-Aircraft:	24xVulcan/Chaparral, 20mm/30mm/40mm AA Guns, 500xStinger, 15 "IHAWK" battalions, 4x"Patriot" batteries
Combat Aircraft:	630 "active" aircraft, including 92xF15, 230xF-16, 55xF4E/2000 (110x"Kfir", 40xF4E, 57xA-4 "Skyhawk" in storage)
Helicopter:	39+AH-64A, 40xCH-53D, 38 Bell 206, 25 Bell 212, 34 UH-60 "Blackhawk", 15xS-70A "Peacehawk"
Small Arms:	9mm Baretta M951 Pistols, 9mm Uzi and Mini-Uzi Submachineguns, 5.56mm (Galil, Negev, M-16A1, 7.62mm M-14, FN-FAL, AK-47, and AKM) Assault Rifles, 7.62mm FN MAG, .30 cal and .50 cal Browning, and 12.7mm DShk Machineguns, 40mm M79, M203 and Mk19 Grenade Launchers

Notes: 1) The Gil/SpikeATGM system is still being introduced at this time.

- 2) Active tank units are mostly equipped with the Merkava.
- 3) Most M-48 and M-60 tanks are being upgraded to "Magach-7" and "Sabra" standards.
- 4) The TI-67 is a captured Arab T-55 upgraded with a NATO 105mm gun.
- 5) Eventually all captured T-55s will be converted to "Achzarit" Heavy APCs.
- 6) Fifty, two-seater, combat F-16s are on order each year from 2003 through 2009.
- 7) Nine more "Apache" AH-64Ds are on order.
- 8) The S-70 is an export version of the UH-60 "Blackhawk".

POINTS OF CONTACT

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