

1982

## Rational Decision-Making: Israel's Security Choices, 1967

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### Recommended Citation

Lebow, Richard Ned (1982) "Rational Decision-Making: Israel's Security Choices, 1967," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 35 : No. 2 , Article 23.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol35/iss2/23>

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I expected him to tell it; while he may have some personal axe to grind, he is not a politician and at no time does the reader detect any untoward motivations in his side of this story.

Adan shows tellingly how the antics of General Sharon, using his political clout to get his way, subverted the entire Southern Command of General Gonen and nearly dislocated the Command's efforts early in the campaign. Even BarLev was unable to completely control Sharon. The resulting lack of unity of command was very costly at times. It is in this recognition that the reader also senses that the small unit cohesion so characteristic of the IDF, so lovingly shown in Chaim Herzog's work, held sway. General Adan also is at pains to show that Israel and the world ought never question the abilities of Israeli soldiers and tactical commanders even as it is sobered by the brilliance and sometimes excesses of the high command.

General Adan casts an equally searching eye at operational and tactical issues. He discusses the vulnerability of the main battle tank (very expensive) to the precision antitank missile (relatively inexpensive). While not minimizing this vulnerability, Adan suggests how the problem is overcome, that is, how it is lived with. In presenting the operations and tactics of the breakout, Adan gives the lie to the whole issue, showing what tanks are for—overrunning the intermediate air defense networks, logistics lines of communication, and command and control networks. Even the most resolute tankers will admit the weaknesses of armor against equally resolute dug-in infantry with the wherewithal to defeat individual tanks. Armored and mechanized forces ought to be used to drive deep into vulnerable rear areas of enemy formations, dislocating the enemy's tactical and operational plan, not assaulting dug-in infantry.

Another issue dealt with provoca-

tively if not in detail, has to do with mechanized formations in urban areas. Adan's armored foray into Suez City was a disaster—at least for the tank battalion that went in. But Adan's hindsight and "lessons learned" will not strike a particularly resonant chord among *our* infantry tacticians. Adan agrees that tanks alone do not operate well in cities. He argues, however, that dismounted light infantry are not dazzling either. Rather, as he puts it, his most effective force was mechanized infantry, *mounted* and firing in all directions from their fighting vehicles—a slightly spruced up version of our current mechanized infantry carrier, the M113. Since urban warfare will be very characteristic of any war undertaken by NATO in Europe, we need very carefully examine General Adan's experience and assertions born in this experience.

Of necessity, only snapshots can be presented here; I have given you some. General Adan also discusses training, combat engineers—the Suez crossing and countermine warfare, Israeli style, have infatuated any number of our own generals—reconstitution, and, most importantly, unit cohesion. The war on the Suez Front is more characteristic of armored warfare than the slugfest on the Golan; General Adan presents this war patiently, with an eye to operational lessons learned. Our business must be to come to grips with these lessons and adapt them to the war that we must prepare to fight.

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Stein, Janice Gross, and Tanter, Raymond. *Rational Decision-Making: Israel's Security Choices, 1967*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980. 398pp. \$25.00

Janice Stein, author of eight of the ten chapters of this volume, evaluates the substance and process of Israeli decision making on the eve of the Six Day War.

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Her analysis, detailed, perceptive, and methodologically sophisticated, represents a significant theoretical and policy contribution to the fields of foreign policy and international relations.

Her theoretical contribution consists in the first place of a lucid exposition of three major paradigms of decision making: the analytic (rational actor), the cybernetic and the cognitive. She describes and evaluates critically the different rules of search, revision, evaluation, and choice that characterize each of these approaches. She then synthesizes a number of different paths to decision by combining and recombining elements of the several approaches. This is based on the assumption that complex decisions are often made by complex means. Stein's analysis of these multiple decision paths breaks new ground by stipulating some of the conditions likely to be associated with the use of different decision making procedures at different stages of the decision making process.

The second part of the book examines Israeli decision making in 1967 in the light of the theoretical framework described above. Stein finds that the Israeli decision making process was relatively open and flexible and on the whole closest to the analytic paradigm. The crisis accentuated the deliberate style of Levi Eshkol's leadership and allowed free wheeling debate within a collective decision-making context. Because dissent was permitted, even encouraged, evaluation of alternatives was more effective than it otherwise would have been as competing arguments were aired and new information pertinent to them actively solicited. Parochial loyalties, political compromises, and crisis-induced stress played little observable role in the decision making.

The principal obstacle to higher quality decision making was an ambiguous definition of Israel's security problem and an imprecise application

of the strategic concepts relevant to it. In defining and developing *casus belli* in the years between 1956 and 1967, Israeli policymakers had paid insufficient attention to the ways in which their various vital interests were interrelated. Nor had they distinguished effectively among different kinds of challenges and the responses most appropriate to them. According to Stein, these critical areas of incompleteness were responsible for competing problem diagnoses, divergent estimates of Egyptian intentions, and general policy confusion.

At one point in the crisis Israel's policymakers were actually "trapped" by the poor quality of their strategic logic. Nasser's announcement of a blockade of the Strait of Tiran threatened to cut off maritime traffic to Israel's port of Eilat. On a more fundamental level it could have been interpreted as a failure of deterrence: Nasser challenged Israel because he doubted her leaders' resolve to go to war in defense of their commitment to innocent passage through the Strait of Tiran. Israeli policymakers at first failed to conceptualize these threats separately and to decide whether the blockade itself or their own apparent lack of credibility constituted the more serious security problem. They also failed to recognize that the two problems called for quite different remedies.

Reopening the Strait with American assistance would have overcome the economic threat posed by the blockade but would have done nothing to restore Israeli credibility. It might actually have been expected to undermine it further by demonstrating Israeli dependence on what the Western powers were willing to do or allow. But because the Israeli cabinet had not distinguished between the two threats they were initially attracted to the American idea of a Western Flotilla reopening the Strait. This would commit Israel to quiescence so long as the American scheme appeared to have any chance of success.

Fortunately for Israeli leaders, who had become increasingly alarmed by the rapid Egyptian military buildup in the Sinai, the American initiative failed and they regained their freedom of action.

The policy lesson of 1967 is clear: confusion and illogic in defining and applying concepts of national security can lead to disaster. It did so for Israel in 1973, an assertion Stein convincingly documents in another publication,<sup>1</sup> for that country's last-minute success in battles it had been unready to fight was many times more capable than it might otherwise have been. If Israeli policymakers were confused in 1967 they were and are a paragon of purpose and consistency in comparison to their recent and present American counterparts. Given the demonstrated consequences of strategic confusion, Washington would be well advised to devote less attention to hardware and more to fathoming the purpose and implications of the commitments in defense of which that hardware might have to be used.

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Cottrell, Alvin J., ed. *The Persian Gulf States: A General Survey*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980. 695pp. \$37.50

Alvin J. Cottrell has produced an authoritative survey of the Gulf region. This comprehensive study is a storehouse of background information on the Gulf that selectively will be of interest to students, scholars, and government officials alike. It does not attempt to keep pace with the rapid changes in the area. Most chapters do not cover events since 1978, and some perhaps dwell too

much on earlier times. Nevertheless, it is a significant research tool and a handy reference work for those wishing to learn more about the intricacies of the Gulf context.

The book is divided into four parts of varying length and includes twelve appendixes. The four parts deal with history; economics and urban development; culture: religion, language, and literature; and arts and society. C. Edmund Bosworth contributes an article on the nomenclature of the Gulf, in which he examines the various names given to the Gulf in history, but leaves the contemporary political controversy between Arab and Persian advocates to "a subsequent chapter on the modern political and diplomatic history of the Gulf."

The first part of the book focuses on history and geography, with separate chapters on political geography, military affairs, and international organizations. The excellent chapter by Ralph H. Magnus provides a comprehensive background of the Gulf states' experience in international organizations that is especially useful in placing the emerging Gulf Cooperation Council in proper perspective.

The second part deals with economics and urban development, focusing primarily on oil and urbanization. The research is thorough, but dated by the rapidity of change in the area. It is still interesting and valuable as a historical reference.

Culture is the subject of the third part, with chapters on religion and law, languages, and Arabic and Persian literature. The insights into the Gulf society to be gained from reading these chapters would be greatly advantageous to students.

The final part of the work is entitled "Arts and Society in the Persian Gulf." While it does include art, architecture, and of course, carpentering, it also sheds light on vital pieces of the political puzzle. The chapters dealing with social change, the tribes of the Gulf, and

<sup>1</sup>Janice Gross Stein, "Intelligence and Stupidity Reconsidered: Estimation and Decision in Israel, 1973," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, September 1980, pp. 147-177.