How Great Nations Can Win Small Wars

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We live today in an age of small wars.[1] In contrast to the last World War, which ended six decades ago and encompassed dozens of nations, spanning continents and seas, the current age is characterized by a different kind of armed conflict. The primary enemy confronting countries is no longer other countries, but guerilla armies and terrorist organizations—armed groups whose power is measured not by the amount of force they can bring to the battlefield or by the quality of their weapons, but by their ability to wear down the other side and break its will to continue fighting.

Because of the nature of unconventional warfare, many analysts believe that in a conflict between a state and a terrorist or guerilla force, the state, with its larger and better-equipped military, is actually the weaker side. U.S. Army Lt.-Col. Robert Cassidy, an expert in counter-insurgency warfare, writes that "big powers do not necessarily lose small wars; they simply fail to win them…. In the absence of a threat to survival, the big powers' failure to quickly and decisively attain their strategic aim causes them to lose domestic support…. The war for the indigenous insurgents is total but it is inherently limited for the great power. This is because the insurgents pose no direct threat to the great power's survival."[2] The militarily weaker side, says Cassidy, hopes to break the cohesiveness of the political consensus

backing the enemy's war effort while exploiting the fact that "big powers are less tolerant of casualties in small wars than their opponents are."[3] Gil Merom of Tel Aviv University points out that the weaker side's advantage is that it "tends to involve potential catastrophic consequences, while victory promises an ultimate reward: Independence."[4] By contrast, a nation usually does not enjoy the benefits of such unanimity of purpose and tolerance for casualties, and thus sooner or later will abandon the struggle, as in the case of the Soviets after many years of war in Afghanistan.[5]

According to this widely held view, in a protracted conflict against a weaker but more determined opponent, the likelihood that a nation will lose is further increased when it is a democracy. Whereas non-democratic countries will often use extreme force against the weaker side even to the point of annihilating it or transferring or expelling entire populations, democratic countries, according to Merom, "are restricted by their domestic structure," which is why "they find it extremely difficult to escalate the level of violence and brutality to that which can secure victory."[6] According to this view, the weakness of democracy stems from the influence of public opinion on the decisions of political leaders: The public generally frowns upon the use of overly violent means, and it does not have the patience for prolonged fighting. "The interaction of sensitivity to casualties, repugnance to brutal military behavior, and commitment to democratic life,"[7] says Merom, often leads democracies into a situation where they cannot or will not use enough force to ensure victory. By contrast, countries that are "less liberal and less democratic can be expected to encounter fewer and lesser domestic obstacles … when they fight brutally small wars."[8]

For those reasons, diplomats and military strategists make grim assessments about a democracy's chances of winning a military struggle against guerilla forces. "The guerilla wins if he does not lose," said Henry Kissinger. "The conventional army loses if it does not win."[9] Lieutenant-General Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, when he was the chief of staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, announced that "it is impossible to defeat a guerilla."[10] This opinion has become so prevalent in Israel that some of today's military commanders

utterly deny that there is even such a thing as victory in small wars. For example, at the end of 2003, Brigadier-General Eival Gilady, former head of the Strategic Planning Division of the General Staff, said: "When I got this post I saw on plans the words 'to achieve decisive victory against the Palestinians.' I asked myself … what kind of nonsense is this? Who exactly are we subduing? What does it mean to achieve decisive victory? We tried to find substitutes for 'decisive.' At first I spoke of an 'impression of victory,' a sort of semblance."[11] As Major-General Yaakov Or, coordinator of government activities in the territories, declared several years ago, "there is no decisive military answer to popular national conflicts."[12]

It seems obvious that if this view is correct, the implications for both Israel and the United States will be profound indeed, as each country decides whether to continue allocating resources and sacrificing lives in small wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, or the Palestinian Authority. But is it correct? Are democratic countries always fated to end up the loser against guerilla or terrorist forces, exhausted and lacking the will to continue fighting? If we take a look at several such conflicts from the last fifty years, the reverse seems to be the case: Not only have democracies been willing to escalate the violence of their tactics, they have also displayed an enormous capacity for seeing a long struggle through to victory.[13] And in those cases where democracies in the end turned in defeat—such as France in Algeria or the United States in Vietnam—it was not the broader public but the upper echelons of leadership that determined the outcome. Contrary to the conventional wisdom among experts, democratic citizens do not shrink from a prolonged conflict if they are convinced that the fight is a just one. When they are convinced, their stamina is often far greater than that of their leaders.

On the whole, it is worth living under democratic regimes, even if only for the simple reason that they do not kill their citizens.[14] For the most part, those living in liberal democracies need not fear persecution, internal purges, and political assassinations. Moreover, the openness and

tolerance of democracies is evident in their foreign policies, especially in their attitude toward countries that also cherish political freedom. It is widely observed that democracies usually do not go to war against each other.

However, when democratic countries sense danger or even the possibility that their interests could be harmed, they are capable of acting decisively against their enemies and even starting full-scale wars. For example, Israel has twice instigated hostilities when it sensed an immediate danger to its existence—on the eve of the Six Day War, and eleven years earlier against Egypt in the Sinai Campaign. Britain declared war on Argentina in 1982 over the strategically unimportant Falkland Islands, and in 2001 the United States launched an all-out war in Afghanistan, despite the distance, inhospitable terrain, and an enemy that had succeeded in thwarting the Soviet invasion a decade earlier. Once a democratic country starts a war, it can escalate the violence to an extremely high level; it is enough to recall that the only country ever to use a nuclear weapon—the United States during World War II—was a democracy. During the same war, Allied forces struck at Germany and Japan with widespread bombing campaigns that claimed vast civilian casualties and reduced large cities such as Dresden and Tokyo to rubble.[15]

The willingness of democracies to use massive violence is evident not just in conflicts that threaten a nation's survival. During the Vietnam War, the American military dropped seven million tons of bombs—three and a half times what it dropped on Germany during World War II, resulting in at least 65,000 North Vietnamese civilian deaths between 1964 and 1972.[16] During the 1954-1962 war in Algeria, France lost approximately 20,000 soldiers and civilians, but losses among the rebels and the Muslim Algerian population totaled at least 300,000, and some say they were closer to one million.[17]

While democratic countries thus do not hesitate to exert massive force on the battlefield, moreover, it is worth noting that decidedly totalitarian countries, which have little compunction about using the most extreme measures, have sometimes found it equally difficult to defeat enemies many

times weaker than them. That is the lesson the Nazis learned in Yugoslavia, for example, as did the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Yet there are examples of rebellions and guerilla wars that have been successfully quelled by democratic and quasi-democratic states. The British fought from 1948 to 1960 against guerilla forces in Malaya and won, and the war conducted by the Sultan of Oman, with the support of Western democracies, against communist guerillas between 1962 and 1976 also ended successfully, and with far fewer civilian casualties than those recorded in Algeria and Vietnam, in both absolute and relative terms.[18]

Probably the best example of how a democracy successfully defeated an insurgency in a protracted conflict can be seen in the way Britain handled its conflict with the Irish Republican Army (IRA). The IRA's goal was to unify Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as a sovereign nation independent of the United Kingdom. The final and most violent outbreak of the dispute started in 1969 and was triggered by several factors, including the Protestant British government's discrimination against Catholics. The Provisional IRA and other radical Catholic groups launched a terrorist campaign against the British forces and Protestants, and at first the British methods, designed around fighting insurgents in the colonies, failed against urban insurgents.[19] Public opinion and political considerations prevented the British from employing against the Irish methods they had used against the colonies—for example, burning down villages and transferring their residents to other areas, or wholesale administrative detention.[20] The blatant discrimination practiced by the British army only helped undermine its cause and push many Catholics into the arms of the IRA. "Bloody Sunday," in January 1972, in which British soldiers killed fourteen unarmed Catholic demonstrators, increased support for the IRA and inspired the group to escalate its activities.[21] In the following years, the policies of successive British governments toward the organization were changed, as reforms were instituted and failed.[22] Politicians refrained for a long time from using the words "war" or "civil war" in the context of Ireland (and by doing

so they hurt their chance of enlisting public support).[23] Human rights violations committed by Britain in Northern Ireland were internationally condemned. Starting in the late 1970s, the separatists achieved a number of resounding successes, such as the 1979 assassination of Lord Mountbatten, a war hero and a member of the English royal family, a bombing in Brighton that narrowly missed the entire British government, several bombings in central London, and a mortar fired at the prime minister's official residence.

The death toll from 1972-1974, at the height of the first outbreak of violence, was 297 members of the security forces and 597 civilians.[24] Between March 1973 and February 1977, 276 IRA bombs exploded in Britain, and 14 shootings were carried out by Republican organizations.[25] In later years, the Irish Republicans were not idle; between 1984 and 1986, they were responsible for no fewer than 521 bombings throughout the United Kingdom,[26] and in the early 1990s the organization launched a bombing campaign in London that included, among other attacks, firing mortars at the prime minister's official residence and detonating explosive-laden trucks in the Baltic Exchange and the NatWest Bank tower, which together caused enormous economic damage.[27] In 1977, Seamus Twomey, an IRA leader, said: "By hitting Mayfair restaurants, we were hitting the type of person that could bring pressure to bear on the British government."[28] The IRA violence was carefully directed at convincing British public opinion to favor giving up Northern Ireland.

At the height of the fighting, it was certainly possible to believe that the Irish separatists had a good chance of achieving their objective. Early in the conflict, some high-level members of the British government advocated acquiescence to the IRA. In a 1972 memo he wrote to the British prime minister and a number of senior members of the government, the British Foreign Minister Alex Douglas-Hume argued:

> The real British interest would I think be served best by pushing them [the Irish] towards a United Ireland rather than tying them closer to the United

Kingdom. Our own parliamentary history is one long story of trouble with the Irish.[29]

At certain stages of the conflict, "polls demonstrated clearly that the majority of the British electorate would be glad to relinquish any claim to Northern Ireland," one scholar asserted.[30] Ostensibly, the outcome should have been clear: A British surrender to IRA demands.

But in the end, it was the IRA that announced a ceasefire. In 1994 it abandoned armed struggle, and not because it had achieved its ends. By the end of the 1980s, the IRA was an army on the run, and its leaders began to face the reality that they could not achieve their ends by violent means. The British honed their methods and were hitting the IRA hard, while Protestant counter-terror groups, which between 1989 and 1993 killed at least 164 Catholics—among them 20 members of the IRA—demonstrated to the IRA and to the Catholic community as a whole that their struggle was not paying off.[31] Equally discouraging to the IRA was the fact that even though the British from time to time negotiated with IRA representatives and were prepared for certain reforms, they never gave any indication that they would consider surrender. Martin Mansergh, an Irish adviser who participated in the negotiations leading to the 1994 ceasefire, said that "while I do not agree that violence has never had any political effect, I see absolutely no evidence from our dealings with the British government, or indeed its dealings with anyone else, that it was materially swayed by the bombings in the city of London."[32] Even when many British citizens, perhaps even most of them, were prepared to make concessions in Northern Ireland or even give it up, "successive British governments had made it clear that they would not and could not give way to 'terrorism'"[33]—and the British public did not force its government to do so.

In the 1998 Good Friday agreement, the IRA leaders adopted "a settlement that only a few years ago would have been regarded as treason." They succeeded in achieving concessions that reduced Protestant discrimination, but the accord was nonetheless "a defeat for Irish republicanism."[34] After

more than 25 years of fighting and 3,600 dead,[35] the British demonstrated that a guerilla force does not always "win when it does not lose." On July 28, 2005, the IRA announced its decision fully to abandon armed struggle in favor of developing "purely political and democratic programs."[36] Northern Ireland is still part of Britain. The British government did not relent, and the public did not force it to give in to pressure and withdraw.[37]

Another meaningful example of a democracy defeating an unconventional enemy is the IDF's confrontation with terrorists in the Gaza Strip between 1967 and 1973. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan maintained a policy of non-intervention toward the 316,000 Gaza inhabitants on the grounds that they should be left to manage their own affairs and that an improvement in their economic condition would help prevent terrorism: "You think twice about helping terrorists when your belly is full," he quipped. The result of this hands-off approach was a sharp increase in the number of terrorist attacks in the Gaza Strip. Terrorist groups took advantage of the unmonitored environment and organized and armed themselves with the declared intention of bringing about results similar to those that had been achieved in Algeria and were going to be achieved, as they saw it, in Vietnam.[38] The significant improvements in medical services, education, and economic conditions in the Gaza Strip between 1968 and 1971 not only failed to bring about a more peaceful atmosphere; they actually helped terrorist organizations operate more freely.[39] The situation reached a point where Palestinians thought to be collaborating with Israel were publicly executed, and residents actively helped terrorists evade capture by the IDF. Israeli citizens began to detour around Gaza on their way to Sinai, and Palestinians, fearful of the terror organizations' revenge, were afraid to work in Israel. In 1970 alone, terrorists murdered 128 Arabs and 15 Jews, injuring 580 Arabs and 120 Jews.[40] Only in early 1971, after a Palestinian terrorist threw a grenade at a parked Israeli car, killing two Jewish children—an attack that shocked the nation—did Israel change its policy.

IDF forces poured into the Gaza Strip and adopted a "carrot and stick" policy: Rewards for areas and individuals that refused to assist the terrorists,

and destruction of the homes of collaborators and their expulsion, insofar as it could be done within the limits of international law.[41] Development work started and stopped according to the security situation in a particular area, so that the residents had a stake in keeping things quiet. Emphasis was put on the economic improvement of trouble-free areas and protecting workers with jobs in Israel. Identity cards were changed to prevent forgeries, the behavior of soldiers was carefully scrutinized, and Palestinian complaints about unbecoming behavior on the part of the IDF were dealt with promptly.[42] A military approach was adopted that the commander, Ariel Sharon, described as "anti-terrorist guerilla warfare."[43] Large and fixed patrols were replaced with small, fast-acting squads that were in charge of specific areas and well acquainted with their residents. Special operations were designed to strike at the terrorists and undermine their control over the population. The refugee camps were thinned out, roads were built through them, and lighting was installed.[44] At the same time, a massive information campaign was undertaken to win the cooperation of the civilian population, ranging from explanations of the IDF's actions to the screening of Arabic-language films.

The IDF's approach yielded impressive results. By the end of 1971, one of the most wanted terrorists, Ziad al-Husseini, was already complaining that "nobody will agree to set up bases for us in the area where we operate. The people are afraid and are beginning to let us down."[45] Moreover, the pacification of Gaza was accomplished with a remarkably low cost in innocent lives. For example, the Shaked commando unit, which was responsible for catching most of the wanted Palestinians, killed only one innocent person, an elderly deaf man who did not hear the soldiers' warning.[46] Some 180 guerillas were killed, around two thousand were captured and imprisoned, and the number of wanted fugitives was reduced to almost zero.[47] The terrorists who had operated so freely had moved out of the Gaza Strip completely by 1972, without any political or other gain for the Palestinians. The Gaza Strip was quiet for fifteen years.[48]

Alongside these unambiguous democratic successes in Northern Ireland and Gaza, the case of Russia—less than fully "democratic" yet in many ways

similar to democratic states in ways that are relevant for the debate—in the second Chechen war offers an additional example of how public resolve can affect the outcome in a small war. In post-communist Russia there was initially little public support for the first Chechen war, which erupted in 1994 and lasted twenty months. Insubordination in the Russian military was pervasive, a number of generals resigned or were dismissed because of their opposition to the war, and at certain stages only about a tenth of the Russian public was in favor of continuing it. When the war ended in a Chechen victory, the two sides signed a five-year interim peace agreement.[49]

The conflict erupted again in late summer 1999. Several months earlier, the Russian public was divided on the Chechen question, with 41 percent in favor of allowing the Chechens independence, and a slightly larger percentage against. The conventional wisdom holds that in such a situation, the Russian public could be convinced to favor granting independence to the breakaway republic by being subjected to a campaign of violence or terrorism.

As early as January 2000—a few months into the conflict—the BBC was quick to announce that Russians were "losing faith in the Chechen war."[50] But in spite of broad support, in theory, for negotiation,[51] and in spite of the majority belief that the Russian government could not or did not want to stabilize the situation in Chechnya,[52] and even though the number of Russian dead had already reached somewhere between ten and fifteen thousand—a level four to six times greater than during the war in Afghanistan, relative to population size[53]—despite all this, Russians re-elected Vladimir Putin twice after the beginning of the war: First in 2000, and then in 2004 with a decisive majority of 71 percent, after four years of bitter fighting.[54]

Considering the broad-based opposition in Russia to the first Chechen war, it is difficult to explain the Russian support for the second war only by the absence of democracy or the control Putin's regime had over the media. Opinion polls show that the Russian public does not accept as gospel everything that Putin tells them about Chechnya.[55] The explanation for the marked difference in support for the two Chechen wars seems to reside in other factors, such as differences in leadership and objectives.

What Putin offered his people was a consistent, clear message: The war in Chechnya was not being fought for economic reasons, such as control over oil resources. It was a defensive war, a struggle of Russia against Islamic terrorism. This description of the war has been accepted by a Russian public that now sees the conflict as a just war.[56] Public support for the war has only increased following Putin's various pronouncements on the subject, such as the speech he delivered after the terrorist attack in Beslan in September 2004, in which hundreds of schoolchildren were slaughtered. Putin, like President Johnson's speech after the Tet Offensive in 1968 (about which more further on), expressed a willingness to end the war peacefully, but in contrast with the American president, his rhetoric was aggressive and hawkish:

> We demonstrated weakness, and the weak are beaten.… This is a challenge to all of Russia…. Terrorists think that they are stronger, that they will be able to intimidate us, to paralyze our will, to erode our society. It seems that we have a choice: to resist or to cave in…. to give up and allow them to destroy and to take Russia apart, in hope that eventually they would leave us alone…. I am convinced that in fact we do not have any choice…. We are dealing… with total and full-scale war.… Such wars do not end quickly, in these conditions, we simply cannot, we should not, live as carelessly as before…. Terrorists meet the most effective rebuff where they confront not only the power of the state but also an organized and united civil society…. We have to be together. Only thus we shall defeat the enemy.[57]

Putin did not offer to compromise and did not promise his citizens an easy time; he demanded from them inner strength, unity, and a willingness to continue the struggle. Forty-eight percent of Russians endorsed the president's speech; only 9 percent opposed it, some of them probably because of Russia's inept handling of the crisis, and others due to their shock at the sight of so many murdered children. Fully 61 percent of Russians continued supporting Putin's policies, while only 16 percent opposed them.[58] After five years of Putin's war leadership, Russian public opinion had only hardened against allowing Chechnya to secede: Just 20 percent of the Russian public

favored granting independence, whereas 64 percent supported a solution that would keep Chechnya part of Russia.[59] The public was convinced that Russia's small war was important enough to continue,[60] in no small part due to Putin's ability to explain it clearly to Russian citizens.

What emerges from the cases of Northern Ireland, Gaza, and the second Chechen war is that even in the case of a prolonged, brutal, and bitter campaign of terror, victory is a possible thing. But if democracies such as the United Kingdom and Israel, or quasi-democracies like Russia, have successfully defeated guerillas in small wars, why in other cases have they so often failed?

The reason militarily superior democracies suffer defeats at the hands of weaker enemies lies not in the level of force they are willing to exert, nor in the weakness of the popular will, but somewhere else. A closer look at three important cases—the French war in Algeria, the American war in Vietnam, and Israel's war in southern Lebanon—reveals that the Achilles' heel of those powerful democracies was not a lack of staying power on the part of the public, but instead, enfeebled decision-making on the part of their leaders.

In 1954, a widespread rebellion broke out in Algeria, which had been a French colony since 1830. The Algerians demanded that their French rulers leave the country and allow its independence. French governments tried to settle the dispute in different ways, but failed. In 1958, Charles de Gaulle, ex-general and hero of the Second World War, was elected president on a platform of "French Algeria." In a public opinion poll conducted in September 1958, about 80 percent of French voters supported de Gaulle's stance against Algerian independence. Moreover, de Gaulle's position was supported by an absolute majority of Algerian Muslims.[61] French public opinion was clearly against withdrawal and was even opposed to compromise; the feeling was that the conflict was worth the cost.[62]

However, in September 1959 de Gaulle changed his mind and declared publicly that Algeria had a right to self-determination.[63] The war had provoked opposition from the French public from the very outset, but before de Gaulle's apostasy, support for withdrawal had not succeeded in becoming the dominant public view.[64] In fact, most of the mass demonstrations and protests against the war occurred after the president's declaration, as support for the war was quickly dissipating. The famous "Manifesto of the 121," in which intellectuals called for insubordination in Algeria, was published in 1960, the year following de Gaulle's about-face. François Maspéro, one of its signatories, declared in the preface to the 1961 edition of the Manifesto that 1960 had been the "turning point" in the French people's attitude toward the war.[65] In 1961, a majority of the French public—in a similar percentage to those who had expressed the opposite opinion three years earlier—voted for separation from Algeria, even though the French military had succeeded in quelling the rebellion. The French followed their president and reversed their support for the war, not because of escalating violence, but because of his announcement that there was nothing to be gained from fighting and that Algeria should be "Algerian."[66]

The American war in Vietnam presents another striking example of how public opinion can be shaped by the pronouncements of democratic leaders. There are many who believe that the war came to an end because of the widespread protest against it and negative press coverage.[67] Yet a closer look at the course of events shows that it was the political leadership, not public opinion, that was first to falter in the face of heavy fighting.

As in the case of Algeria, there was no shortage of Americans who opposed the war from the outset and expressed their views in various ways, such as protest songs[68] and the march on the Pentagon in October 1967.[69] But protests did not lead to any decisive change in American public opinion or in the attitude of politicians. In December 1967, the commander of American forces in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, made a speech to Congress and was applauded from both sides of the aisle. Public

support for the war and for the president gradually fell in comparison to the beginning of the war, but at the end of 1967 and the beginning of 1968, a clear majority of Americans still felt that Westmoreland's performance was satisfactory, the war was being properly managed, and that it even should be escalated.[70]

In early 1968, broad support for the war continued despite mixed messages coming out of the White House.[71] Previously, Johnson had refrained from calling the conflict a war, and regularly spread easily refutable disinformation about it.[72] Moreover, as scholar Dale Walton points out, the American government "offered no satisfying 'one paragraph' (let alone a one-line bumper sticker) explanation of why the effort in Vietnam was important to U.S. national interests."[73] In France it had at least been possible to sum up the objective of the war in two words: "French Algeria." In 1968, British general Robert Thompson, an expert in counterinsurgency warfare,[74] said that he had asked many Americans why the United States was fighting in Vietnam, but did not receive one clear answer. "The replies," he said, "varied from containing China, preventing aggression and defeating the Vietcong to giving the people of South Vietnam a free choice."[75] And yet, despite the fact that three years of war in Vietnam had cost the lives of more than fifteen thousand Americans, there was twice as much support for the war at the beginning of 1968 as there was opposition to it.

Many have argued that support for the war began to dwindle after the Tet Offensive at the end of January 1968, shortly after the American government and military commanders had made statements about the end of the war being close at hand. In a wide-ranging attack, North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces took the American and South Vietnamese armies by surprise. Even though the attacks were repulsed everywhere but Hue City, the magnitude of the assault surprised the American press and public[76] such that the Tet Offensive has come to be seen by many as the turning point of the war.[77]

After the Tet Offensive, there was a noticeable change in the way battles were covered on television. Even though the status of the war and the

balance of forces remained more or less unchanged, fewer battles were reported as victories, slightly more were reported as defeats, and far more as draws.[78] The administration's statements about the war were treated with more skepticism: General Westmoreland was presented as a liar or deluded optimist, and President Johnson and his administration came under intense criticism. Arguably the final blow to America's hopes of success in Vietnam was dealt by the legendary CBS Evening News anchor Walter Cronkite, at the time often referred to as "the most trusted man in America." When Cronkite visited Vietnam, he was shocked to see the mass graves of thousands of citizens murdered by North Vietnamese forces in Hue City during the Tet Offensive, and said that he would do everything he could to put an end to the war. On February 27, 1968, in one of the most famous broadcasts in the history of American television, Cronkite announced to his millions of viewers:

> To say that we are closer to victory today is to believe, in the face of the evidence, the optimists who have been wrong in the past. To suggest we are on the edge of defeat is to yield to unreasonable pessimism. To say that we are mired in stalemate seems the only realistic, yet unsatisfactory, conclusion.[79]

Johnson was deeply affected by Cronkite's statement. It is said that after the broadcast he remarked to his press secretary, "If I've lost Walter Cronkite, I've lost Middle America."[80] David Halberstam of the *New York Times* later claimed that "The Vietnam War was declared over by a television anchorman."[81]

Johnson's poor showing two weeks later in the New Hampshire primary against an anti-war challenger further demoralized him.[82] On March 22 he met with his "Wise Men," as he called his foreign policy advisers. Most of them, heavily influenced by the media, took a pessimistic line. "As I walked back to my office," Johnson later wrote, "I was turning over in my mind the opinions I had just heard and what these reactions meant as a reflection of broader opinion…. If they had been so deeply influenced by the

reports of the Tet Offensive, what must the average citizen in the country be thinking?"[83] That same day the president announced that Westmoreland would end his tour of duty in Vietnam by June 1968. In his famous speech of March 31, 1968, in which he announced he would not seek re-election, Johnson announced an end to the bombing of North Vietnam and expressed his hope that the government of North Vietnam would cease "its efforts to achieve a military victory." The word "victory" was mentioned only twice in the forty-five minute speech, and even then only regarding North Vietnam's military aspirations. "If they do mount another round of heavy attacks," said Johnson, "they will not succeed in destroying the fighting power of South Vietnam and its allies.… Many men… will be lost… and the war will go on. There is no need for this to be so. There is no need to delay the talks that could bring an end to this long and this bloody war."[84]

Johnson made no mention whatsoever of the possibility of an American victory. He did not tell the public what he wrote some time later in his memoirs—that the Tet Offensive had been "the most disastrous Communist defeat of the war in Vietnam."[85] He had claimed in his speech that the Tet Offensive had "failed to achieve its principal objectives," but added that "the Communists may renew their attack any day."[86] It was difficult not to see Johnson's speech as an attempt to extricate the United States from involvement in Vietnam. After all, if the president had thought that victory was imminent, why would he have proposed saving the North Vietnamese from defeat? Why would he have refused to send more troops to Vietnam or replaced Westmoreland at such a sensitive moment?

Taking a cue from Johnson's gloomy view of the war, none of the 1968 presidential candidates talked anymore about victory in Vietnam. Even Richard Nixon, the Republican who went on to win the presidency and had criticized the administration after the Tet Offensive for not escalating the war, spoke about "peace with honor." Even though it would be four years before America got out of Vietnam, in 1968 it was clear that the government was looking for a way to extricate the United States from a perceived morass.

What led to what? Did a change in public opinion affect the government's position? What happened was in fact precisely the opposite. The Tet Offensive at first actually strengthened the hawks and weakened the doves; a great majority of the public favored escalating the war and opposed the cessation of bombing in North Vietnam. Even Cronkite's famous newscast editorial did not have an immediate effect on the public. At the end of February 1968, the percentage of those supporting the war was identical to the percentage supporting it at the beginning of the month.[87] One month later, for the first time there was a sharp drop in support for the war and doves slightly outnumbered hawks[88]—but even then a majority thought that Westmoreland was doing an "excellent" job conducting the war and expressed confidence in America's military strategy in Vietnam.[89] The level of support for the war was highest among young people, the age group that was serving in Vietnam, and only in August did it drop significantly.[90]

Looking at these facts, it seems likely that if Johnson had adopted a more hawkish posture after the Tet Offensive, public opinion would have followed him. The fact that support for escalating the war was far higher than support for the president suggests that it was the administration's lack of clarity and resolve, not the war itself, that led to its downfall. Johnson almost never spoke to the nation from the beginning of the Tet Offensive until his speech at the end of March, and he virtually gave up any attempt to present the public with a coherent policy. He rejected the suggestions of those in favor of escalation but did not adopt the contrary policy, and he most certainly did not say anything to refute Cronkite. From the point of view of public opinion, Johnson suffered from what one scholar has called a "collapse of leadership."[91] "The media's generalized portrait of 'disaster' in South Vietnam," wrote journalist Peter Braestrup, who researched the role of the press in the Tet offensive, "affected political Washington far more than it did the general public."[92] Johnson was mistaken in thinking that along with Cronkite he had lost the ordinary citizen; he erred, according to Adam Garfinkel, when "at a crucial moment, his administration and its fabled

Wise Men seem to have accorded a greater impact to the antiwar movement than it had and may have given it more influence than it deserved."[93]

Lyndon Johnson's decision not to seek a second term was motivated by several personal considerations: His failing health, his feeling that the public was turning against the war, and his belief that the American strategy in Vietnam was leading to a stalemate.[94] According to William Hammond, a media historian who researched the press and the military in Vietnam, Johnson was "convinced that the conflict was necessary but believed that the American public and Congress lacked the will… to carry it through to a successful conclusion."[95] But clearly it was not the public that lacked the will to succeed, but the president, who had been influenced by advisers and a press riddled with doubt.[96]

The ability of political leaders to weaken public resolve in wartime is similarly seen in the IDF's withdrawal from the security zone in southern Lebanon in 2000. The security zone had been part of Israel's security posture for almost a decade before it began to be publicly debated.[97] A large majority of the public thought that staying in the security zone was essential, a view that was not noticeably affected by the toll in Israeli lives in Lebanon.[98] Even in June 1999, three weeks after Ehud Barak was elected to lead a government that came to power on a wave of promises to withdraw from Lebanon, the percentage of those opposed to a unilateral withdrawal, 61 percent, was almost exactly what it had been in February 1997.[99]

Yet on July 6, 1999, Prime Minister Barak declared that the IDF would pull out of Lebanon within a year. In the months that followed, Israeli public opinion turned dramatically in favor of that position.[100] Barak's declaration also affected IDF soldiers, who for the first time were outspoken in their support for the new policy. In February 2000, during a visit by Barak to an outpost in the Lebanon security zone, a group of enlisted soldiers mustered the courage to explain to the prime minister why they felt the IDF was failing in Lebanon and why they were in favor of an immediate pullout. One soldier summed up his thoughts by saying, "We have to start getting

out now; why wait till July?"[101] "Gilad," a company commander serving in the security zone, wrote of his feelings in early 2000:

> As a soldier I have never dared to ask why we are in Lebanon. My big brother… also didn't ask if it was the right thing to do politically or not, nor did my father… and now, in the last few months… suddenly there have been some who have argued, suddenly asked questions, even cases of refusing an order. "What good will it do? Do you want to send us to our deaths?" they asked. It's not nice to admit, in the last few months amidst a wave of funerals and thirty mortars a day, a situation was created in which it's simply been difficult to function with the soldiers. You don't conduct a war this way.[102]

In May 2000, the IDF withdrew from Lebanon hastily and in disarray, quickly leading to the collapse of the South Lebanese Army and enabling Hezbollah to take up positions along the border. The message sent to Israel's enemies was a clear one, and was eloquently expressed by Hezbollah's secretary-general, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah: "Israel, which has both nuclear power and the strongest air force in the region," he said, "is weaker than a spider's web."[103]

What emerges most clearly from the cases of failure on the part of the French in Algeria, the Americans in Vietnam, and the Israelis in southern Lebanon is very much the flip side of what we already have seen with respect to Northern Ireland, Gaza, and Chechnya: That in all these cases, it was not the citizenry which lacked the patience and resolve required to support their government and military through a protracted conflict. Rather, in all these cases, it was democratic leaders who first despaired of being able to win; once they decided to abandon the fight, public opinion quickly followed their lead.

The prevalence in recent history of small wars waged between terrorist or guerilla forces and sovereign nations requires a different kind of strategic thinking. The new age of warfare not only requires changes in tactics on the battlefield, but a change in how we understand the sources and politics of conflict. The realist paradigm, based on the idea of war as "politics by other means," as Clausewitz put it, may no longer really obtain. Armed organizations go to war on behalf of religious beliefs and moral ambitions that are at odds with traditional notions of politics or the best interests of their constituencies. However, democratic nations are capable of being inspired by similar passions, and they, too, are capable of mustering vast resources of courage and stamina in the face of a vicious enemy. It is wrong to suppose that the advantages of tenacity and willpower fall only to the militarily weak side, struggling for independence or fighting against a major power.[104]

In certain respects, this state of affairs is a result of the operational successes of guerilla warfare and terrorism. Mao Zedong said that one of the principles of guerilla warfare is to strike at the enemy but to stop before he becomes incensed. In other words, an overly destructive attack is liable to trigger devastating retaliation.[105] The harder the terrorists hit, the more the leaders of victim nations abandon circumspect political rationality in favor of military action, and complex political substantiations give way to unsubtle slogans such as "the Global War on Terror,"[106] "World War IV,"[107] and "the axis of evil." In the speech U.S. President George W. Bush made on the night of September 11, 2001, he was not in need of sophisticated explanations of the kind that were perhaps in the minds of Lyndon Johnson and his advisers. He used the simple and unsophisticated language of life and death:

> Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack.… These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation

> into chaos and retreat. But they have failed…. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America… we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining.… We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them… we stand together to win the war against terrorism."[108]

There is not a single word here of *realpolitik*, no mention of constraints, interests, or any attempt to discuss the fine points of terrorism or whether it is possible to defeat it. And precisely because of its simplicity, such language is successful. Even though a conventional terror attack cannot defeat a tank division, Osama Bin Laden, Yasser Arafat, and whoever blew up the apartment block in Moscow in 1999 succeeded in convincing the citizens of the nations they attacked that a war of survival was at hand. In the end, terrorism's success in making itself such a profound influencing factor has also been its greatest failure.

This is not surprising. Numerous historic examples bring into question the supposition that it is possible to break the enemy's will by waging a slow war against its citizens. To take an extreme example, during World War II the German and Japanese peoples never reached a real breaking point, despite the colossal destruction visited on them, for example, by the firebombing of Japanese towns, the maelstrom in Hamburg in 1943, and the bombing of Dresden.[109] No underground movements sprang up and no popular movements were formed to resist the government. German citizens whose homes had been destroyed still sought to pay their taxes, and until the end of the war, more than 90 percent of Japanese factory workers were still coming to their jobs every day.[110]

The behavior of democracies is slightly more complicated, but ultimately not materially different. The examples of Algeria, Vietnam, and Lebanon, and the counter-examples of Northern Ireland, Gaza, and Chechnya, paint a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of democratic societies: On the one hand, the public's endurance is much greater than the conventional

wisdom; and on the other, in order to break such a country through a war of attrition, all that is necessary is to influence a small and concentrated group—that is, its leadership. If the leadership decides that the war is not worth the cost or the trouble, the public will probably follow it.

But if both political leaders and public opinion are convinced of the rightness and necessity of war, it is extremely difficult to withstand the wrath of a democratic country. The staying power of such countries does not depend on the damage they suffer in human lives and property. Their power lies in what defines their very existence—their belief in democratic values and their wish to protect them. If a democratic society believes in the rightness and necessity of its struggle, and if its leadership can provide a simple and clear answer to the question, "What are we fighting for?" the public will be willing to bear any burden required of them, including casualties, political and military fiascoes, and the economic burdens of war. And this, in the end, is the most important conclusion to be drawn: At the most critical junctures of its history, the citizenry is not the weakest link in a democratic country, but its greatest resource.

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Notes

I wish to thank Martin van Creveld, Yossi Hochbaum, and Ze'ev Elron for their helpful comments.

1. The expression "small wars" is preferable in my view to "low intensity conflict," "military operations other than war," and "limited conflict," because "small wars," an expression coined in the nineteenth century, best describes conflicts that every now and then can be of such high intensity (for example Operation Defensive Shield or the recent battles in Fallujah and Najaf in Iraq), that it is justifiable to define them as wars.

2. Robert M. Cassidy, "Why Great Powers Fight Small Wars Badly," *Military Review* (September-October 2002), pp. 42, 43.

3. Cassidy, "Why Great Powers Fight Small Wars Badly," p. 48.

4. Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars: State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2003), p. 13. It is important to note that Merom raises the notion of "asymmetry of willpower," but only partially agrees with it. This notion is based on the historian Martin van Creveld's definition of "the war for existence" as a form of a non-political war, in which the fear for survival can drive people "to make sacrifices beyond anything imaginable in 'ordinary' times" and ignore cost-benefit considerations that guide policies under normal conditions. Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: Free Press, 1991), p. 145.

5. From a historical point of view, the success of an asymmetric uprising is rare. Until the middle of the twentieth century, the weaker side usually lost small wars. Its lack of resources, unconnected to its will to win, is what eventually determined the outcome. In the middle of the nineteenth century, for example, Tsarist Russia suffered heavy defeats in the Caucasus at the hands of Imam Shamil and his followers, but in the end—it took 30 years—he was defeated. In 1879, Britain was hit hard by Zulu warriors in Isandlwana, but a little more than a year later the Zulu Empire was on its knees. The annihilation of General Custer's force at the battle of Little Big Horn in 1876 did not prevent the U.S. Army from subduing the Indian tribes. For Shamil's wars see Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnya and Daghestan* (London: Frank Cass, 2004); for the battles in Isandlwana and the Zulu Wars see Donald R. Morris, *The Washing of the Spears: A History of the Rise of the Zulu Nation Under Shaka and Its Fall in the Zulu War of 1879* (New York: Da Capo, 1998); Ian Knight, *Isandlwana 1879*: *The Great Zulu Victory (Campaign 111)* (London: Osprey, 2002). According to the historian John Ellis, out of approximately 130 guerilla wars throughout history, "less than twenty of them could really be considered to have been ultimately successful" from the point of view of the guerillas. John Ellis, *A Short History of Guerrilla Warfare* (London: Ian Allan, 1975), p. 196. Today, however, guerilla forces score relatively

more victories, but in contrast with the past, the stronger side—meaning the country—does not usually deal so harshly with the weaker side and at most it denies it the opportunity to self-determination and certain rights.

6. Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*, p. 15.

7. Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*, p. 230.

8. Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*, p. 231. The historian Martin van Creveld also points out that the power of strong countries occasionally works against them because there is no glory in defeating a weak opponent, and thus motivation is low. A boxer fighting a little boy cannot "win." He can allow himself to be beaten by the boy and suffer humiliation, or hurt the boy and be considered a criminal. A conversation with Martin van Creveld, September 2005. See also van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, chs. 6-7.

9. Henry Kissinger, "The Vietnam Negotiations," *Foreign Affairs* 47 (January 1969), p. 214.

10. This was said to cadets at the company and regimental commanders' course at the end of 1997; the author heard it with his own ears.

11. Ben Caspit, "Giladi Program," *Maariv*, January 2, 2004.

12. Yehuda Wegman, "The IDF's Accomplishments are Canceled Out by Conception," *Makor Rishon*, September 15, 2004. The theory of the triumph of will is gaining popularity, since it appears to explain many contemporary small wars in which the outcomes have contradicted Napoleon's famous remark that "God is on the side of the strongest battalion." It is also popular among many in the military, if only because it makes the minimum demand of them: If it is impossible to defeat an uprising, they cannot be responsible for not winning.

13. An important book on the subject is *Democracies and Small Wars*, ed. Efraim Inbar (London: Frank Cass, 2003). Although not all authors in that book are mentioned below, it had a significant influence on this article.

14. See R. J. Rummel, *Power Kills: Democracy as a Method of Nonviolence* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1997).

15. General Arthur Harris, commander-in-chief of the Bomber Command, was in favor of "area bombing" as the best strategy to break the Germans. He opposed precision bombings because he considered it a "pointless search for panacea targets" to paralyze the Third Reich's economy. See David J. Lonsdale, *The Nature of War in the Information Age*: *Clausewitzian Future* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), pp. 154-155.

16. There are varying estimates of the number of casualties in World War II and the Vietnam War. Matthew White has made a broad survey of different sources

for such statistics in twentieth-century wars, at http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/warstatx.htm. According to some estimates, the Vietcong and North Vietnamese lost more than a million people out of a population of approximately 20 million on the eve of the war. According to other estimates, the number of casualties was more than twice as great, and two-thirds were civilians. This number is greater, for example, than the number of Afghan casualties in the war against the Soviet Union, in both absolute and relative terms. See Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1997). According to an official report by the Hanoi government, published by the AFP news agency on April 4, 1995, the death toll in North Vietnam (even though it is unclear what is included in that definition) between 1954 and 1975 reached 3,000,000, of whom 1,100,000 were soldiers. The report did not specify if the military casualties included those of the Army of the Republic of South Vietnam (ARVN). If they are included, the number of military casualties of the north would be around 900,000, and the total North Vietnamese losses 2,900,000. Hanoi claimed that to prevent demoralization in the north, the figures were adjusted down during the fighting, at www.rjsmith.com/kia_tbl.html.

17. R. J. Rummel, *Statistics of Democide: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900* (Charlottesville: Center for National Security Law, 1997), table 14.1B.

18. Merom compares the actions of Germany in German Africa between 1904 and 1907 with the Boer War to demonstrate the difference in efficiency between democracies and dictatorships. In German Africa, 18,000 soldiers were deployed; the cost of suppressing mutinies was 22 million pounds sterling and African casualties totaled approximately 400,000 (more cautious estimates refer to half that number). On the other hand, during the Boer War the British deployed 449,000 soldiers and lost 22,000 (only 7,900 of them in battles!); the war cost 220 million pounds sterling and the number of casualties on the enemy's side amounted to only 25,000 (see Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*, pp. 44-45). However, it seems that in this case Merom is ignoring a very important factor, perhaps the most important factor: The identity of the enemy. The British were fighting Europeans, who were properly armed, of a similar culture, and had knowledge of Western warfare. Fifty years later, against Mau-Mau rebels in Kenya who did not have proper weapons or high capabilities, the British lost roughly 95 Europeans while the Africans lost 11,000. In these campaigns, about 2,000 Africans who sympathized with Britain also met their deaths (Merom doesn't say how many casualties in the war in Africa were German sympathizers). For a review of different sources for the number of casualties, see Matthew White, "Death Tolls for the Man-Made Megadeaths of the Twentieth Century," at http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/warstatx.htm.

19. On the progress of the conflict, see Peter Rose, *How the Troubles Came to Northern Ireland* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001); John Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency: From Palestine to Northern Ireland* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 151-162.

20. By the time administrative detention was suspended in 1975, 1,981 people had been detained under it. In Malaya the corresponding number was 34,000, and in the fighting against the Mau-Mau in Kenya, 77,000. Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, p. 166.

21. The number of bombs planted by the IRA increased from 150 in 1970 to 1,382 in 1972 (and dropped to 978 in 1973). Their strength also increased greatly. Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, p. 167.

22. From methods of fighting subversion to policing and back, and then again to policing, assassination of organization activists, and so on.

23. Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, "From War to Peace in Northern Ireland," in *A Farewell to Arms? From 'Long War' to Long Peace in Northern Ireland*, eds. Michael Cox, Adrian Guelke, and Fiona Stephen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 31.

24. Marie Smyth, "The Human Consequences of Armed Conflict: Constructing 'Victimhood' in the Context of Northern Ireland's Troubles," in *A Farewell to Arms?*, p. 121, table 9.2. It should be noted that the number of civilian casualties includes both Catholics and Protestants.

25. Canadian Security Intelligence Service, "Irish Nationalist Terrorism Outside Ireland: Out-of-Theatre Operations 1972-1993," *CSIS, Commentary* 40, February 1994, at www.csis.gc.ca/en/publications/commentary/com40.asp.

26. M.L.R. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland? The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 175.

27. Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, p. 191; Jane M. Jacobs, *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 64; and Timothy Hillier, "Bomb Attacks in City Centers," *Emergency Response and Research Institute*, September 1994, at www.emergency.com/carbomb.htm.

28. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland?*, p. 125.

29. PRO, PM/72/10, Douglas-Hume to Edward Heath, March 13, 1972, PREM *15/1004*. Online photocopy at CAIN, http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/publicrecords/1972/index.html.

30. Kennedy-Pipe, "From War to Peace," p. 33.

31. The number is according to Malcolm Sutton, "Sutton Index of Deaths: An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland," at http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/index.html. The number is greater in Tim Pat Coogan, *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Search for Peace* (Boulder: Roberts Rinehart, 1996), p. 262, which gives the number of dead as 160 between 1988 and 1992. For a critical description of the British government's actions and the question of the link between

it and Protestant terrorist cells, see above, pp. 241-324 and Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, pp. 187-190.

32. Martin Mansergh, "The Background to the Irish Peace Process," in *A Farewell to Arms?*, p. 14.

33. Kennedy-Pipe, "From War to Peace," p. 33.

34. Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, p. 193.

35. Smyth, "The Human Consequences," p. 119, table 9.1. Malcolm Sutton puts the number at 3,550 dead between 1969 and 2005, with an additional 18 dead about whom it is not clear if they were murdered in connection with the conflict between 2002 and 2005. Sutton, "Sutton Index of Deaths."

36. "IRA Says Armed Campaign Is Over," BBC News, July 28, 2005, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/4720863.stm. Ireland is an example of a relatively "light" conflict. Its relevancy can be rejected by claiming it to be a special case. All in all, the majority of Northern Ireland's inhabitants want to remain part of Britain (although this is usually the situation in many international disputes in which there is a large group of non-separatists, as in Algeria). But it should be noted that every conflict is unique, and the IRA and sections of the British public believed that the British would eventually withdraw. In addition, the cost in lives of the conflict, combined with the psychological effect of the London bombings and the shelling of the prime minister's residence, were greater than the price Britain paid against the Mau-Mau in Kenya. There are many things that affect the outcome of an uprising; the British-Irish example is enough to show that the same government can run its affairs in different places in entirely different ways, but that the direct effect on Britain of the conflict in Northern Ireland was immeasurably greater than the effect of the conflict in Kenya. Notwithstanding the uniqueness of the conflict in Ireland, we can learn from it that the number of dead and the psychological effect of terror are not fixed terms in the equation.

37. For more on the Northern Ireland conflict see, for example, John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, *Explaining Northern Ireland: Broken Images* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995); Joseph Ruane and Jennifer Todd, *The Dynamics of Conflict in Northern Ireland: Power, Conflict and Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1996); David McKittrick and David Vea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin, 2001).

38. Daniel Naim, "The Development and Destruction of Terror Organizations in the Gaza Strip and Their Expulsion 1967-1973" (master's thesis, Bar-Ilan University, n.d.), chs. 3-4. [Hebrew]

39. Naim, "The Development and Destruction of Terror Organizations," p. 61.

40. Naim, "The Development and Destruction of Terror Organizations," p. 71 and appendix xiii. See also David Maimon, *The Terror That Was Defeated: The Quelling of Terror in the Gaza Strip, 1971-1972* (Tel Aviv: Steimatzky, 1993), pp. 44-50, 195. [Hebrew]

41. Naim, "The Development and Destruction of Terror Organizations," pp. 93-94.

42. Maimon, *The Terror That Was Defeated*, pp. 99-106.

43. Ariel Sharon with David Chanoff, *Warrior: The Autobiography of Ariel Sharon* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), p. 252.

44. Those who were moved out—about two thousand families—were moved into empty apartments close to or in El-Arish; most of them stayed near where they had previously lived (Naim, "The Development and Destruction of Terror Organizations," p. 87). See also Maimon, *The Terror That Was Defeated*, pp. 109-114.

45. Avihai Becker, "How Terror Was Defeated in the Gaza Strip," *Hadashot*, April 11, 1993.

46. Amatzia Chen, "The IDF Doesn't Learn the Lessons of War," *News First Class*, July 28, 2005 [Hebrew], at www.nfc.co.il/archive/003-D-11231-00.html?tag=23-27-38. Other units mistakenly killed more innocent people, but the number is extremely small.

47. Naim, "The Development and Destruction of Terror Organizations," p. 103.

48. To the best of my knowledge, there has been only one study of the fighting in the Gaza Strip during that period and it was by Naim, above. Other sources important to the subject are Maimon, *The Terror That Was Defeated* and Uri Milstein and Dov Doron, *Shaked Commando Unit* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 1994), ch. 13, pp. 221-233, and Sharon, *Warrior*, pp. 248-262. It is probably possible to explain why the Gaza Strip is not a particularly good example. But then the question would arise why every example in which the subversive forces lost is not representative and every example in which the subversives won is representative.

49. For more information, see Yagil Henkin, *Un-Guerilla Warfare: The History of the War in Chechnya 1994-1996* (Tel Aviv: Army Training and Doctrine Division, 2004). [Hebrew]

50. "Russians Losing Faith in Chechen War," BBC News, January 30, 2000, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/624668.stm.

51. John Dunlop, an expert on the Caucasus, recently claimed that "the Russian public does not in the main support Vladimir Putin's war in Chechnya … Rather they… favor a negotiated settlement." In a poll conducted in February 2005 by the liberal Levada Institute, 69 percent of the Russian public was in favor

of negotiating and 21 percent wanted the war to continue. See John B. Dunlop, "Do Ethnic Russians Support Putin's War in Chechnya?" *Chechnya Weekly* 6, January 26, 2005, at www.jamestown.org/images/pdf/cw_006_004.pdf, Levada Tsenter, "The Socio-political Situation in Russia in January 2005," February 8, 2005, at www.levada.ru/press/2005020801.html. It seems that even if Russians were in favor of negotiations, they clearly were not in favor of negotiating with the extant Chechen leadership. In February, of 42 percent who were in favor of negotiating and thought that the government should talk to "the representatives of the opposite side," only slightly more than a quarter (or less than one-eighth of all those asked) thought that they should talk to Maskhadov. The willingness to talk therefore remained theoretical, because it was not accompanied by a willingness to negotiate with someone who actually represented the insurgents. In March 2005, only 9 percent of those who believed that the ceasefire announced by the late Chechen leader Maskhadov a month before his elimination was genuine; 86 percent of them (about 40 percent of respondents) thought that the ceasefire was a kind of "trick." See *The Public Opinion Foundation Database* (FOM), "The Chechen Drama: Characters and the Plot," February 24, 2005, at http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/map/projects/dominant/edomt0508_2/ed050822; "The Chechen Conflict: The Situation and Personalities," March 1, 2005, at http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/eof050802.

52. About one-third of respondents thought that Russia could settle the matter in Chechnya but did not want to, and about one-tenth of Russians thought that Russia could not and did not want to. The rate of respondents who expressed confidence in the government's wish to settle the Chechen war was 40 percent; only one-quarter of them believed that Russia was also capable of doing so. FOM, "The Situation in Chechnya: Monitoring," February 24, 2005, at http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/chechnya_position/etb050811.

53. See FOM polls dealing with the subject, at http://english.fom.ru, and especially the following: "Should Chechnya Be Part of Russia?" December 7, 2004, at http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/stat_chechnya/eof044806; "The Situation in Chechnya: Monitoring"; "Chechnya: 10 Years On," December 7, 2004, at http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/chechnya_position/erb044805. The Russian minister of defense recently announced that conscripted soldiers will no longer be sent to Chechnya, only volunteers. Since his announcement had no significant effect on support for the war, we can assume that the opposition to sending inexperienced conscripts—and sometimes also untrained: Some had been in the army less than a month before being sent—bore no relation to opposition to the war. Official data on the number of casualties varies greatly depending on the source reporting them. The lowest estimate was reported by the Russian ambassador to Belgium, Vadim Lukov, who spoke of only 1,329 dead between 2001 and October 2004 (and perhaps more than this number among members of the Chechen militia). However, the Russian

prosecutor-general in Chechnya claims that the number of Russian losses to March 2005 was greater than six thousand. See Vadim Lukov, "Whom Does Chechnya Support?" published in the Belgian newspaper *Tijd,* January 19, 2005, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, at www.ln.mid.ru/brp_4nsf/0/46346ad8df78b2d7c3256f9500372d37?openDocument; "Over 6,000 Russian Servicemen, Police Killed in Chechnya: Prosecutor," *China View*, March 17, 2005, at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2005-03/17/content_2711629.htm. According to a report from a Russian army source to the Russian Itar-Tass news agency, in 2002 alone 4,739 Russian soldiers were killed and 13,108 were wounded. Itar-Tass, February 17, 2003. Quoted in *Johnson Russia List* #7065, February 17, 2003, at www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/7065-4.cfm. For a comprehensive discussion of the number of dead, see the website Human Rights Violations in Chechnya, at http://hrvc.net/htmls/references.htm/. For the number of dead in the first Chechen war see Svante E. Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers—a Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001), p. 229; John B. Dunlop, "How Many Soldiers and Civilians Died During the Russo-Chechen War of 1994-1996?" *Central Asian Survey* 19 (2000), pp. 330-338; Carlotta Gall and Thomas de Waal, *Chechnya—Calamity in the Caucasus* (New York: New York University, 1998), p. 399, n. 9; Olga Trusevich and Alexander Cherkasov, *An Anonymous Soldier in the Kavkazian War*, *1994-1996* (Moscow: Zven'ya, 1997), at www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/N-Caucas/soldat. [Russian]

On the dead and injured in Afghanistan, see Dunlop, "How Many Soldiers and Civilians Died?" p. 332; Lester W. Grau and William A. Jorgensen, "Beaten by the Bugs: The Soviet-Afghan War Experience," *Military Review* (November-December 1997). For statistics on the number of civilian dead, see John Ellis, *From the Barrel of a Gun: A History of Guerrilla, Revolutionary and Counter-Insurgency Warfare, from the Romans to the Present* (London: Greenhill, 1995), pp. 246-247. For the number of Afghan inhabitants before the war, see John C. Griffiths, *Afghanistan: Key to a Continent* (Boulder: Westview, 1981), pp. 79-80, and Jan Lahmeyer's Population Statistics website, at www.library.uu.nl/wesp/populsst/Asia/afghanic.htm.

54. There is also no way of knowing if he was elected *mainly* because of his handling of the war in Chechnya. However, it is clear that the way he managed the war did not arouse opposition powerful and extensive enough to dissuade many from voting for him. Some of the votes in the elections were apparently forged, but there is no doubt that even without the forgeries he would have won by a large majority. About 65 percent of those eligible voted in the elections.

55. In October 2004, a month after the terrorist attack in Beslan and two months after the bombing of two civilian aircraft, 44 percent of Russians did not agree with Putin's claim that an organized war was being waged "against Russia," against 37 percent who believed this to be the case and others who had no opinion on the subject. FOM, "Who Declared War on Russia?" October 11, 2004, at http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/act_terrorism/eof043904.

The reason may be that the Russian public agreed with the content if not the terminology. After the wave of terrorist attacks in August-September 2004, 76 percent of Russians thought that all the attacks were attributable to one source. About half of respondents believed that it was the work of foreign terrorists. Only 5 to 8 percent thought that the attacks were aimed at achieving independence for Chechnya or a retreat of the Russian army from it. FOM, "Who Kidnapped the Children in Beslan, and Why?" at http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/map/ed043723. In this situation, the question of whether it was a "war" or simply an "organized terrorist campaign" is less important, especially considering the fact that the president's call for national steadfastness in a speech he delivered after Beslan was well received and gained wide support. It is interesting to note that in a poll carried out by the Levada Center in February 2005, 44 percent of respondents thought that Russia was under a military threat from other countries, against 33 percent who had thought so in 1998. See Levada Tsenter, "Russians Speak About the Army for National Army Day," at www.Levada.ru/press/2005022201.html. [Russian]

56. For example, at the end of January 2004, a majority of Russians (including those who favored negotiations) believed that the Russian government was fighting to protect the country's integrity, the Russian Republic, or against international terrorism. Rosbalt News Service, February 1, 2004, at www.rosbalt.ru/2004/02/01. The poll allowed for more than one answer; the overall number who took a positive view of the Russian government's policy reached 149 percent.

57. An English version of the speech appeared in the *New York Times* on September 5, 2004. The speech appears in Russian on many Internet sites.

58. FOM, "Nord-Ost and Beslan: President Putin's Message to the Nation," September 16, 2004, at http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/map/analytic/klimov/ed043727. Seven percent—almost half of those opposed—made no mention whatsoever of the content of the speech, but only of Putin's clumsy handling of the affair. We now know that obvious blunders by the Russian forces, such as using flamethrowers during the assault on the school, aggravated the proportions of the disaster. It should be noted that support for the assault on the Nord-Ost Theater reached 81 percent. Part of the difference is perhaps attributable to the shock of seeing hundreds of dead children in Beslan in comparison with the lighter losses in Nord-Ost.

59. Forty-eight percent thought that Chechnya should remain part of Russia as a normal republic, 16 percent believed it should be granted "special status" as an autonomous republic inside Russia, and 21 percent maintained that it should be given complete independence. See FOM, "The Situation in Chechnya," December 9, 2004, at http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/chechnya_position/ed044913.

In addition, opinion polls on the Chechnya conflict were stable for about two years, and at the end of 2004, 25 percent of Russians—the highest rate for the

previous two years—believed that the conflict had improved that year, compared with only 7 percent who opined that the situation had deteriorated (about half the public thought that there had been no change). (FOM, "The Situation in Chechnya") Even the deadly terrorist attacks of 2004, including Beslan, did not change that trend. It should also be noted that President Putin worked resolutely and with completely undemocratic methods against those who opposed the war. See, for example, Andrei Smirnov, "Chechen Rebels Hand the Anti-War Movement an Olive Branch as the Kremlin Tightens the Screws," *Chechnya Weekly* 6, February 9, 2005, at www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=409&issue_id=3226&article_id=2369237. At the end of 2005, there was a slight increase in FOM polls in the number who thought that the situation in Chechnya had worsened or had not changed at all (53 percent of Russians believed that it had not changed, 13 percent said it had deteriorated, and 17 percent said it had improved, against 49 percent, 9 percent and 23 percent, respectively, in the previous poll), although Putin's situation improved. Support for him rose from 38 to 42 percent, and only 5 percent gave him a negative rating. Moreover, the percentage of those who thought that the situation in Chechnya had deteriorated in comparison with the previous period is not proof positive of whether the situation had deteriorated in comparison with all periods, and it should also be noted that the percentage of those who thought that the situation had worsened was still far smaller than during the peak of 2003-2004. FOM, "Final Ratings of Russian Politicians in 2005," December 22, 2005, at http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/cat/policy/rating/ed055123; "The Situation in Chechnya, October 2005," at http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/cat/societas/Chechnya/Chechnya_position/ed054310.

60. It could justifiably be said that the brutality employed by Russia in Chechnya in no way testified to weakness. It is difficult to level charges of complacency against the army, who twice destroyed the Chechen capital in bombings that claimed the lives of tens of thousands of citizens. It should also be remembered that Putin's target audience was the Russian public. Accordingly, the important question is whether Putin was successful in convincing this audience—and the answer, by four to one, is an unqualified "yes." Another important point is that Putin has long insisted that the war in Chechnya is over. The Russian public consistently refuses to agree with him. The contradiction between Putin's claim that the war was over and his demands on the Russian public lacks all practical significance—especially after conscription ended in Russia.

61. Eighty percent of the Muslim population took part in the referendum. Ninety-six percent of them supported the continuation of French rule despite the attempts of the guerilla organization the National Front for the Liberation of Algeria (FLN) to interfere with the referendum. There was no evidence of significant numbers of forgeries.

62. This was despite the fact that the French government adopted an ambivalent policy toward the crisis. Even after it introduced conscription and called for a

general (metaphorical) conscription of its citizens, the government avoided declaring the conflict in Algeria an obligatory war situation as necessitating "immediate attention" and preferring to see it as no more than a situation requiring the "maintenance of order." See Stuart A. Cohen, "Why Do They Quarrel? Civil-Military Tensions in LIC Situations," in *Democracies and Small Wars*, pp. 27-29. It should be noted that the French government perpetuated the deception to such an extent that it refused to give war medals to heroes of the battles in Algeria. The Americans employed a similar deception during the Vietnam War, defined by the president of the United States as a policing and assistance action. At the end of 1994, the Russian government under Boris Yeltsin repeated the mistake when it sent forty thousand troops with 230 tanks into the rebellious republic of Chechnya while repeatedly emphasizing that the forces were only "restoring constitutional order." The almost total annihilation of two Russian brigades in a matter of two days in the capital, Grozny, resulted from the Russians entering the town as a procession instead of in battle order, and taking up positions in open and unsecured parking places instead of in battle formation.

63. It is possible that de Gaulle was so minded earlier. On his own admission, even when he was declaring "Long Live French Algeria," he was pessimistic about finding a solution to the crisis. According to the historian Alistair Horne, in April 1958, before he had been elected, de Gaulle said to the Austrian reporter Artur Rosenberg that "Certainly Algeria will be independent." See Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*: *Algeria 1954-1962* (New York: Viking, 1978), p. 281 (see also ch. 14 on de Gaulle's policy in 1958, and p. 344 on his 1959 declaration).

64. Immediately prior to de Gaulle's election, there was even a real drop in the number of Frenchmen who thought that the Algerian conflict was the most important item on France's agenda. An absolute majority of the French thought that Algeria should remain French. In January 1958, only 37 percent of France's citizens thought that the Algerian question was the most important one for their country, in comparison with 51 percent who were of that opinion in September 1957. Yet because of de Gaulle's intense preoccupation with Algeria, and after he declared that Algeria would be granted "self-determination," 68 percent of the French maintained that the problem of Algeria was the most important subject for France, a percentage that would increase as the date for the withdrawal drew closer. See Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*, p.102, table 6.2, and p. 105, table 6.3.

65. François Maspéro, *The Right of Disobedience, the "Case of the 121"* (Paris, 1961). [French]

66. It is not certain that by this declaration de Gaulle meant full independence for Algeria. There is some dispute about what his intentions were, when precisely he decided to give up "French Algeria," and what prompted him to make that decision. See, for example, Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, pp. 377-381; Gil Merom, "A 'Grand Design'? Charles de Gaulle and the End of the Algerian War," *Armed*

Forces and Society 25 (1999), p. 267. In any case, the meaning of de Gaulle's declaration was clear and its effect was soon felt.

67. There are some who maintain that coverage of the Tet Offensive in January-February 1968 led to a sea of change in public opinion because it brought home to America what was really happening in Vietnam, or alternatively, because the media twisted the truth and presented the American victory as a defeat. The first opinion was held, for example, by Michael Maclear in his book *Vietnam: The Ten-Thousand Day War* (New York: St. Martins, 1981); the other opinion was best expressed by Peter Braestrup, *Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington* (Boulder: Westview, 1977). Braestrup does not blame the media for the American defeat in the Vietnam War, only for its amateurish and misleading coverage; harsher and more explicit criticism can be found from *Los Angeles Times* correspondent Robert Elegant. In his article "How to Lose a War: Reflections of a Foreign Correspondent," *Encounter* 57 (August 1981), pp. 73-90, he categorically states that the Vietnam War was decided by television; even now, this opinion is extremely prevalent. See also Ron Ben-Yishai, "Attrition in the Media," in *The Strategy of Attrition in a Limited Conflict: Choice or Necessity?*, ed. Gideon Tern, *Essays on National Security* 4 (March 2003), pp. 119-126. Based on a seminar from January 2002. [Hebrew]

68. Some of the most prominent songs were "Send the Marines" by Tom Lehrer, "Lyndon Johnson Told the Nation" by Tom Paxton, both from 1965, and "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die Rag" by Country Joe and the Fish from a 1967 album of the same name. The song was around thirtieth on the charts for two straight years. This, for example, is how Paxton described the protest against the government's dishonesty:

> Lyndon Johnson told the nation: Have no fear of escalation
> I am trying everyone to please.
> Though it isn't really war / We're sending fifty thousand more
> To help save Vietnam from the Vietnamese.

Country Joe and the Fish went a lot further and to the sounds of happy circus music they sang a song calling—obviously satirically—for the Americans to hurry and send their children to serve in the army:

> Be the first one on your block
> To have your boy come home in a box!

(The song ended with a fusillade.)

69. The march, in which 70,000 people participated, was accompanied by scuffles with the police and the burning of draft cards.

70. In December 1967, when they were asked about General Westmoreland's conduct of the war, 68 percent answered "good" or "excellent," 16 percent "only

fair" or "poor," and 16 percent "unsure." Braestrup, *Big Story*, vol. 1, p. 688. In a 1968 survey, 56 percent of those asked defined themselves as "hawks" and only 28 percent as "doves," in support of downsizing the war or opposing it altogether. See John Mueller, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion* (New York: John Wiley, 1973), p. 107; William M. Hammond, *Reporting Vietnam: Media and Military at War* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998), pp. 121-122; C. Dale Walton, *The Myth of Inevitable U.S. Defeat in Vietnam* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), pp. 34-35.

71. Walton, *The Myth of Inevitable U.S. Defeat*, p. 34.

72. An excellent example of this is Johnson's denial in 1965 that North Vietnam was being bombed, when every writer in Saigon knew that it was a downright lie.

73. Walton, *The Myth of Inevitable U.S. Defeat*, p. 33.

74. Thompson made a name for himself as one of the most successful commanders in the fighting against guerillas in Malaya, and he also commanded the British contingent to Vietnam. His book, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: Praeger, 1966) is still considered a cornerstone in fighting against an insurgency.

75. Robert Thompson, "Squaring the Error," *Foreign Affairs* 46 (April 1968), p. 448. Among other things, Thompson noted that the Americans are not good at coordinating their different resources: diplomatic, informational, military, economic (DIME), and concentrating on the military without looking at the political, social, and intelligence context.

76. In smaller forums military commanders warned about a mass attack by the Vietcong at the beginning of 1968, and intelligence reports and other indicators also pointed to one. For its own reasons, the White House chose not to inform the public of these predictions. Johnson would later admit that it was a grave error. See, for example, William C. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 313-316; Maclear, *Vietnam: The Ten-Thousand Day War*, p. 204; Braestrup, *Big Story*, vol. 2, p. 71; Peter Braestrup, "The Tet Offensive: Another Press Controversy II," in *Vietnam Reconsidered: Lessons From a War*, ed. Harrison E. Salisbury (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), pp. 167-171; John Laurence, "The Tet Offensive: Another Press Controversy III," in *Vietnam Reconsidered*, pp. 172-178.

77. After the name of the famous book by Don Oberdorfer, *Tet! The Turning Point in the Vietnam War* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1971).

78. Before the Tet Offensive, 62 percent of the battles were declared as victories, 28 percent as defeats, and 2 percent as draws. After the offensive, reports of American victories dropped by almost one-third, reports of defeats increased by four percent and reports of draws or uncertain results rose from 2 percent to 24

percent. Daniel C. Hallin, *The Uncensored War—The Media and Vietnam* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1986), pp. 161-162, 166.

79. Hallin, *The Uncensored War*, p. 170.

80. Maclear, *Vietnam: The Ten-Thousand Day War*, p. 199. Johnson never mentioned it in his memoirs. Cronkite is mentioned only once, in the context of Kennedy's assassination.

81. Hallin, *The Uncensored War*, p. 170. The quotation is in Hallin's words.

82. According to him, he was already thinking about resigning as early as 1967, and General Westmoreland assured him that it would not affect the morale of those enlisting.

83. Lyndon Baines Johnson, *Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency 1963-1969* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1971) p. 418.

84. "President Lyndon B. Johnson's Address to the Nation Announcing Steps to Limit the War in Vietnam and Reporting His Decision Not to Seek Reelection, March 31, 1968," *Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum*, at www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/680331.asp.

85. Johnson, *Vantage Point*, p. 383.

86. Johnson, "Address to the Nation 1968." Contrariwise, Westmoreland thought that an additional recruitment could lead to victory by exploiting North Vietnam's failure in the Tet Offensive with a massive counter-attack.

87. At the beginning of February 1968, 61 percent defined themselves as "hawks," whereas the number of "doves" dropped to 23 percent. Seventy-one percent opposed ending the bombing of North Vietnam. Fifty-three percent favored some kind of escalation, whereas only half of this percentage was in favor of downsizing the war or withdrawing, and 10 percent was interested in maintaining the status quo. At the end of February, 58 percent registered as "hawks" and 26 percent as "doves." See Mueller, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion*, pp. 90, 106-107 and Braestrup, *Big Story*, vol. 1, p. 680.

88. According to a Gallup poll taken between March 16 and 20, 1968, 41 percent described themselves as "hawks" compared with 42 percent who described themselves as "doves." Allowing for sampling error, it is impossible to know whether there were more hawks than doves, or vice versa. See Mueller, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion*, pp. 106-107.

89. Fifty-two percent thought that Westmoreland's conduct of the war was "good" or "excellent" and 35 percent thought it was "only fair" or "poor." In another poll, 54 percent of respondents were confident about the United States' military strategy in Vietnam; in late February 1968, 42 percent felt that the war was "standing still." At the height of the Tet Offensive, 74 percent of those asked expressed

confidence in American strategy. Braestrup, *Big Story*, vol. 1, pp. 686-688, and Hammond, *Reporting Vietnam*, pp. 121-122.

90. A March 25 Harris poll showed that 60 percent "regarded the Tet Offensive as a defeat for U.S. objectives in Vietnam," but this information says nothing about how respondents felt about the question of whether to continue the war or not. See Maclear, *Vietnam: The Ten-Thousand Day War*, p. 221. Surprising data from the same month provides a clue to this in the form of poll results from Senator McCarthy supporters—McCarthy was known for his opposition to the war—after the New Hampshire primaries in which he came second. Almost two-thirds of those who held that view among McCarthy voters were hawks who did not oppose the *war* but only its *handling* and the fact that the United States was not exerting its full power in the war. See Braestrup, "The Tet Offensive," pp. 170-171.

91. Vaughn Davis Bornet, *The Presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1983), pp. 273-274. In Johnson's speech of February 2, 1968, for example, he said: "It may be that General Westmoreland makes some serious mistakes or that I make some. We don't know. We are just acting in the light of information we have." The president also said that in the future "there will be moments of encouragement and discouragement." It was certainly impossible to take much comfort from these statements.

92. Braestrup, "The Tet Offensive," p. 171.

93. Adam Garfinkle, "Aftermyths of the Antiwar Movement—Vietnam: No Discharge from That War," *Orbis* (Fall 1995), at www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0365/is_n4_v39/ai_17473108. On the antiwar movement and its influence during the Johnson and Nixon administrations, see Adam Garfinkle, *Telltale Hearts: The Origins and Impact of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995).

94. For a critical analysis of American strategy in Vietnam see, for example, Harry G. Summers, *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1982). It should be noted that the war strategy of the United States in Vietnam until 1968—"seek and destroy"—was an attempt to quickly destroy the enemy before he could train new soldiers. However, the effect of this strategy was to allow the enemy to choose when and where to fight and the erosion rate it "wanted." Added to this were the restrictions the United States imposed on itself, including giving immunity to important North Vietnamese installations (including runways and anti-aircraft rocket batteries under construction), refraining from cutting off the Vietcong supply routes in neighboring countries, a prohibition on attacking enemy forces from the moment they left the Vietnamese border, and so forth. For a live description of the American operational restrictions from the point of view of a bomber pilot, see, for example, Jack Broughton, *Thud Ridge* (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1969). For a discussion of the failure of U.S. strategy in Vietnam, see Walton, *The Myth of Inevitable U.S. Defeat*. For a discussion of the structural

failures of the American military in Vietnam, see Richard Gabriel and Paul Savage, *Crisis in Command: Mismanagement in the Army* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978). Walton maintained that the American failure was not attributable to one specific error but to a general refraining from doing anything that could have brought them victory in the war.

95. Hammond, *Reporting Vietnam*, p. 292.

96. Garfinkle, "Aftermyths of the Antiwar Movement."

97. For example, Operation Grapes of Wrath in April 1996, and the understandings that were reached as a result, were considered by 57 percent of the public as successful or very successful, in comparison with 35 percent who thought that they were unsuccessful or not at all successful ("The Peace Index, April 1996," the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, Tel Aviv University). This was despite the fact that in retrospect the agreement appears to have tied the IDF's hands. Immediately afterward, there was a steep drop in the number of dead among the Lebanese organizations fighting against Israel, whereas the average losses suffered by the IDF and the South Lebanese Army (SLA) did not change significantly. In the years 1993, 1994, and 1995, for example, 104, 104, and 105 members of Hezbollah and other Lebanese organizations, respectively, were killed in fighting. Seventy-two were killed in 1996 (27 in Operation Grapes of Wrath). The number dropped to 54 in 1997, and in 1998 the number killed was 43—the first time in the history of southern Lebanon that the IDF and the SLA suffered greater losses than they inflicted. I have no precise data for 1999-2000, but it should be noted that there was a reduction in the number of Israeli dead in Lebanon during that period, mainly as a result of changes in tactics, restrictions on the extent of IDF activities in the region, and other factors. The number of Hezbollah dead during the same period also continued to drop. It is possible to provide various explanations for this trend after Operation Grapes of Wrath, but it is difficult to believe that the proximity is coincidental. It should be noted that there are conflicting data about Hezbollah and Amal losses in Lebanon, attributable, among other things, to the fact that several Israeli sources got into the habit of adding "presumed" losses to confirmed ones. Moreover, Israeli public opinion did not pay sufficient attention to the price being paid by members of the SLA, whose losses did not have the same repercussions as Israeli losses.

98. There was no correlation between the percentage of those opposed to a unilateral withdrawal and the number of IDF dead. In 1997, when IDF losses in Lebanon reached a peak of 39 dead in addition to the 73 killed in a helicopter disaster, the percentage of support for a unilateral withdrawal did not change, remaining the view of less than one-third of the public in comparison with 60 percent opposed. In February 1997, 61 percent of the public was opposed to a unilateral withdrawal and 29 percent supported it; in September 1997, 60 percent were against and 32 percent for; in March 1998, about 86 percent of Israelis were

opposed to a unilateral withdrawal (23 percent unconditionally and 63 percent on the condition that the Lebanese government guarantee appropriate security arrangements) and 12 percent were in favor (the question was framed slightly differently in March 1998, which probably affected the results). In November 1998, although there was a sharp drop in the numbers opposed to a withdrawal (only 48 percent of the public at that time against 42 percent in favor), it was a one-time event, similar to the sharp increase in opposition to a withdrawal in March 1998. In the two weeks preceding the poll, seven soldiers were killed, five of them in the area of Tel Kaba'a, almost on the security fence, in incidents that demonstrated the ability of Hezbollah to reach the Israeli border almost unchallenged. It is difficult to estimate to what extent those events influenced the poll results. See "The Peace Index" for the relevant dates.

99. "The Peace Index," February 1997, June 1999. It should be noted that one study did find that between January and March 1999, 55 percent of Israelis supported unilateral withdrawal. Asher Arian, "Israeli Public Opinion Concerning Lebanon and Syria—1999," *Strategic Assessment* 2 (June 1999), pp. 19-23. If this study is correct, then at the end of 1998 and the beginning of 1999 there was indeed a sharp drop in the support for staying in Lebanon. But even if we accept Arian's figures completely, they would only support our thesis. If the protest movement had had any real effect, there would have been a steady drop in the percentage opposed to a unilateral withdrawal. If after an all-time low at the beginning of 1999, the opposition to unilateral withdrawal could return to its February 1997 levels, then this was not a simple case of eroding support for the fighting in Lebanon. According to *Maariv*, the first time a majority supported withdrawal from Lebanon was in February 2000. During the years 1997-1999, prior to Barak's declaration, support for withdrawal zigzagged but never exceeded 40 percent. After his declaration, however, support for withdrawal rose consistently. See also Yigal Haccoun, "The Israeli Unilateral Withdrawal from Lebanon: The End of Fifteen Years of Military Intervention, 1985-2000" (master's thesis, Bar-Ilan University, n.d.), p. 80. [Hebrew]

100. *Post facto* support for unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon reached almost 63 percent in the week after the withdrawal, compared to 33 percent opposed. Sixty-one percent thought that the withdrawal had been prudent, as against about half of that percentage that thought the IDF's exit from Lebanon was evidence of weakness. Moreover, 58 percent of respondents felt that "the Four Mothers" and public protests had either somewhat or significantly affected the decision on the withdrawal. See "The Peace Index," May 2000. It is interesting to note that a majority of the public believed the withdrawal would encourage the Palestinians to engage in armed activities against Israel.

Lieutenant-Colonel (res.) Dani Reshef, a member of "the Four Mothers" organization, said that at the beginning of 1999 Prime Minister Barak treated the movement's demands for a withdrawal with total contempt, and claimed that they

"simply did not understand the significance and the enormity of their error." Even during the withdrawal itself, Barak still hoped that it would be possible to stop it and bring the Syrians back to the negotiating table. (Dani Reshef, "Barak Rewrites History," *Makor Rishon*, June 17, 2005). If this is correct, then Barak adopted the proposal to withdraw from Lebanon as a measure intended to increase his chances of success in the elections and nothing more, and was swept along by events. However, as stated above, he was not swept along with the public, but—even if he did not intend to—he changed the public's mind. That is therefore proof that a minority group in a democratic society can tip the balance and influence the leadership in a way that is not proportional to the real clout they have in public opinion.

101. Amos Harel, "The Soldiers in the Yakinton Post Want a Withdrawal Now," *Haaretz*, February 10, 2000.

102. Ron Leshem, "The Cursed Mountain," *Yediot Aharonot*, May 11, 2001.

103. Al-Manar Television, June 6, 2000. Cited in Eyal Zisser, "The Return of Hizbullah," *Middle East Quarterly* 9 (Fall 2002). This statement appears in many sources. According to former Chief of Staff Moshe Yaalon, it is actually Yasser Arafat who has the copyright on it. Ari Shavit, "There Are People On Your Own Side Who Really Undermine You. It Drives Me Crazy Sometimes," *Haaretz*, August 28, 2002.

104. One myth that is very likely to become a popular belief is that the disengagement plan and the Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip in 2005 was caused by the weakening of Israeli society and its lack of resolve in standing against the armed Palestinian struggle. This is, for sure, the version that the Hamas and the Palestinian Authority are trying to promote, claiming that "The army of the Jews was defeated," and that, "the liberation of the land of Palestine in Gaza… was achieved solely by the heroes and warriors of jihad, not through barren peace negotiations and bowing our head." (Quoted in Nadav Shragai, "Dealing with Demography," *Haaretz*, March 7, 2006). Indeed, prior to, and during the first stages of, the Palestinian armed struggle against Israel after the outbreak of hostilities on September 2000, many feared or believed Israel would buckle under the pressure of repeated terrorist attacks and suicide bombings. Maj.-Gen. Moshe Yaalon, then deputy commander of the IDF, articulated such a fear when he said in January 2001 that "This is a clash of interests, of wills, of two peoples or of two political entities… the nation must first be convinced [of this] because in my opinion, in a struggle of this kind society is the weakest link…. This struggle will be decided by attrition. We call it 'fatigue'… we can't talk about [winning] militarily." (Quoted from Amnon Lord, "In the Mire of Fatigue," *Makor Rishon*, October 15, 2004.) Concerning "the theory of fatigue," see the remarks of Colonel (res.) Shmuel Nir, one of the originators of the theory: "the conflict is… a clash of national wills. National will cannot be dispelled by brandishing a sword. It follows that we need to adopt a strategy, *the deciding factor of which*

is breaking society's will to fight and loss of the ability to act effectively, by causing a revolution in the consciousness of the society that has the assistance of military means. Military power does not decide the conflict." Shmuel Nir, "Attrition and Adaptation," in *The Strategy of Attrition*, p. 166. Emphasis added.) If "society is the weakest link," as Yaalon said, Israel's death toll, incomparably higher than anything suffered since the Yom Kippur War, should have worn the public down completely. In 2002 alone, the conflict claimed 452 Israeli lives, with 2,309 injured. Israeli civilians paid the highest price, accounting for about 80 percent of the dead between 2000 and 2002. (Don Radlauer, "An Engineered Tragedy: Statistical Analysis of Casualties in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, September 2000-September 2002," *International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism*, September 2002, www.ict.org.il/articles/articledet.cfm?articleid=439 and "Four Years of Violent Conflict between Israel and the Palestinians—Interim Summary," *Intelligence and Terror Information Center*, October 2004, www.intelligence.org.il/sp/10_04/four.htm.) But instead of breaking the national will, the Palestinian terrorism campaign convinced the Israeli public that it was confronting a threat to Israel's very existence. In January 2001, 70.4 percent of Jews (and 71.4 percent of all Israeli residents, Jewish and Arab) thought that the Israelis and the Palestinians were fighting to gain additional concessions in their negotiations, and only 24.3 percent (22 percent of Jews and Arabs together) felt that the Palestinians were not interested in making peace. But by the end of November, 61.8 percent (58.7 percent of Jews and Arabs) already felt that Israel was in "reasonably high" or "very high" danger from the point of view of national security, and only 11.4 percent (13 percent of Jews and Arabs) thought that it was not in any danger. In August 2001, the number of Israelis who believed that the Palestinians were fighting for concessions or nationhood dropped to 41.6 (46.3 of Jews and Arabs), while the number of those who believed that the Palestinians were fighting because they wanted to annihilate Israel, hate it, did not want peace or were bloodthirsty and the like rose to 41.8 percent (36.7 of Jews and Arabs). An additional 11.1 percent (11.7 percent of Jews and Arabs) believed the Palestinians were willing to die rather than lie under occupation. See the data file of "The Peace Index" in the relevant months. March 2002 was the bloodiest month of the Intifada since September 2000, during which 136 Israelis were killed (IDF spokesperson's site, www1.idf.il/dover/site/mainpage.asp?sl=HE&id=22&docid=37572.HE). At the end of the month, most Israelis refused to change their way of life, claiming that doing so would constitute a victory for terrorism. A month earlier, almost two-thirds of Jews (65.4 percent of Israelis) thought that Israeli society could withstand a protracted conflict better than Palestinian society, and approximately 5 percent thought that they both had similar powers of endurance (only 20.2 percent thought that the Palestinians could better cope with the conflict). In April 2002, after a wave of March terrorist attacks, approximately 85 percent of the public thought that the terrorist attacks and the Israeli response in Operation Defensive Shield had strengthened the sense of Israeli unity ("The Peace Index" data file, February-April

2002). Following the lethal terror attacks, reserve soldiers reported for duty to participate in Operation Defensive Shield at a rate of more than 100 percent, as even those who were not called wanted to join the fight. "Fighting for our homes" became a common expression. A good example of sentiment at the time can be found in Gil Mezuman's documentary film, "Jenin Diary: The Inside Story" or in the diary (partly written after the fact) of a reserve soldier in Operation Defensive Shield, on the site www.fresh.co.il/vBulletin/showthread.php?t=58537. In September 2003—a very short time before then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon presented his disengagement plan—some 60 percent of Israelis thought that their society was better able to withstand a protracted conflict than Palestinian society (only 19 percent thought the opposite was true, and 8.4 percent thought that both societies were equally capable), and, while most favored negotiation, they believed that there should be no negotiation under fire. The Israeli public was neither driven to the extreme of demanding all-out war, nor faint-hearted in favoring surrender to the demands of the other side. See "The Peace Index" for the relevant dates.

The above makes it quite clear that Sharon was not forced to execute the disengagement under pressure of Israeli public opinion and the weakening of its will; without expressing an opinion about the rightness or wrongness of the disengagement, it is sufficient to say that Sharon *could have taken a different path without risking much pressure from the Israeli public.* The support for the disengagement plan is another illustration of the above argument in regard to leadership. A survey published at the beginning of March 2005 showed that Israelis thought of Sharon as a corrupt prime minister, but that at least he seemed to know where he was going. Eighty percent said he was a "leader," an accolade that explains the support he received. (Yossi Verter, "Four Years of Sharon: Acknowledge His Shortcomings, Trust His Leadership," *Haaretz*, March 4, 2005.) Verter assumed that Sharon derived support from the disengagement plan; however, in my opinion he confuses cause and consequences. A less ambitious plan, suggested by Labor Party candidate Amram Mitzna, did not win the public's trust in the 2003 elections, and at the same time Sharon was saying that "painful concessions" would only be made in a permanent agreement, a process that would take, in his opinion, one or two generations. It seems that the explanation should be the other way around: The more the prime minister was portrayed as being determined—despite (and maybe because of) the absence of public discussion as to the significance of the disengagement plan in terms of security, economics, and demographics—the more the public was inclined to follow him, not because of its strong ideas on the subject, but because it believed personally in Sharon as a leader. (After all, if the question of Gaza retreat was a deciding factor, Sharon would have lost the elections to Mitzna; but the latter's Labor Party got only half the votes of Sharon's Likud Party.) It should be noted that in the poll there are several pieces of information that do not fit: For example, 44 percent of the public thought that the prime minister was an honest man, whereas 62 percent thought he was corrupt.

105. See, for example, Yaakov Amidror, "What We Are Fighting For and How It Should Be Done," in *The Strategy of Attrition*, pp. 143-156; Dan Schueftan, "Decades of Attrition Wars—The Cumulative Lesson of Israeli Experience," in *The Strategy of Attrition*, pp. 61-64; Yehuda Wegman, "The Limited Conflict Catch," *Nativ* 92 (May 2003), at www.nativ.cc/May2003/vagman.htm.

106. A problematic slogan in itself that camouflages the fact that terrorism is usually an instrument in the hands of its operators and not merely a cause in its own right; it seems that the slogan was intended to obscure the fact that there is someone behind terrorism. In this article, for the sake of convenience, I have also referred to "terror" as an entity in itself, when I obviously mean those who employ terrorism and share the same ideas.

107. Norman Podhoretz and other neo-conservatives coined the term. From their point of view, the Cold War was World War III. See Norman Podhoretz, "How to Win World War IV," *Commentary* (February 2002).

108. A transcript of the speech on September 11, 2001, is available at http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/11/bush.speech.text.

109. It is known that Germany's production output, augmented with forced labor, actually grew during the bombings. Moreover, as can be seen from their quick recovery after the war, Germany and Japan were not crushed nations. For the German example, see the writings of General Lucius Clay, who was in charge of Germany's rehabilitation. Lucius Clay, *Decision on Germany: A Personal Report on Four Critical Years That Set the Course of Future World History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1950). My thanks to Yossi Hochbaum for referring me to this book.

110. Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1996), p. 130.