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Falcons against the Jihad

Israeli Airpower and Coercive Diplomacy in Southern Lebanon

KENNETH C. SCHOW, JR., LT COL, USAF

School of Advanced Airpower Studies

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Abstract

From the dust-filled skies over northern Iraq to the fog-covered valleys of Bosnia, American airmen are finding themselves at the center of US efforts to solve the problems of an increasingly fragmented world. Airpower's new role as the tool of choice for US policymakers confronts the Air Force with challenges never envisioned during the cold war. These challenges include nonstate actors, ethnic hatred, nationalist tensions, and an increasing array of regional conflicts. If our experiences in Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti, and North Korea are any indication, the United States is moving toward a general policy of coercive diplomacy to deal with regional conflicts and the challenges they present. Accordingly, USAF planners will continue to find themselves asked to use airpower to support the strategy of coercive diplomacy.

Given that the Air Force has focused on supporting cold-war strategies for the last 40 years, it is reasonable to expect that planners would look to the experiences of other air forces to help develop our own coercive strategies. The Israeli Air Force (IAF) presents an ideal candidate for this type of evaluation. Since its creation in 1948 the IAF has had a long history of supporting coercive strategies employed by Israeli leaders to deal with threats posed by the surrounding Arab states. A particularly effective period to evaluate is the experience of the Israeli Air Force in Lebanon between January 1983 and June 1985. This period is significant for USAF planners because Lebanon confronted the IAF with an environment that one RAND analyst concluded is likely to be representative of armed conflict worldwide in the last quarter of the twentieth century: a mixture of conventional warfare, classic guerrilla warfare, and campaigns of terrorism.

During the Lebanon conflict, the IAF employed the most advanced combat aircraft in the world to attack targets in southern Lebanon in an effort to compel the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Shi'ite forces to reduce the frequency of guerrilla attacks against Israeli ground troops. This thesis evaluates the effectiveness of those air raids in supporting the Israeli coercive strategy.

The analysis of this subject begins by demonstrating that Israeli air strikes in Lebanon supported a strategy of coercive diplomacy—an approach adopted when Israeli ground efforts proved unable to reduce the number of guerrilla attacks. In the course of this effort, the Israeli Air Force executed 28 air raids, all of which would have little effect on the decision calculus of the Palestinians and Shi'ite organizations in southern Lebanon. The most interesting aspect of this strategy is the fact that 90 percent of the Israeli air strikes were directed against the Palestinian organizations while the evidence shows that the Shi'ites in southern Lebanon were responsible for many of the guerrilla attacks against the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) ground troops. This study concludes that the decision to minimize air attacks against the Shi'ites was an effort on the part of senior Israeli leaders to gain long-term security on their northern border by "signaling" their willingness to work with Nabih Berri and other Amal leaders. In addition to this, Israeli leaders were concerned that massive raids

on organizations like Hizbollah would have little impact on their willingness to attack the IDF, or worse yet, would inspire them to even greater violence.

In light of these political realities, the Israelis focused the air attacks on the radical Palestinian groups. Although the Israelis had an extensive intelligence base built up on the Palestinian organizations to assist them in developing their attack plans, the Israeli air strikes failed to affect the PLO. As a result, they combined with an increasingly angry Shi'ite population to execute a succession of guerrilla attacks against the IDF, which eroded the will of the Israeli leadership to stay in Lebanon.

This study contends there were two reasons for this failure. First, the asymmetry of motivation favored the Shi'ites, which negated the effectiveness of air strikes as a "carrot." Second, the air strikes were unable to create a realistic fear of escalation for the targets. This was caused by two factors: the Lebanese environment and the inability of the air strikes to add significantly to the costs of the target organizations.

The lesson in this experience for American policymakers is that even though the Israelis possessed the most advanced aircraft in the world, capable of delivering an impressive array of technologically advanced weapons, these advantages meant little when it came to coercing the Palestinians and the Shi'ites. This was because the Israeli strategy was based on the assumption that air strikes could inflict such pain on the target organizations that they would give in to Israeli demands rather than suffer at the hands of Israeli airmen. What the Israelis did not count on was the fact that the PLO and Shi'ites were already paying tremendous costs, and neither precision guided munitions nor iron bombs could add to these costs in any significant manner.

Given that many experts believe the United States will face similar situations in the future, US policymakers must understand that the ability to destroy targets with surgical accuracy does not automatically translate into the ability to inflict "significant pain" on an adversary. Consequently, we *must* be selective in choosing where we employ our "shrinking" air forces, or risk squandering the few advantages we enjoy.

About the Author

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Chapter 1

Introduction

From the dust-filled skies over northern Iraq to the fog-covered valleys of Bosnia, American airmen are finding themselves at the center of US efforts to solve the problems of an increasingly fragmented world. Airpower's new role as the "tool of choice" for US policymakers confronts the Air Force with challenges never envisioned during the cold war. These challenges include nonstate actors, ethnic hatred, nationalist tensions, and an increasing array of regional conflicts. If our experiences in Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti, and North Korea are any indication, the United States is moving toward a general policy of coercive diplomacy to deal with regional conflicts and the challenges they present. Accordingly, USAF planners will continue to find themselves asked to use airpower to support the strategy of coercive diplomacy.

Since the Air Force has focused on supporting cold-war strategies for the last 40 years, it is reasonable to expect that planners would look to the experiences of other air forces to help develop our own coercive strategies. The Israeli Air Force (IAF) presents an ideal candidate for this type of evaluation. Since its creation in 1948, the IAF has had a long history of supporting coercive strategies employed by Israeli leaders to deal with threats posed by the surrounding Arab states. A particularly effective period to evaluate would be the experience of the Israeli Air Force in Lebanon between January 1983 and June 1985. This period is significant for USAF planners because Lebanon confronted the IAF with an environment that one RAND analyst concluded is likely to be "representative of armed conflict worldwide in the last quarter of the twentieth century: a mixture of conventional warfare, classic guerrilla warfare, and campaigns of terrorism."[1]

During the Lebanon conflict, the Israeli Air Force employed the most advanced combat aircraft in the world to attack targets in southern Lebanon in support of a coercive strategy designed to compel the Palestine Liberation Orgaization (PLO) and Shi'ite forces to reduce the frequency of guerrilla attacks against Israeli ground troops. This thesis evaluates the effectiveness of those air raids in supporting the Israeli coercive strategy.

Overview

The analysis of this subject begins in chapter 2 with a description of the Lebanese Period: focusing on Israeli and PLO/Shi'ite objectives, events

leading up to the use of airpower, and specifics on the Israeli application of airpower. Chapter 3 discusses the coercive airpower strategy employed by the Israelis in Lebanon. This discussion will show that the Israeli use of airpower between January 1983 and June 1985 is consistent with the tenets of coercive diplomacy as defined by Alexander George.

Chapter 4 identifies factors that influenced the execution of the Israelis' coercive strategy. Here, this study concludes that the decision to minimize air attacks against the Shi'ites was an effort on the part of senior Israeli leaders to gain long-term security on their northern border by signaling their willingness to work with Nabih Berri and other Amal leaders. In addition to this, Israeli leaders were concerned that massive raids on organizations like Hizbollah would have little impact on their willingness to attack the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), or worse yet, would inspire them to even greater violence. In light of these political realities, the Israelis focused their air attacks on the radical Palestinian groups.

Chapter 5 uses data gathered from the *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)* and the *Journal of Palestine Studies (JPS)* to evaluate the effectiveness of airpower in controlling the behavior of Shi'ite and Palestinian resistance forces. This analysis involves a comparison of the total number of air attacks by the Israeli Air Force against Palestinian and Lebanese targets to the total number of attacks by those actors against Israeli military personnel. Results of this analysis led to the conclusion that Israeli air strikes, flown between November 1983 and June 1985, had little impact on reducing the willingness of these nonstate actors to attack the IDF in Lebanon.

Chapter 6 follows with insights into why the air raids failed to support the objectives of the Israeli coercive strategy. It contends there were two reasons for this failure. First, the asymmetry of motivation favored the Shi'ites in southern Lebanon, which negated the effectiveness of air strikes as a "carrot." Second, the air strikes were unable to create a realistic fear of escalation for the target organizations: a dilemma brought on by the Lebanese environment and the inability of the air strikes to add significantly to the costs of the target organizations.

Chapter 7 concludes by summarizing the evidence, identifying key lessons from the IAF experience in Lebanon, and providing recommendations for Air Force planners facing similar situations.

Notes

1. Brian Jenkins, *International Terrorism: New Modes of Conflict* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1983; reprint, Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Library Document No. M-30352-1-U No. 3302).

Chapter 2

The Lebanon Period

Israeli Objectives

When Israel decided to invade Lebanon, its primary purpose was to "destroy the terrorist organizations in Lebanon in such a way that they [would] not be able to rebuild their military and political base."[1] To accomplish this objective, the Israelis turned to their military. Under the guidance of Israel's hawkish defense minister, Ariel Sharon, plans were developed for a large-scale military invasion of Lebanon designed to crush the PLO forces in the region. Final approval for this plan was given on 5 June 1982, and Israeli forces were sent into Lebanon the next day. Although there had been some concern about the level of PLO resistance, the three-pronged attack into Lebanon succeeded far better than Sharon had expected. Within two days Israeli forces reached their objective: a line 45 kilometers north of Israel. Although they were supposed to stop at this point, Sharon convinced senior Israeli leaders that the only way to create a final solution to the terrorist problem was to allow Israeli forces to press all the way to Beirut. Within six days of this decision Israeli forces were at the doorsteps of the city.

From a tactical viewpoint, the Israeli invasion was a huge success: They had driven much of the PLO from Lebanon, inflicted a devastating defeat on the Syrian Air Force, and now controlled large portions of Lebanon. From a strategic viewpoint the invasion would prove to be a failure. Although the IDF had forced the PLO out of Lebanon, a large portion of their forces were allowed to escape to Tunis under UN protection. Those who did not escape to Tunis fled to Syria, where they regrouped and continued operations against the Israelis from the sanctuary provided by Hafez Assad. Worse yet, the Israeli invasion ignited hatred among the Shi'ite population in Lebanon, who turned to terrorism and guerrilla warfare against the Israeli troops.

The Israelis quickly discovered that the long-term security they so desperately sought would not be gained by a short-term invasion. To ensure the security of their northern border, Israel was forced to keep 15,000 to 20,000 troops deployed as far north as the Beirut-Damascus highway. These troops were to "serve as a buffer between the terrorists and the civilian population."[2] The problem with this approach was that the buffer forces quickly became the object of terrorist attacks. In September 1982, Lebanese and Palestinian terrorists began a rearguard war against the IDF forces in southern Lebanon.

The purpose of the terrorist attacks was clear: to make life so intolerable for the Israeli soldiers in Lebanon that Israel would be pressured into a unilateral withdrawal from the country.[3] Yasser Arafat described the strategy as follows:

> In accordance with the resolution of the PLO Military Council and the Palestine National Council (PNC), we have not only succeeded in escalating our military attacks on the Israeli forces in Lebanon, but in coordination with the Lebanese resistance, we have turned these attacks into a war of attrition against the Israeli presence in Lebanon . . . . Thus, what they thought was going to be a three-to-five day journey into Lebanon against our forces has become a trap against their continued presence in Lebanon.[4]

To counter these attacks the Israelis relied on a coercive strategy based on a combination of retaliation and preemptive measures. This strategy was rooted in the concept that every act of violence committed against an Israeli soldier would be met with a quick and often violent response. The objective of the Israeli policy was to create an environment in which the cost of attacking Israeli troops would be far greater than the return. Between October 1982 and November 1983 the primary tool for executing this policy was the Israeli ground forces. During this period Israeli foot patrols, using "techniques developed in the Jordan valley and the Gaza Strip," began a campaign of arrests, reprisals, and curfews designed to uncover "terrorists" and disrupt the resistance organizations.[5]

Rather than reducing the determination of the Palestinians and Lebanese, the coercive tactics only incited them to greater violence.[6] The "concrete" indicator of Palestinian and Shi'ite determination was the dramatic rise in the number of attacks against the IDF in southern Lebanon. In the first seven months of 1983 the number of attacks against the IDF almost doubled.[7] These figures would prompt Israeli military correspondent Shmu'el Tal to report: "Despite the effort the IDF devotes to security in southern Lebanon, the terrorist effort[s] to attack IDF soldiers are increasing and their actions are daily becoming more sophisticated and daring."[8]

As the number of casualties increased, pressure began to build on Israeli political leaders to bring the troops home. For the first time in Israel there were massive antiwar protests organized by groups with such names as Peace Now; No To the War Medal; and Parents for the Withdrawal from Lebanon. To bring the message home to the Israeli leadership, one group began a daily march outside Prime Minister Menachem Begin's home in which they would carry a scoreboard updating the death toll in Lebanon. These protests clearly had an effect on the Israeli leadership. In June 1983 Prime Minister Begin observed, "Every soldier who falls tears one's heart." Meanwhile Foreign Minister Yitzak Shamir stated, "The effort of every cabinet member . . . must be devoted to [overcoming] the difficulties the terrorist organization rearguard [war] is causing us."[9] The casualty figures also galvanized the Israeli cabinet, which "firmly demanded an explanation of the defense establishment's plans to prevent continued casualties among the IDF soldiers in Lebanon."[10]

Although Israeli leaders wanted to remove their troops from Lebanon, they feared a pullout would allow terrorist elements to begin the cycle of attacks against northern settlements that had prompted the June invasion. In an effort to reduce their casualties, yet still retain control over South Lebanon, the IDF pulled back in August 1983 to the Al-Awali River. Once there they set up observation posts, dug trenches, built bunkers, and set up a sophisticated communications and electronic system along the high ridges of the valley. This, in combination with mobile patrols and a system of roadblocks, was used to strictly control the flow of traffic in and out of the region.[11]

Even before the move was complete there were those within the IDF who doubted its ability to reduce casualties. IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Levy would state that he did not expect a major reduction in casualties, adding that the redeployment to the Awali River was driven by political rather than military considerations.[12] Palestinian journalist Yezid Sayigh would predict in the Fall 1983 edition of the *Journal of Palestine Studies* that "the temptation to use the air force and artillery . . . will grow if the IDF redeployment [to the Awali River] fails to reduce casualties."[13] True to Levy's prediction, the Awali line did little to stem the rising tide of attacks against the IDF, and, as the number of attacks continued to rise, so did the calls for "a more aggressive retaliatory policy." A central feature of these calls was a request that the IDF "use the air force and artillery . . . as they were used against Jordan in 1968 to 1970."[14]

Airpower's Role

True to Sayigh's prediction, on 3 November 1983, two months after the redeployment to the Awali River failed to reduce the number of IDF casualties, the Israelis launched their first air strikes in over a year against terrorist targets in Alley, Bhamdoun, and Sofar. This raid would mark the beginning of Israel's use of airpower to support their efforts to control the behavior of the Palestinian and Lebanese organizations during this period.

In making this decision, Israeli leaders were not making a "radical" change to their airpower doctrine. Israel had first introduced airpower as a countermeasure to terrorist/guerrilla attacks in 1966, and since that time it has played an integral role in their efforts to reduce attacks against Israeli personnel.[15] This was especially true of their counterterrorism effort, where for every act of Palestinian terrorism committed both inside and outside the boundaries of the State of Israel, an IAF retaliatory air raid had become an expected occurrence.[16] Massive air raids against terrorist headquarters, training camps, and installations had followed such terrorist incidents as the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre, the May 1974 Ma'alot massacre, and the June 1982 attempted assassination of Ambassador Shlomo Argov in London.

The air raids developed for Lebanon involved the IAF's principal combat aircraft: the A-4 Skyhawk, the F-4E Phantom, the F-15, F-16, and the Kfir. Each air raid was designed as a quick surgical stroke meant to destroy vital

terrorist targets while preventing large-scale civilian casualties.[17] During this period, Israeli fighters would fly 28 air raids against terrorist targets in southern Lebanon (table 5). Twenty-five of these missions were directed against Palestinian targets and three were against the Shi'ites.

Israeli leaders designed these raids to operate as both a "carrot" and a "stick." Their primary aim was to act as a stick, coercing the radical PLO and Shi'ite organizations to reduce the frequency of guerrilla attacks by destroying resources deemed vital to the execution of those attacks. These air raids would also "create a situation of uncertainty for the terrorists so that they [could not] feel safe in perpetrating their attacks."[18] This would reduce the frequency of attacks by forcing the terrorists to expend energy and resources on defensive precautions, rather than on offensive strikes against Israeli targets.[19] Many of these raids also involved overt and implicit retaliation. In these cases air raids were directed at specific organizations in response to attacks against the IDF. These raids were designed to increase the psychological "costs" for the targeted organizations by sending a clear message that "we know who you are and we know where to find you." There were also attempts to signal the PLO/Shi'ites that they were approaching the limits that Israel would tolerate in the conflict.

While Israeli leaders used the destructive power of the Israeli air raids as a stick against the radical PLO and Shi'ite organizations, their ability to withhold these strikes was used as a carrot against the moderate ones. This was the case with Nabih Berri's Amal organization. During this period, Berri's organization was not targeted by the IAF. As chapter 5 will point out, evidence indicates that the decision to limit IAF attacks against the Amal organization was a result of Israeli leaders trying to signal their willingness to work with Nabih Berri.

Although military leaders designed the tactics, the Israeli prime minister and his cabinet selected the targets and were the final approval authority for all the air raids.[20] When selecting these targets, Israeli leaders sought maximum coercive effects by attempting to focus the air attacks directly at the "parties involved," while structuring them so as to minimize the political costs to Israel.[21] In the case of retaliation raids, this meant selecting targets that were both proportional and directly connected to specific terrorist actions.

To assist the senior leaders in making their decisions, Israeli intelligence compiled comprehensive target lists for each one of the terrorist groups believed to be operating against Israel. Included with these lists would be an assessment of the value of each of the targets to the organizations. When one of the terrorist groups would conduct an attack in Lebanon, the prime minister and the cabinet would select an appropriate target from the list. The target would then be sent down to IAF headquarters where air force planners would determine the aircraft and weapon best suited for the mission.

The missions themselves involved small packages of A-4, Kfir, or F-16 ground attack aircraft escorted by F-15s. Most of these missions did not require defense suppression since the greatest threat was from small arms

fire and shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles (SAM). The F-15s were brought along to prevent interference with the missions by Syrian MiGs. The choice of weapons on these missions would vary depending on the nature of the target. By 1983 the Israelis had a variety of precision guided munitions (laser guided bombs and TOW missiles) provided by the US. The increased accuracy and reduced collateral damage promised by the weapons expanded the list of targets that could be struck on these retaliatory raids. This became especially important in Lebanon since the terrorists tended to locate their strategic targets (headquarters, communications, and weapons storage) inside heavily populated areas.

In addition to the problems involved in minimizing collateral damage, one of the greatest challenges facing IAF pilots was achieving the element of surprise. As one IAF pilot put it "if [the terrorists] hear you they will run. If they are running out into the bushes you can't hit them."[22] To maximize the element of surprise the IAF increasingly turned to night operations in executing their reprisal raids in Lebanon. These attacks not only minimized the threat of ground fire to the crews but also reduced the ability of the targets to "run away."

The desire to achieve the element of surprise also spurred the use of helicopters. With their nap of the earth flying capability, the AH-1S Cobra and Hughes 500 MD Defender allowed IAF pilots to "sneak up" on their targets or even wait by the roadside to ambush selected vehicles. Helicopters also had the advantage of not being tied to an airfield. This allowed the IAF to keep a number of helicopters forward deployed in alert positions where they could respond quickly to requests for reprisal or counterforce raids from Israeli leaders who wanted to punish those who attacked the IDF.

The helicopters were also used to support special raids. During these raids, one or two platoons of paratroopers were inserted by helicopter near a guerrilla/terrorist base.[23] The troops would then approach on foot, attack the camp with automatic fire, propel grenades and mortars, then be withdrawn by helicopter again. This form of attack, along with selective air strikes, was designed to maintain pressure on Israel's enemies and to keep them off balance.

Notes

1. Ze'ev Shiff and Ehud Ya'ari, *Israel's Lebanon War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 42.
2. Interview with Moshe Arens, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, 16 June 1983.
3. "Arens on Terrorist Attacks in Lebanon, Withdrawal," *FBIS*, 12 June 1983.
4. Ibid.
5. "IDF Commander in Lebanon on Anti-Terrorist Battle," *FBIS*, IDF Radio, 15 June 1983.
6. Yair Evron, *War and Intervention in Lebanon* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 115. According to Evron the efforts to suppress Shi'ite attacks against the IDF "turned the Shi'ite population into a new and dangerous enemy which was quite willing to resort to terrorism and guerrilla warfare."
7. Clifford Wright, "The Israeli War Machine in Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 12 (Winter 1983): 52.

8. *FBIS*, 4 May 1983.

9. "Interview with Shamir," *FBIS*, 11 June 1983.

10. "Schiffler Assesses Cabinet Meeting," *FBIS*, 12 June 1983.

11. In a 1983 interview Yasser Arafat observed the continuing attacks on the IDF. "This has been confirmed by Israeli military sources and is considered one of the reasons for the Israeli government to redeploy it forces to the Awali River in order to minimize casualties," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Fall 1983, 1.

12. Yezid Sayigh, "Israel's Military Performance in Lebanon, June 1982," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 13 (Fall 1983): 64.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Hanan Alon, *Countering Palestinian Terrorism in Israel: Toward A Policy Analysis of Countermeasures* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1980), 39.

16. Samuel Katz, *Guards Without Frontiers: Israel's War against Terrorism* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1990), 17.

17. This was in keeping with the Israeli policy of Tohar Haneshed (Purity of Arms), that forbids the killing of innocents. "All the Inefficiencies of Any Intelligence Service," *Armed Forces Journal International*, October 1973, 47.

18. "IDF Commander in Lebanon on Anti-Terrorist Battle," *FBIS*, 15 June 1983.

19. Katz, 168.

20. IAF officer, interview with author, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, Maxwell AFB, Ala., 20 February 1994.

21. Katz, 170.

22. IAF officer interview.

23. Ibid.

Chapter 3

The Israeli Strategy

Defining the Israeli Strategy

The premise of this thesis is that air raids executed by Israeli fighters were part of a strategy of coercive diplomacy designed to influence the behavior of Arab nonstate actors. This strategy was based on the assumption that airpower could be used to undermine the will of PLO and Shi'ite organizations to execute guerrilla attacks against Israeli ground forces in southern Lebanon. An effective way to interpret this strategy is through the theories of Alexander George. In *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy,* George identified two strategies for using military force as an instrument of foreign policy: the quick, decisive military strategy and coercive diplomacy.[1] According to George, in the quick, decisive military strategy, military force is used to

> destroy a significant portion of the opponent's military capability to contest what is at stake in the conflict. Accordingly, this strategy largely dispenses with threats, diplomacy, or subtle modes of persuasion to alter the opponent's policy. It relies, rather, on military force to provide a "war winning" strategy.[2]

Under this strategy, military force renders the opponent *incapable* of resisting the demands of the attacker. In contrast to this approach, the strategy of coercive diplomacy uses "just enough force . . . to demonstrate resolution to protect well-defined interests and also to demonstrate the credibility of one's determination to use more force if necessary."[3] It is a strategy that uses military force "in discrete and controlled increments, to *induce* the opponent to revise his calculations and agree to a mutually acceptable termination of the conflict"[4] (emphasis added). As Barry M. Blechman noted in his dissertation, "The Consequence of the Israeli Reprisals," it is a distinction between violence used to attain an objective directly and violence used as a form of bargaining.[5]

An important aspect of coercive diplomacy is communication between the attacker and target. In contrast to the quick, decisive military strategy, where communication between the attacker and the opponent only occurs "*after* the effort to apply force" (emphasis added), in coercive diplomacy the attacker communicates with the target throughout the application of military force.[6] Communication between the two adversaries allows the attacker to demonstrate his "resolution to protect well-defined interests and also to demonstrate the credibility of one's determination to use more force if necessary."[7] According to George, this communication is the distinctive aspect

of coercive diplomacy that makes it "a much more flexible, refined, [and] psychological instrument of policy."[8]

In explaining the concept of coercive diplomacy, George identified two variants of the strategy. Known as the try-and-see approach (the weaker version) and the tacit-ultimatum (the strongest version), these variants represent "the endpoints of a continuum; intermediate variants are also possible."[9]

In the try-and-see approach, "the defending power in an attempt to persuade its opponent to call off or curtail its encroachment takes only one step at a time. It deliberately postpones the decision to take additional action until it becomes clear whether the steps already taken will have a sufficient coercive impact on the opponent."[10]

Under this strategy the attacker may make demands on the opponent but does not "create a sense of urgency for his compliance with the demand."[11] In contrast to this approach, the tacit-ultimatum combines the threat of future punishment with a time limit. Under this variant, "at the same time the defending power takes its initial actions it communicates to the opponent that other, more damaging steps will follow in short order if he does not comply with the demand made on him."[12] According to George, the tacit-ultimatum uses all three elements of a classical ultimatum:

1. a specific demand on the opponent;
2. a time limit (explicit or implicit) for compliance; and
3. a threat of punishment for noncompliance that is sufficiently strong and credible.

The Israeli Airpower Strategy

The Israeli use of airpower between January 1983 and June 1985 is consistent with the tenets of coercive diplomacy as defined by Alexander George. To begin with, the execution of IAF air raids met George's requirement that the application of military force be both discrete and controlled. This becomes evident when comparing the use of airpower in Lebanon with its employment during the 1967 War, which George describes as an example of the quick, decisive military strategy.

During the 1967 War, the Israeli Air Force executed a series of decisive strikes designed to incapacitate the Egyptian Air Force in a short period. This effort required hundreds of sorties and was completed in less than four days. By comparison, during the Lebanon period evaluated in this study, the Israeli Air Force would fly four-to-eight missions per month, followed by lulls in which none or only one air strike was flown. The total number of missions flown in Lebanon between January 1983 and June 1985 was less than that flown during the *first* day of the 1967 War.

Further indication that airpower was supporting a strategy of coercive diplomacy in Lebanon comes from the fact that Israeli air raids were often "proceeded, accompanied, or followed by appropriate communications to the

opponent." For example, the first series of air strikes against Palestinian and Shi'ite targets in southern Lebanon was followed by the pronouncement from Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir that "Middle East peoples should realize that if Israel is provoked, the hand extended in peace will turn into an iron fist that will strike at terrorism to the bitter end."[13] This is consistent with George's statement that the central task of a coercive strategy is to "create in the opponent the expectation of unacceptable costs of sufficient magnitude to erode his motivation to continue what he is doing."[14]

As to the question of which variant of the strategy was being used: The Israeli decision to avoid executing any air strikes against the PLO and Shi'ites for over a year (October 1982–October 1983) indicates that the Israelis were engaged in a try-and-see approach. Further support for this view comes from the periodic lulls in air attacks. Between January 1983 and June 1985, there were three months in which the Israeli Air Force did not execute any air strikes against targets in southern Lebanon (table 5). These lulls could be the result of Israeli leaders waiting to see whether the air strikes were having the desired effect on the PLO and Shi'ites. This is consistent with the try-and-see approach in which the coercing power "deliberately postpones the decision to take additional action until it becomes clear whether the steps already taken will have a sufficient coercive impact on the opponent."[15]

Although evidence indicates that the strategy used by the Israelis in Lebanon was a weak variant of coercive diplomacy, other aspects of the strategy show that it was not the "weakest" variant of the try-and-see approach. Of the three elements that indicate the strength of a particular variant, the Israeli use of airpower during this period possesses two of the three: a specific demand and the threat of punishment for noncompliance. Both elements are present in the statement made by Prime Minister Shamir after the air strikes against the PLO and Shi'ites in November 1983. Since the air strikes that preceded this announcement were executed in retaliation for the bombing of IDF headquarters in Tyre, the assumption is that the provocation Shamir refers to are terrorist attacks against the IDF. The implied message is that should the target organization continue to provoke Israel by continuing to attack the IDF, Israel will respond with punishment delivered by the "Iron Fist." This approach is consistent with George's view that the coercing power "may not need to state a specific time limit or define the threat of punishment for noncompliance to reinforce its demand on the opponent. Either or both may be sufficiently *implicit* in the structure of a situation"(emphasis added).[16]

Notes

1. Alexander L. George, David K. Hall, and William E. Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy: Laos, Cuba, Vietnam* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), 16–17.
2. Ibid., 16.
3. Ibid., 18.
4. Ibid.

5. Barry M. Blechman, "The Consequence of the Israeli Reprisals: An Assessment" (PhD diss., Georgetown School of Government, 1971), 10.
6. George et al., 17.
7. Ibid.,18.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., 27.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, 4 November 1983, ii.
14. George et al., 26–27.
15. Ibid., 27.
16. Ibid., 28.

Chapter 4

Factors Influencing the Airpower Strategy

As stated in the previous chapter, although the Shi'ites were responsible for many of the attacks against the IDF, almost all the Israeli air attacks were directed at the PLO, in particular the hard-line, pro-Syrian organizations located in the Bekka Valley. The choice of Palestinians as the primary target was a matter of political reality (table 1). As Yitzak Shamir stated in a 1984 interview, "The Lebanon issue, is not a matter of principle . . . it is a matter of determining what is the most effective means of attaining security for the north."[1]

Table 1

Palestinian Targets of IAF Air Strikes

PFLP	DFLP	ABU MOUSSA	PFLP-GC	PPS F	SAIQ A	*NOT SPECIFIED	TOTAL
4	4	2	2	1	1	11	25

Legend:

Abu Moussa	Syrian Leader
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PFLP	Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine
PFLP-GC	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command
PSF	Popular Struggle Front
SAIQA	Palestinian Guerrilla Organization

*In these cases there was enough information to determine that an air attack was flown against a Palestinian group, but not enough to determine which organization.

Source: Lt Col Kenneth C. Schow, Jr., 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan Air Base (AB), Korea, June 1994.

The Shi'ites and Long-Term Security

With the Shi'ites comprising one-half of Lebanon's three million people, and 60 percent of those living in the South, Israeli leaders felt they could not afford to risk making the whole community its implacable enemy if Israel was to have any hope of coming to a long-term solution with Lebanon on security arrangements for its northern border.[2] As Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin would say, "If as a result of the war in Lebanon we will have succeeded in eliminating to a large extent the PLO terrorists, but will have brought about Shi'ite terrorism, one would have to think twice about what really proved to be the results of this war."[3]

In an effort to remove their troops from southern Lebanon without jeopardizing the security of their settlements, the Israelis attempted to get Amal to accept responsibility for ensuring the security of their northern border. Unfortunately, the political environment in South Lebanon prevented this from happening. Augustus R. Norton framed the situation as follows:

> If Amal provided the overt security assurances sought by Israel, it would jeopardize its competitive position vis-à-vis Hizb Alla, with which Amal [was] compet[ing] for the political heart of the Shi'i community.[4]

With overt assurances a political impossibility, the Israelis attempted to engage the Shi'ite in a tacit agreement. In an effort to signal their willingness to coexist with Nabih Berri's Amal organization, Israeli leaders forced the IDF to exercise restraint in reacting to Shi'ite attacks. Under a policy described as the velvet glove, Rabin and other cabinet members would issue occasional threats that Israel would not cease fighting terrorism, and Israeli agencies would continue to gather information about Shi'ite networks and organizations, but the IDF in southern Lebanon was forced to react defensively rather than offensively to the guerrilla attacks.[5] Limiting IAF attacks against Amal seems to have been another of the signals being sent by the Israeli leadership to the Shi'ites. In an article that appears to reflect the thinking of Israeli leaders, Hirsh Goodman, journalist, noted: "The danger with [the Israeli policy of automatic retaliation] is that the IDF could find itself retaliating against precisely the people we want to be our allies in the southern security zone."[6]

Hizbollah and the PLO

In addition to minimizing attacks against Amal, the IAF did not execute many attacks against the radical Hizbollah organization. This appears to have been the result of limitations imposed on the IAF because of the nature of the Hizbollah organization. Unlike other organizations in Lebanon, Hizbollah was a popular movement based on Islamic teaching, not a political party with a fixed address. This made it difficult for the Israelis to pinpoint and attack individuals responsible for carrying out attacks against the IDF.[7] It was this same problem that prevented the United States from launching reprisal attacks against Hizbollah after the bombing of Marine barracks in Beirut. The Israelis were also concerned that massive raids on radical Shi'ites might not reduce their willingness of attacking the IDF, and might even inspire them to even greater violence. As early as 1983, members of the Hizbollah organization, mindful of the martyrdom of the Prophet Mohammed's son, had shown themselves quite willing to die for their cause.[8] The Israelis were well aware of this fact and it seems to have been reflected in their targeting strategy.

With attacks against the Shi'ites largely ruled out for political and practical reasons, the IAF was left to focus on the Palestinian organizations who had returned to Lebanon and were operating out of bases in Syrian controlled

territory. Interestingly, Yasser Arafat's Fatah organization was largely excluded from these attacks. This was because six months before the first air attack, Arafat had been driven out of Lebanon by a group of pro-Syrian hard-liners led by A'akid Muhamad Sa'id Musa (Abu Moussa). This reduced Arafat's stature in the PLO during this period and seems to have made him a nonfactor in Israeli eyes.

The hard-line organizations on the other hand presented a threat. Abu Muossa and the other PLO forces (PFLP, PFLP-GC, DFLP, SAIQA, PSF, PLF) who had returned to Lebanon included the most violent anti-Israel factions within the PLO. Unlike Arafat, they were opposed to any compromise with Israel and advocated violence as the sole means of achieving a solution to the Palestinian question.[9] These forces were heavily supported by the Syrians and were executing attacks against the IDF from bases behind Syrian lines in the Bekka Valley. Since the location of these bases made it very difficult for Israeli ground forces to attack them, the Israelis turned to airpower which provided a safer method to reach these bases.

Notes

1. *Jerusalem Post*, 29 November 1984.
2. Scott Mcleod, "Israel's Iron Fist - Deterrence or Revenge?," *Middle East International*, 8 March 1985, 22.
3. Avner Yaniv, *Dilemmas of Security: Politics, Strategy, and the Israeli Experience in Lebanon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 279.
4. Augustus R. Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 121.
5. Yaniv, 279.
6. *Jerusalem Post*, 17 May 1985.
7. Mcleod, 22.
8. Ibid.
9. Rashid Khalidi, "The PLO as Representative of the Palestinian People," *The International Relations of the Palestine Organization,* eds. Augustus R. Norton and Martin H. Greenberg (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 62.

Chapter 5

Effectiveness of IAF Reprisal Raids

In terms of sorties flown and material destroyed, the retaliation raids were termed a *success* by the Israeli *Spokesman*.[1] In terms of the one measure of merit that really mattered—stemming the rising tide of terrorist violence against Israeli troops—they were a failure. In the six months prior to the initiation of air strikes (period one: May 1983–October 1983), there had been 60 attacks against IDF personnel in southern Lebanon (table 2). Following this period, the IAF flew 14 air raids against Palestinian targets and Shi'ite targets. The effect on the target organizations during this period appears negligible. In fact, the number of guerrilla attacks against the IDF during six months in which there were no air raids against the PLO and Shi'ites (period one) was exactly the same as the first six-month period (period two) in which no air raids were flown against them. Results during periods three and four bring the effectiveness of the air raids further into question. During these periods, the number of attacks against the IDF skyrocketed—from 74 attacks during period three (May 1984–October 1984) to 157 attacks during period four (November 1984–May 1985). These increases occurred despite the fact that the IAF continued to execute air raids against the PLO and Shi'ites. This evidence seems to indicate that the air strikes did not reduce the willingness of the PLO and Shi'ites to execute these attacks.

Table 2*

Guerrilla Attacks against the IDF in Southern Lebanon

(6 month intervals)

	Period One	Period Two	Period Three	Period Four
	May '83–October '83	**November '83–April '84	*May '84–October '84*	*November '84–May '85*
Attacks against the IDF	60	60	74	157
IAF Air Attacks	0	14	7	6

*See appendix for detailed information on data collection and coding.
**IAF air strikes begin.

Source: Lt Col Kenneth C. Schow, Jr., 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan AB, Korea, June 1994.

Although an argument can be made that the rise in guerrilla attacks following period two occurred because the IAF reduced the number of air attacks it flew during subsequent periods (three and four), an equally effective argument can be made against this view. To begin with, air attacks flown during these periods were designed to prevent future attacks on the IDF. To accomplish this the IAF focused on destroying resources that the target organizations needed to execute future attacks. The destruction of these resources was designed to inflict pain on the target organizations, followed by signals from Israeli leaders that to avoid further pain (i.e., air strikes), the target organizations need only stop attacking the IDF. If the air strikes flown during period two had been effective at destroying critical resources or inflicting great pain on the target organizations, one would expect to see a reduction in the number of guerrilla attacks in period three. The data shows that this did not occur. This same argument can be applied to periods three and four. During these two periods, the number of air attacks remained relatively equal, yet the number of guerrilla attacks in period four is more than double those in period three.

While this evidence does not prove that by flying more air attacks against the PLO and Shi'ites the Israelis *might* not have been able to affect the willingness of the target organizations to attack the IDF, it seems to conclusively prove that the air raids flown during this period *did not reduce* the number of attacks against the IDF. The Shi'ite response to the Israeli Iron Fist policy in early 1985 adds further credence to this view. During this period, IDF ground forces inflicted a degree of suffering on the Shi'ite population of southern Lebanon, comparable to that of large-scale air strikes.[2] Despite the brutal punishment inflicted on the Shi'ites by the Iron Fist, the number of guerrilla attacks against the IDF more than doubles during this period. Based on this experience it is hard to imagine how even directing all 28 air strikes against the Shi'ites would have caused them to react differently.

As a result of airpower's inability to coerce the Shi'ites and Palestinians, these forces continued to engage in a relentless battle of attrition which eventually eroded all domestic support for the occupation of Lebanon. By the summer of 1984, the press began referring to Lebanon as Israel's Vietnam. Public opinion polls showed that a majority of Israelis no longer supported the war and many in both the right and the left wing of Israel's political parties were calling for an immediate pullout.[3] By the time Israel's national unity government was elected in August 1984, it became clear that one of its main functions would be to extricate Israel from the Lebanese quagmire.[4] On 18 January 1985 the Peres-led government took the first steps in this direction when it announced a three-stage withdrawal plan from Lebanon. Six months after this announcement the last Israeli troops returned home.

Notes

1. A review of the public statements made by the IDF *Spokesman* showed that all comments made concerning the effectiveness of the IAF missions indicated that the missions were successful.

2. Avner Yaniv, *Dilemmas of Security: Politics, Strategy, and the Israeli Experiences in Lebanon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 281. According to Yaniv, "The Iron Fist policy began on February 20, 1985 with a raid on the Village of Bazouriyeh, east of Tyre. The next day there was a similar raid on the villages of Burj Rahal, Burj al Shemali, and Bedias. The following week the area under attack was further expanded. This phase in the policy came to a climax a week and one-half later with a massive raid on Ma'arakhe, the largest of these villages. The raids were conducted methodically. A large force in armored cars would suddenly surround a village chosen for a raid. Israeli soldiers would take the hills around it and block all entrances to the village with physical barriers. The troops would enter the village shooting at anything that moved while commanding the residents through loudspeakers to stay at home. They would search every home thoroughly and round up all the men ages sixteen to sixty and assemble them in the village square. Then, assisted by hooded informants, the Israelis would begin to identify suspected al Amal supporters and take them for further interrogation. Houses owned by suspected supporters of al Amal would be blown up. Any attempt to resist would lead to shooting. Fifteen Shi'ites were killed in this way within the first ten days of the new policy.

When the first phase of the policy failed to reduce the number of guerrilla attacks, Israeli's response was to escalate the reprisals further. The day after a car bomb attack, a large Israeli force crossed the IDF line of deployment and raided the village of Zrariyeh. Thirty-four Lebanese Shi'ites were killed and much damage was done to the village. Ten days later a large helicopter-borne Israeli force, supported on the ground by a great deal of armor, performed a similar raid on nine other villages. The raid was so large that one Beirut radio station called it a new invasion. By evening, however, the IDF force withdrew, leaving behind scores of blown-up homes and taking with it scores of prisoners.

3. Yaniv, 271. This was reflected in public opinion polls showing that 84 percent of the population supported staying in Lebanon in June 1982. This figure dropped to 64 percent at the end of 1982, 51 percent at the end of 1983, and was down to 36 percent by early 1985.

4. According to Augustus R. Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987): "Until late 1984, the dilemma was framed as follows: we want to get out, but how can we afford to, given the security risks? But in late 1984, the question became: given the risks of staying, how can we afford to stay?"

Chapter 6

Why the Air Strikes Failed

The question that hangs over the Lebanese experience is "How could air raids, which were so successful in destroying their assigned targets, be so unsuccessful in reducing the number of attacks against the IDF?" The short answer to this question is that while the air strikes were successful, the strategy failed. The Israeli strategy was based on the assumption that the destruction of resources vital to the execution of guerrilla attacks and the "psychological costs" of the air strikes could undermine the will of the PLO and Shi'ite organizations to attack the IDF. This strategy failed for two reasons. First, the asymmetry of motivation favored the Shi'ites, which negated the effectiveness of air strikes as a carrot. Second, the air strikes were unable to create a realistic fear of escalation for the targets. This resulted from two factors: the Lebanese environment and the inability of the air strikes to add significantly to the costs of the target organizations (tables 3 and 4).

Table 3

IAF Air Attacks in Southern Lebanon (6 month intervals)

May '83–October '83	November '83–April '84	May '84–October '84	November '84–May '85	Total
0	14	7	7	**28**

Source: Lt Col Kenneth C. Schow, Jr., 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan AB, Korea, June 1994.

Table 4

Targets of Israeli Air Attacks

Total Number of Air Attacks	Air Attacks Against Palestinians	Air Attacks Against Shi'ite
28	25	3

Source: Lt Col Kenneth C. Schow, Jr., 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan AB, Korea, June 1994.

Asymmetry of Motivation

When the Israelis invaded Lebanon in the summer of 1982, many of the 500,000 Shi'ites in the South greeted them as liberators. It was a situation that would quickly change. As one Israeli journalist would state:

> It is a fact that with the conquest of the villages and hamlets of southern Lebanon, we were received with rice and flowers. Now we are received with grenades and explosives. Something has happened to the Shi'a sect. The joy about our arrival as people liberating them from the terrorist burden has changed with time into burning hatred. This is not something to be surprised about: We have behaved as a military government, with all that involves, and caused much suffering to the population.[1]

As outlined in the previous chapter, Israel initially responded to the Shi'ite attacks by forcing the IDF to react "defensively," which appears to have included preventing the IAF from attacking them. This was an attempt by the Israeli leadership to "signal" their willingness to work with moderate Shi'ite leaders like Nabih Berri.[2] In effect, airpower was being used as a carrot. Based on the Shi'ite response the carrot clearly was not effective.

The failure of airpower to act as an effective carrot occurred because an "asymmetry of motivation" existed between the Israelis and the Shi'ites. According to George, the motivation of the coercing power and his opponent are key variables which effect the outcome of coercive diplomacy. He contends that the motivation of the coercer dictates the nature of the demand made on the opponent, which in turn effects the motivation of the opponent to resist. He goes on to say, "The chances that coercive diplomacy will be successful will be appreciably greater if the objective selected—and the demand made—by the coercing power reflects only the most important of its interests that are at stake, for this is more likely to create an asymmetry of motivation favoring the coercing power."[3] The situation in southern Lebanon appears to have favored the Shi'ites rather than the Israelis.

As chapter 2 pointed out, the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon was born of a desire to enhance the security of their northern border. While one would expect this to provide Israel with a high degree of motivation, this is not the case. Although it was true that maintaining their security was a matter of national interest for Israel, the country and its leaders were divided as to whether the occupation of Lebanon was an effective method for maintaining that security.[4] Rather than creating a strong consensus within Israel, the occupation provoked much dissent within the country, robbing its leaders of the motivation needed to prevail in coercive diplomacy.

Israeli efforts were not helped by their misestimation of Shi'ite resentment to the Israeli occupation. The Israelis mistook the warm welcome they received from the Shi'ites in the summer of 1982 as a willingness on the part of the Shi'ite population to tolerate an extended IDF presence in South Lebanon. In reality, the politically "awakened" Shi'ite community was unwilling to tolerate domination by any foreign power, Arab or Israeli. As Augustus R. Norton observed, "Having begun to throw off the shackles of the

PLO presence, the Shi'i community was not about to wrap itself in the chains of Israel's occupation."[5]

The depth of Shi'ite commitment was evident in their willingness to endure the Iron Fist. Norton also observed, "As the occupation of the South wore on, with debilitating effects for the economy and political stability of the area, moderation was discredited and extremism was validated. As a result, Israeli officials found that no significant Shi'i leader was even willing to respond to their quiet advances."[6] In the face of this asymmetry of motivation, the Israeli effort to coerce the moderate Shi'ite forces using the carrot of airpower was an exercise in futility.

Inability to Create Fear of Unacceptable Escalation

The second factor that undermined the effectiveness of Israeli airpower was the inability of the air strikes to create fear in the minds of the Palestinians and Shi'ites that unacceptable escalation could occur. According to George, "coercive diplomacy is enhanced if the initial small steps taken against the opponent begin to arouse his fear of unacceptable levels of warfare."[7] During this period, Israeli air strikes did not create that fear in the minds of the Palestinians and Shi'ites: therefore, the coercive value of the air strikes was eroded. In examining the situation one can identify two causes for this failure. The first was the Lebanese environment, which limited the ability of the IAF to attack the guerrillas, and the second was the inability of the air strikes to significantly raise the costs for the target organizations.

Lebanon Environment

The coercive value of the Israeli air attacks was undermined by the environment in Lebanon which made it easy for the guerrillas to attack the IDF but difficult for the IAF to respond. As Clifford Wright observed, "With its high population density and hilly terrain, Lebanon was perfectly suited to the 'hit and run' tactics employed by the terrorists."[8] It allowed small groups of guerrillas to strike their targets and merge quickly back into the population. This made it difficult for the Israelis to determine which groups or individuals were responsible for the attacks. Further confounding the Israeli effort was the fact that "the population of South Lebanon [was] far more politicized, organized and armed than populations of the surrounding Arab states."[9] Consequently, they were more than willing to provide support and assistance to the various guerrilla factions. In addition to this, the structure of the resistance organizations made it difficult for the Israeli intelligence agencies to gather information needed to execute air attacks against particular organizations. This was especially true of the Shi'ites, who tended

to be made up of "small, hard to penetrate, locally based cells of militant youths."[10] A final complication for the IAF was the fact that the PLO and Shi'ites often put high-value targets, such as supply depots and headquarters, in high-density areas. The political sensitivity to collateral damage caused by air strikes sometimes reduced the willingness of Israeli leaders to use airpower against these targets.[11]

Israeli Air Strikes Could Not Increase Costs on Attackers

Even when airpower could locate and destroy the terrorist targets, it did not significantly increase the "cost of doing business" for the Palestinians and Shi'ites. The Israeli strategy aimed to destroy resources vital to the Palestinian and Shi'ite "war of attrition," imposing extreme costs on the target organizations that would undermine their will to continue. Evaluation of this strategy depends on whether the targets destroyed by air attacks significantly increased the costs which the Palestinians and Shi'ites had to pay. By this criterion, the Israeli strategy had little hope of success.

The basic problem was that the Palestinians and Shi'ites were already paying a tremendous price in blood to evict the Israelis from southern Lebanon. Before the first air strike in November 1983, the Shi'ites had already lost 19,000 people at the hands of the Israeli invaders, while the PLO suffered 1,000 killed and "several thousand" fighters captured during the Israeli invasion.[12,13] Furthermore, during the first year of their occupation, Israeli efforts to control the Shi'ite and Palestinian population decimated the economy of South Lebanon.[14] The local population suffered even further when Israel abandoned its "defensive" efforts in dealing with the Shi'ites and adopted a ruthless Iron Fist policy.

The air strikes failed to coerce the PLO and Shi'ites because they added little to the costs already being endured by the resistance groups in southern Lebanon. First, the air strikes did not cause many additional casualties. Second, even though the air attacks were successful in destroying resources needed to conduct the guerrilla war, both the Shi'ites and Palestinians had the capability to replace these resources. In the case of the PLO, their annual budget during this period included 100 million dollars for military operations and 200 million dollars to ease the suffering of Palestinians living in Lebanon.[15] While subsidies from Syria and Iran were not generous, they easily allowed the Shi'ites to replace equipment and facilities destroyed by the Israeli raids. Money also helped ensure that both the organizations had little difficulty replacing manpower losses. This was especially true for the Shi'ites, where as a result of the horrendous economic climate of South Lebanon, the salary paid a Shi'ite militiaman was often his families only available source of income.[16] Even the deaths inflicted by the IAF did not increase the level of pain. In study on the effectiveness of Israeli terrorist

countermeasures, Hanan Alon would observe, "There is no proof that the strikes reduced the willingness of the Palestinians to join the organizations and to die for their cause. One may assume that, on the contrary, the strikes led to rage which may have *encouraged* (emphasis added) joining terror organizations and taking part in their operations."[17] The same case appears to have held true in Lebanon.

Notes

1. Yisre'el Zamir, "The Bluff Called Security Arrangements," *'al Hamishar*, 23 February 1984.

2. In the year and one-half leading up to the Israeli pullout in June 1985, the IAF would fly 28 air attacks against "terrorist" targets in southern Lebanon. In the course of these attacks, the Israelis would execute 25 attacks against Palestinian targets and three attacks against Shi'ite organizations. Because 90 percent of the air strikes were directed against Palestinian targets, one would expect to find that the Palestinians were responsible for most of the attacks against the IDF. Contrary to this expectation, the evidence indicates that by the spring of 1984 it was the Shi'ites in southern Lebanon who were responsible for most of the attacks against the IDF.

3. Alexander L. George, David K. Hall, and William E. Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy: Laos, Cuba, Vietnam* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co.,1971), 26.

4. One year into the occupation polls showed that support for the occupation amongst Israelis had dropped from 84 percent in June 1982 to 51 percent in May 1983. Israeli leaders, such as Shimon Peres would question the soundness of the occupation while "reiterate[ing] his party's position that the IDF should withdraw from Lebanon as soon as possible since it [was] impossible to unify Lebanon by military means." The party in power would also underscore the limits of Israeli commitment when foreign minister, Yitzhak Shamir stated "all of us want to get out of Lebanon." There were other signs of discontent as well. For the first time in Israeli history, Israeli antiwar organizations developed and began to protest the government's policy. Even the IDF was not immune as one of its most highly decorated generals resigned in protest over the occupation.

5. Augustus R. Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 114.

6. Ibid.

7. George et al., 225.

8. Clifford Wright, "The Israeli War Machine in Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 12 (Winter 1983): 52.

9. Yezid Sayigh, "Israel's Military Performance in Lebanon, June 1982," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 13 (Fall 1983): 64.

10. Norton, 112. This also applied to the Palestinians, who had broken down into smaller bands of radicals following their eviction from Lebanon in August 1982.

11. Sayigh, 22. Using these advantages, PLO and Shi'ite guerrillas were able to execute nearly one guerrilla attack a day causing over 150 Israeli deaths. The Israeli response resulted in 15 killed or captured. It was the first time in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, that Israeli forces suffered worse than one-to-one casualties.

12. PLO figures from Sayigh, 62.

13. Shi'ite figures from Norton, 113.

14. Norton, 118. In November 1982, Israel began to isolate the South from the rest of Lebanon, making crossing into the Israeli-controlled sector an arduous and time-consuming process that seriously impeded commerce. Israel aggravated this by dumping agricultural produce in South Lebanon at prices that made even locally produced fruits and vegetables uncompetitive.

15. Neil C. Livingstone and David Halevy, *Inside the PLO* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1990), 163.

16. Shi'ite figures from Norton, 106.

17. Hanan Alon, *Countering Palestinian Terrorism in Israel: Toward A Policy Analysis of Countermeasures* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1980).

Chapter 7

Conclusions

Summary of Findings

This study has followed a trail that ended with the failure of Israeli air strikes to reduce the willingness of PLO and Shi'ite resistance fighters to execute attacks against the IDF. The analysis began by demonstrating that Israeli air strikes during this period supported a strategy of coercive diplomacy—an approach adopted when Israeli ground efforts proved unable to reduce the number of guerrilla attacks. In the course of this effort, the Israeli Air Force executed 28 air raids, all of which would have little effect on the decision calculus of the Palestinians and Shi'ite organizations in southern Lebanon. The study contends there were two reasons for this failure: First, the asymmetry of motivation favored the Shi'ites, which negated the effectiveness of air strikes as a carrot. Second, the air strikes were unable to create a realistic fear of escalation for the targets. This resulted from two factors. The first of these was the "Lebanese environment," which severely limited the ability of airpower to target the Shi'ite and PLO organizations. In this case, the combination of terrain perfectly suited to "hit and run" tactics;[1] a highly politicized population willing to provide aid and assistance to the resistance forces; "small, hard to penetrate, resistance cells"; and targets located in high-density areas, made it difficult to gather the intelligence information needed to execute air strikes. The second was the fact that when the IAF was able to execute air strikes, the damage inflicted by these strikes did not significantly increase the costs the Palestinians and Shi'ites had to pay for attacking the IDF.

In addition to the reasons why the strategy failed, this study also identifies factors that influenced the Israelis to select this strategy. Here the study concludes that the decision to minimize air attacks against the Shi'ites was an effort on the part of senior Israeli leaders to gain long-term security on their northern border by "signaling" their willingness to work with Nabih Berri and other Amal leaders. In addition to this, Israeli leaders were concerned that massive raids on organizations like Hizbollah would have little impact on their willingness to attack the IDF, or worse yet, would inspire them to even greater violence.

In light of these "political realities," the Israelis focused the air attacks on the radical Palestinian groups. This decision may have been influenced by the fact that the Israelis had an extensive intelligence "base" already built up on

the Palestinian organizations, and that PLO camps in the Bekka Valley were difficult to attack with ground power. Ultimately, the Israeli air strikes failed to affect the PLO.

Key Lessons

Clifford Wright would observe in an article published in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*: "The fact that a state-organized military apparatus of massive proportions waged war against a non-state guerrilla group was, as one American analyst put it, like 'the Wehrmacht against the Apaches'."[2] The irony of this observation is that the Palestinian and Shi'ite "Apaches" won. With no air force, no navy, and no mobile armor to support them, Palestinian and Lebanese fighters were successful in forcing one of the world's largest military powers to bend to their will. There is a valuable lesson in this for American policymakers who seem ever willing to use American airpower to deal with similar situations. Simply stated, that lesson is: Technology and size does not guarantee "coercive" victories.

Even though the Israelis possessed the most advanced aircraft in the world, capable of delivering an impressive array of technologically advanced weapons, these advantages meant little when it came to coercing the Palestinians and the Shi'ites. This was because Israeli strategy was based on the assumption that air strikes could inflict such pain on the target organizations that they would give in to Israeli demands rather than suffer at the hands of Israeli airmen. What the Israelis did not count on was the fact that the PLO and Shi'ites were already paying tremendous costs, and precision guided munitions and iron bombs could not add to these costs in any significant manner. In fact, as stated in chapter 3, even if all 28 air strikes had been directed at the Shi'ites (who were causing most of the damage against the IDF) it probably wouldn't have changed the outcome.

One factor which clouded Israeli thinking was an over reliance on technology. This was identified by one Israeli analyst, who conceded ". . . the tendency of the (Israel Defense Force) IDF to concentrate on technological solutions, at the expense of tactical originality that constituted its traditional forte, led to a relative decline in the quality of its performance against the Arabs."[3] This is an important lesson for the United States—a country which currently possesses the most technologically advanced air force in the world, and appears ever willing to use it to make recalcitrant nonstate actors conform to internationally established codes of behavior. Our experiences in Somalia and Bosnia appear to reinforce the IAF "lessons" from Lebanon—*that massive technological advantages do not translate into coercive victory*.

Given that many experts believe we will face more, not less, of these situations in the future, US policymakers must understand that the ability to destroy targets with surgical accuracy does not automatically translate into the ability to inflict "significant pain" on an adversary. We *must* be selective

in choosing where we employ our "shrinking" air forces, or risk squandering the few advantages we enjoy. The bottom line is that "high-tech aircraft and weapons" can *never* substitute for sound thinking and clear judgment. Recently, it seems as if the success airpower enjoyed in the Gulf War, and the feeling that "we have the technology so we must use it," have clouded our judgment about where we want to commit our air forces, and what they can do for us once they get there. Giving in to these urges, without first establishing a clearly defined strategy, is a recipe for disaster which allows "the Apaches" to win every time.

Notes

1. Clifford Wright, "The Israeli War Machine in Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 12 (Winter 1983): 52.
2. Ibid., 39.
3. Ibid.

Appendix

Data Analysis

Data Characterization

Data analyzed during this study fell into two categories:

1. air attacks by Israeli fixed-wing aircraft and helicopter aircraft against Palestinian and Shi'ite targets in southern Lebanon, and
2. attacks by Palestinian and Shi'ite resistance forces against Israeli Defense Force (IDF) ground troops in southern Lebanon. Weapons and tactics used in these attacks included

- hand grenades;
- bazookas;
- rocket propelled grenades;
- kaytusha rockets;
- shootings;
- ambushes;
- mine incidents which resulted in IDF casualties; and
- car bombs.

Data Sources

Data included in this study was derived from the following two sources.

1. The "Chronology of the Israeli War in Lebanon" was produced by the *Journal of Palestine Studies* to catalogue events which occurred during the Israeli invasion and subsequent occupation of Lebanon. This chronology is compiled by reviewing articles from over 80 publications, including the major US, European, Israeli and Arab English-language press. The data gathered for this study was contained in sequential editions of the *Journal of Palestine Studies* from Summer/Fall 1982 up to Fall 1985.
2. The *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)* is compiled by reviewing articles from a variety of publications, including the major US, European, Israeli and Arab English-language press. The data gathered for this study was contained in sequential editions of the Middle East section of the *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* between 30 October 1982 and 30 June 1985.

Methodology

All attacks were recorded by date in a database using Microsoft Excel 5. These attacks were grouped into "IAF Air Attacks" and "Palestinian/Shi'ite Guerrilla Attacks." The number of attacks were totaled using the Excel "Countif" formula.

Table 5:

All IAF air attacks were indexed by date of attack, the organization they were directed against, the location of the attack, the type of attack (retaliation or counterforce), and the asset used. An air attack was classified as a "retaliation" attack when a representative of the Israeli government publicly claimed that the attack was executed in response to, or in retaliation of, an attack by Palestinian or Lebanese resistance forces against IDF troops in southern Lebanon. Attacks not labeled as retaliation were classified as "counterforce."

Tables 1–3:

IAF air attacks were then grouped by month of occurrence into three general categories:

1. Shi'ite: attacks directed against Shi'ite organizations;
2. Specified Palestinians: attacks in which it was possible (based on the information in the two data sources) to determine the specific Palestinian organization being targeted; and
3. Unspecified Palestinian: attacks in which it was possible to determine (based on the information in the two data sources) that a Palestinian organization was the target of the attack, but it was not possible to determine the specific organization.

Tables 4–6:

These tables present the number of "IAF Air Attacks" and the number of "Palestinian/Shi'ite Guerrilla Attacks" which occurred in each month between 1 January 1983 and 30 June 1985.

Uncertainties

The uncertainties involved in the investigation originate from two sources. First, most of the source literature is distinctly partisan. This results not only in differing interpretations of the significance of events, but at times, in disputes as to whether specific events actually occurred or not. Second, as the

Middle East conflict remains an active issue, much of the source material remains the subject of governmental or individual censorship. This problem is particularly significant with regard to military interactions.

Because of this fact the author was not allowed access to material which would have made the study more comprehensive. This was the case for source material requested from Israel, the US State Department, and the RAND Corporation. Inquiries to the Israeli embassy about Israeli Air Force flight records, planning materials, and Israeli defense force casualty figures did not evoke a positive response. Similar requests to the US State Department and to RAND regarding the number of Middle East terrorist attacks during this period and information regarding counterterrorist policies, also met with negative responses.

In lieu of these central sources, the author constructed a set of data representing the military interactions between Israel and the Lebanese and Palestinian forces by using the *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)* and the "Chronology of the Israeli War in Lebanon and the Israeli Palestine Conflict" produced by the *Journal of Palestine Studies (JPS)*. These two sources comb unclassified sources (newspapers, magazines, etc.) to create a daily record of significant events occurring in the Middle East. Because of source limitations involved with *FBIS* and *JPS* this data set is incomplete.

This is especially true in regard to the number of attacks against IDF and Israeli personnel. All sources, including *FBIS* and *JPS* are to a large extent dependent upon the whims of the nations involved for their information. Thus, minor events, particularly those not involving casualties, could or could not be reported depending upon the then current wishes of the pertinent governments and organizations. As a result, one encounters a phenomena associated with conditions of unstable equilibrium. That is, as hostilities increase, each nation/organization tends to report a larger fraction of minor incidents, thus making hostilities appear to increase at an even greater rate. This thesis attempted to alleviate that problem by reporting only those incidents in which casualties were sustained. The assumption was made that casualty figures are less vulnerable to reporting variability than simple incident frequencies. The fact that casualties are sustained indicates a minimum level of incident seriousness which generally leads to inclusion of the event in the printed news, media, and consequently in the data set. In all cases, substantial efforts have been made to uncover all views on issuers for which uncertainties exist and particular efforts have been extended to avoid any implications of partisanship in the analysis.

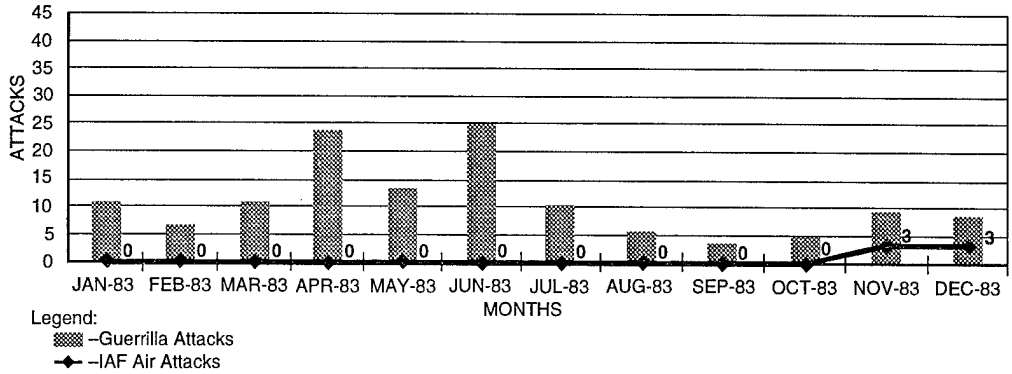
Table 5

IAF Air Attacks

Date	Target	Location	Type of Attack	Asset Used
1. 4 Nov 83	PFLP HQ	Aley, Bhamdoun, & Sofar	Reprisal (Bombing of IDF HQ, Tyre)	Aircraft
2. 16 Nov 83	Islamic Amal & Hizbollah Training Camps, Ammo Dump	Nabih Chit (near Baalbek)	Reprisal (Bombing of IDF HQ, Tyre)	Aircraft
3. 20 Nov 83	Sa'iqa, Syrian Ba'ath Party, PFLP-GC Guerrilla Bases	Sofar, Falougha, & Bhamdoun	Counterforce	Aircraft
4. 6 Dec 83	DFLP Bases	Near Beirut	Reprisal (IDF soldier killed in South Lebanon)	Aircraft
5. 19 Dec 83	Palestinian Terrorist Base	South Lebanon	Counterforce	Aircraft
6. 21 Dec 83	Iran-Backed Terrorist Base	South Lebanon	Counterforce	Aircraft
7. 3 Jan 84	PLO Command Ctr	Bhamdoun	Counterforce	Aircraft
8. 4 Jan 84	PLO Terrorist Base	Baalbek	Counterforce	Aircraft
9. 10 Feb 84	PLO Terrorist Base	Bhamdoun, Mansuriya, Baalchmay	Reprisal	Aircraft
10. 19 Feb 84	PLO Terrorist Base	Bhamdoun, Mansurya, Baalchmay	Counterforce	Aircraft
11. 21 Feb 84	PLO Terrorist Base	Bhamdoun, Ain al-Jadida, Bikh Shtay & Mansuriya	Counterforce	Aircraft
12. 23 Feb 84	PLO Terrorist Base	Bhamdoun & Mansuriya, Rweisat	Counterforce	Aircraft
13. 5 Mar 84	PLO Terrorist Base	Aly	Counterforce	Aircraft
14. 7 Apr 84	PLO Terrorist Base	Bhamdoun	Counterforce	Aircraft
15. 21 May 84	Shi'ite Villages	Janta & Deir al-Ghazal	Counterforce	Aircraft
16. 24 May 84	PFLP	Bar Elias	Counterforce	Aircraft
17. 28 Jun 84	PLO Terrorist Base	Nahr Island (near Tripoli)	Counterforce	Aircraft
18. 1 Aug 84	PLO Terrorist Camp	Nahr al-Bared	Counterforce	Helicopters & Aircraft
19. 16 Aug 84	PFLP-GC	Bar Elias	Counterforce	Aircraft
20. 28 Aug 84	PFLP	Majdal Anjar	Counterforce	Aircraft
21. 10 Sep 84	DFLP Base	Bhamdoun	Counterforce	Aircraft
22. 27 Nov 84	DFLP Base	Qubb Elias	Counterforce	Aircraft
23. 9 Jan 85	Abu Moussa & Popular Struggle Front Bases	Mar Elias & al-Marj	Counterforce	Aircraft
24. 10 Feb 85	DFLP Base	Ta'lbaya	Counterforce	Aircraft
25. 11 Feb 85	Abu Moussa HQ	Ta'lbaya	Counterforce	Aircraft
26. 13 Mar 85	As'iqa Base	Bar Elias	Counterforce	Aircraft
27. 9 Apr 85	Popular Struggle Front Base	Shamlan	Counterforce	Aircraft
28. 17 Apr 85	DFLP Base	Bar Elias	Counterforce	Aircraft

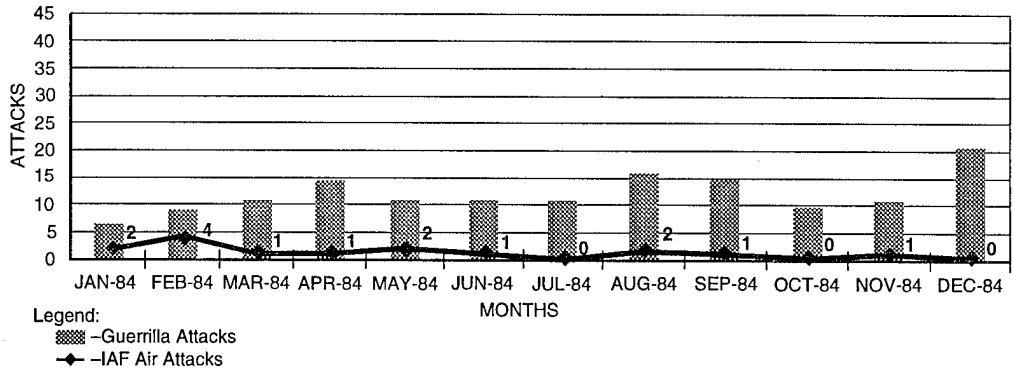
Source: Lt Col Kenneth C. Schow, Jr., 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan AB, Korea, June 1994.

Table 6
1983 IAF Attacks versus Palestinian/Shi'ite Guerrilla Attacks



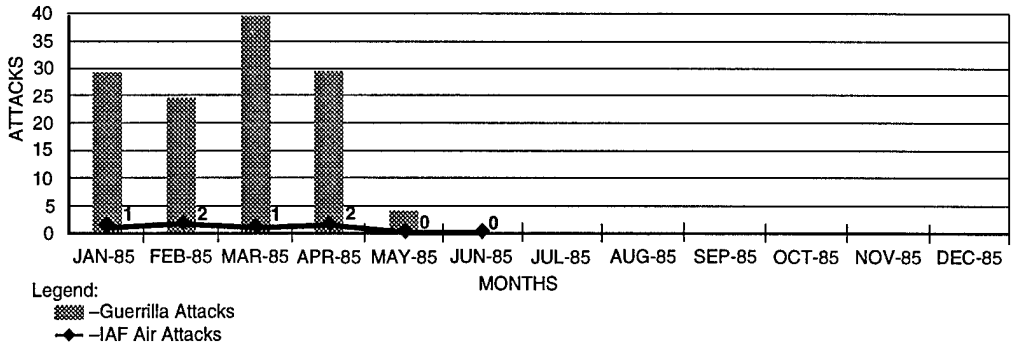
Source: Lt Col Kenneth C. Schow, Jr., 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan AB, Korea, June 1994.

Table 7
1984 IAF Attacks versus Palestinian/Shi'ite Guerrilla Attacks



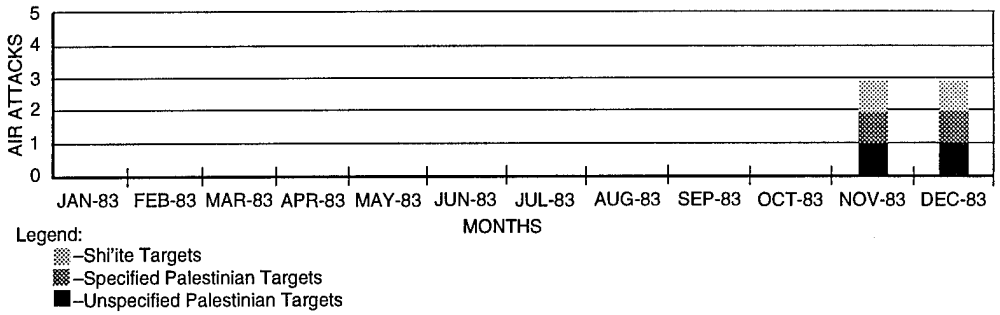
Source: Lt Col Kenneth C. Schow, Jr., 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan AB, Korea, June 1994.

Table 8
1985 IAF Attacks versus Palestinian/Shi'ite Guerrilla Attacks



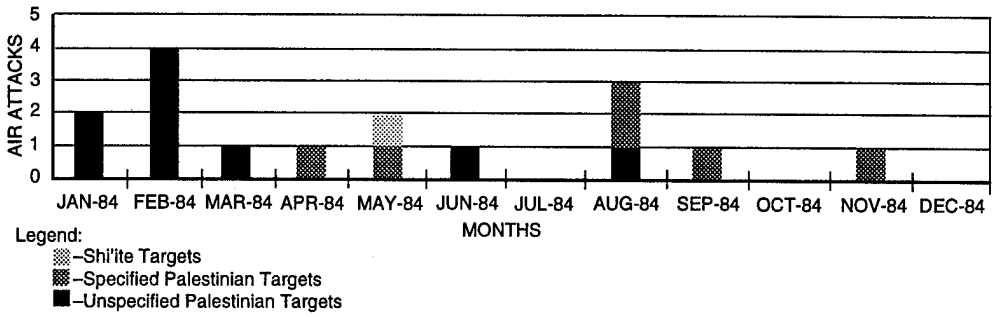
Source: Lt Col Kenneth C. Schow, Jr., 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan AB, Korea, June 1994.

Table 9
1983 IAF Attacks (Target Breakdown)



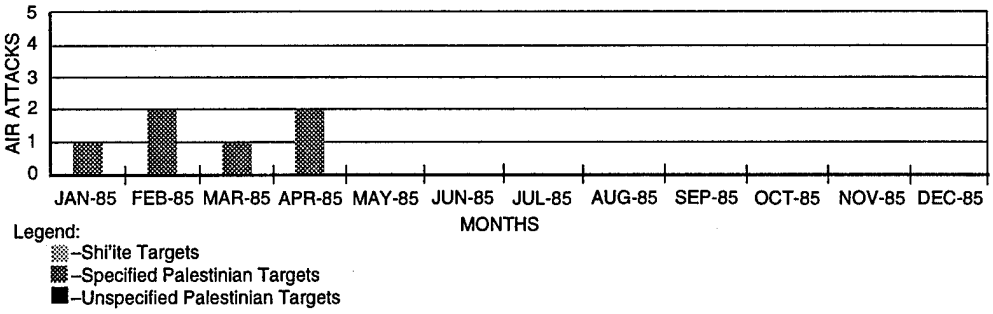
Source: Lt Col Kenneth C. Schow, Jr., 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan AB, Korea, June 1994.

Table 10
1984 IAF Attacks (Target Breakdown)



Source: Lt Col Kenneth C. Schow, Jr., 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan AB, Korea, June 1994.

Table 11
1985 IAF Attacks (Target Breakdown)



Source: Lt Col Kenneth C. Schow, Jr., 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan AB, Korea, June 1994.

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