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A Look at the New Evidence

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Perception, Misperception and Surprise
in the Yom Kippur War:
A Look at the New Evidence

by Abraham Ben-Zvi

INTRODUCTION:
THE LIMITATIONS OF STRATEGIC SURPRISE THEORY

During the years following the Second World War, intensive research was undertaken on the subject of response to threat. Confronted with the baffling, yet recurrent inability of nations to respond adequately to warnings of an impending attack, many scholars concentrated on such events as the Pearl Harbor attack, the Barbarossa Operation, and the outbreak of the Korean War, and produced a voluminous body of literature. Alongside the plethora of works which sought explanations solely in terms of the specific conditions operating at the time of the event analyzed, a few other inquiries attempted to integrate the case under scrutiny into a broader theoretical framework in order to better elucidate the inherent patterns by which nations cope with situations of crisis and threat.[1] On the whole, the literature dealing with the failure of national actors to stand up to the challenge of an imminent assault can be divided into two major categories, which differ widely from one another in terms of the explicit and implicit premises, the specific nature of the explanation advanced, and the level of abstraction. These may be termed the analytic-revisionist and the cognitive-perceptual categories.[2]

In most of their basic premises, analytical-revisionist studies comprise an extension of the logic of the rational theory of decision. Convinced that actions taken by national actors reflect purpose or intention, and are chosen "'as a calculated solution to a strategic problem,"[3] proponents of this approach assume that statesmen accurately perceive external threats and opportunities, and select policies on the basis of a cost-benefit calculus in order to advance the national interest.[4] Committed to the notion of rationality (albeit in the sense of provocative action), which implies consistent, value-maximizing choice, this research category generally ignores the possibility of chance, lack of coordination, unintended consequences and coincidences. Instead, it suspects that "well-laid plans give events a coherence they would otherwise lack,"[5] and that hidden manipulation and conspiracies, rather than confusion and chaos, are the factors responsible for the failure of national actors to meet the challenge of an impending onslaught. Specifically, analytic-revisionist interpretations of the Pearl Harbor attack, the outbreak of the Korean War and the Yom Kippur War argue that the initiator did not in the least surprise the leadership of the "victim state." Rather. the attacker merely reacted to a deliberate posture on the part of the "victim," who provoked the confrontation as a carefully thought-out means of maximizing a broad cluster of desired goals, whose importance far outweighed the losses anticipated in the course of the conflagration.[6] The analytic-revisionist category of research therefore rejects the concept of surprise as an authentic, spontaneous phenomenon. Perceiving the outbreak of war as the culmination of an elaborate scheme, intended to goad the enemy into firing the first shot, this approach directly challenges the orthodox interpretation of such events as the Pearl Harbor attack, the outbreak of the Korean War and the beginning of the Yom Kippur War.[7]

Whereas the analytic-revisionist category of research is predisposed to downgrade or obfuscate any conceptual, cultural, or communication impediments to a timely and accurate diagnosis of an immediate onslaught, works which rely largely on cognitive premises as their basic analytical tool are largely skeptical about the prospects for fully overcoming the problems of confusion, ambiguity and deception. Seeking an explanation in terms of the perceptual mechanisms and predispositions which obscured the relevant warning signals gathered by the "victim state," these studies maintain that "the possibility of surprise at any time lies in the conditions of human perception and steins from uncertainties so basic that they are not likely to be eliminated, though they might be reduced."[8] As a result of this innate propensity to see ambiguous information as confirming preexisting images and beliefs "about how the world works and what patterns it is likely to present us with."[9] policy makers are bound — according to this category — to distort or dismiss as unreliable and unfounded, information which is incompatible with initial beliefs, particularly those which

comprise the core of their belief systems.[10] Given the welter of obstacles to accurate and timely threat perception "that are both profound and numerous, and therefore also practically insurmountable." strategic surprises are depicted by representatives of the cognitive orientation not as the exception but rather the rule — "practically every strategic surprise attempt is said to succeed."[11]

In the same way that the analytic-revisionist literature can be divided into several subcategories, which differ from one another both in terms of the specific interpretation pursued and the extent to which they accept the premises of the analytic-revisionist model.[12] so do various cognitive interpretations diverge in terms of emphasis, focus and nuance. They include: Alexander George's and Richard Smoke's analysis of the reward-cost implications of correct and timely signal detection, which originate in a specific policy background; Robert Jervis' review of an entire cluster of motivated (rather than purely cognitive) biases affecting threat perception; Raymond Cohen's emphasis on the dangers of misperception, which are inherent in the encounter between low-context and high-context cultures; Richard Ned Lebow's findings regarding the domestic sources of brinkmanship: and Barbara Farnham's focus on such components of prospect theory as frame change. These are but a few of the efforts to integrate cognitive premises and concepts into a differentiated and sophisticated explanation of the roots of human behavior on the eve of and during acute international crises.[13]

In assessing the contribution of these two research categories in explaining cases of inadequate response to threat, it is evident that analytic-revisionist studies reduce the complexity of human behavior in crisis situations to a monistic unity. In so doing, they establish distorted stereotypes of the political actor and of the nature of political processes. Committed to the belief that catastrophes such as Pearl Harbor, the Korean War and the Yom Kippur attack did not result from genuine intelligence failures but were rather the outcome of deliberate provocations designed to entice the opponent to strike, analytic-revisionist interpretations greatly *overestimate* the human capacity to initiate, plan and manipulate. These studies ignore the fact that political actors do not function in a social, political, cultural and psychological vacuum, but are continuously confronted with a plethora of constraints which may well restrict their freedom of action and margin of maneuverability.[14]

Turning to the evaluation of cognitive-perceptual explanations, it appears that at least some of them *underestimate* the human capacity to deviate from preexisting cognitive constraints, and thus to adopt policies which are incompatible with preconceived images and beliefs. Thus, whereas analytic-revisionist studies overestimate the human capability to control the operational environment, some (albeit not all) cognitive-perceptual works underestimate the ability of decision-making units to overcome the obfuscating screen of ambiguity, noise and deception. and thus to predicate their crisis behavior upon the dynamics of the unfolding situation rather than on the premises of certain fixed belief systems.[15] In other words, for all the efforts to proceed beyond the single distinction between "signals" and "noise" and thus to analyze the origins of surprise in a highly differentiated manner, this research category has been preoccupied with the cognitive, political and strategic sources of misperception of the opponent's intentions. It has remained at least partially oblivious to the cluster of constraints, problems and difficulties (including cognitive and doctrinal biases and barriers), which may arise *after* the adversary's basic intentions had been accurately perceived and diagnosed by the "victim state" and after the initial barriers to receptivity had been completely overcome.[16] Notwithstanding their insightful efforts to incorporate concepts and analytical tools from attribution theory and schema theory. and to differentiate between distinctive levels of rationality in the processing of new and discrepant information, the cognitive-perceptual "school" has paid insufficient attention to the multitude of cognitive, political, strategic and bureaucratic factors and constraints which may intervene between threat perception and response, and which may doom the prospects of effectively responding to the threat of the approaching attack.[17] The existence of this intervening phase between threat perception and response therefore implies that threat perception may remain decoupled from any concrete and timely action when decision makers are convinced that it is unnecessary to resort to certain emergency measures to counter the imminent danger. It further entails the possibility that even when policy makers do perceive a threat and believe some response to be feasible, desirable and necessary, unpreparedness may still be the final outcome:[18]

> We should not play down the magnitude or severity of the difficulties standing in the way of
> accurate threat perception, nor should we succumb to the common fallacy of blaming every

failure to respond effectively on unwillingness to recognize the existence of a threat. Diverse 'legitimate" as well as illegitimate' inputs, some completely beyond one's control and others having little to do with surprise, influence the response process and may dramatically affect its output and the ultimate outcome.[19]

As a step toward further differentiation not only between divergent sources of misperception, but also between the distinct phases of threat perception and response, the following analysis will focus on the case of the Yom Kippur War of October 1973. Using the recently declassified *Agranat Commission Report* as a major historical source, I believe that this sequential review of the factors and variables which intervene between threat perception and response will help explain at least some of the remaining anomalies and paradoxes associated with the outbreak of the war. In addition, it may provide the impetus for more comprehensive and comparative research on the types of linkage between perception and action.

CASE STUDY: THE YOM KIPPUR WAR, 1973

Israeli Perceptions of Arab Intentions

In order to systematically reconstruct the perceptual and behavioral patterns by which members of the Israeli political and military leadership attempted to cope with the welter of tactical indicators, which increasingly warned of an impending attack on Israel by both Egypt and Syria, it is essential to scrutinize carefully the two major determinants of expectations about future adversarial behavior that pertain to the opponents' intentions and capabilities. Although it is widely assumed that intention assessment, which is believed to be intrinsically fraught with ambiguities and ambivalence, is considerably more difficult than capability assessment, which is at least partially based on hard evidence (which is relatively easy to obtain),[20] one should not overlook the broad complex of intangible capability components and dimensions that are particularly susceptible to misperception.[21] These include: the enemy's motivation and morale: the quality of their military intelligence, control systems and communications; the nature of the prevailing military doctrine; and their ability to absorb and effectively employ new and sophisticated weapon systems.[22]

Intention assessment may be divided into two sub-categories: first, perceptions of the adversary's basic intentions; and second, perceptions of the adversary's immediate intentions.[23] The former are perceptions of the opponent's general behavioral style, approach to calculating political action, motivational calculus and ideology.[24] Altogether, these components comprise a coherent set of beliefs and expectations concerning the opponent's operational code, frame of reference, and overall cultural and conceptual frameworks.[23] The second subcategory are perceptions of the opponent's anticipated short-term behavior. Whereas perceptions of the adversary's basic intentions represent the potential and the desired, perceptions of the adversary's immediate intentions represent the tangible and the operational, with the initiator prepared to act forthwith in order to promote their basic objectives and thus to convert the hypothetical into the actual and observable.[26]

Most of the works that seek to elucidate the origins of surprise focus on the opponent's *intentions* (both basic and immediate) as the central independent variable and as the main determinant which precipitated complacency and lack of preparedness in the face of the approaching attack. However, it appears that within the Arab-Israeli sphere intention assessment did not comprise the main source of misperception and miscalculation. Instead, the main factor responsible for the inadequate Israeli response to the clearly perceived threat of war was the continued inability of Israel's military leaders (and its intelligence establishment) to update their assessments of the adversary's military *capabilities* during the period preceding the Yom Kippur War. Thus, while perceptions of the enemy's immediate intentions were revised and updated in view of the accumulating tactical indicators of the approaching war, no such change took place in the Israeli perceptions of Arab capabilities, which remained largely outdated and depreciatory.[27] Indeed, in applying these concepts and distinctions to the context of the Yom Kippur case, it is clear that during the period immediately preceding the outbreak of war, the basic strategic preconception — previously adhered to by most Israeli decision makers and high-ranking military officers — that Syria (or Egypt) would not resort to war unless it could secure control of the skies, gradually and incrementally receded into the background (particularly with regard to the northern front) in the face of the accumulating complex of tactical indicators which increasingly warned of an impending attack.

During the years and months that preceded the war, Israeli leaders were predisposed to perceive basic Arab intentions as divorced from their immediate intentions. For example, while Defense Minister Moshe Dayan repeatedly reiterated (in April, May, July and early September 1973) his belief that Arab frustration with the status quo might ultimately lead Egypt and Syria to embark on a confrontational course vis-a-vis Israel, this assessment remained — at least until late September — general, amorphous and long-term, and as such did not entail any immediate and operational ramifications for Israel.

As the defense minister observed, in his statement of 17 April 1973, to the Northern Command:

The period during which the Arabs hoped to pursue the diplomatic option as a means of recovering the territories lost in the Six-Day War has ended, and they started to play for and think of a new era of hostilities ... I think that it is safe to say that Egypt, Libya and Syria have embarked on a collision course with Israel.[28]

Similarly, in his address of 22 May 1973, to the Parliamentary Foreign and Defense Committee, Dayan pointed out: "Egypt believes that the status quo cannot be maintained indefinitely, and that it is preferable [for Egypt] to renew hostilities regardless of the consequences rather than accept the status quo."[29]

Finally, in his meeting with the editors of Israel's major newspapers, the defense minister once again alluded to the danger of war, which was inherent in a continued diplomatic stalemate (combined with Egypt's adamant refusal to accept the territorial status quo). The nature of the potential challenge, and the Arab timetable for resorting to military operations remained, however, fraught with ambiguity and permeated with uncertainty: "The Arabs are intensifying now their efforts to mobilize such resources as oil . . . . It is entirely possible that this endeavor will entail not only words but specific deeds."[30]

For all its salience and durability, this perception of the Arab threat as middle-range or long-term (which was predicated upon the premise that Egypt and Syria would not attack Israel unless they achieved the capability to strike Israel's centers of population), was progressively abandoned by several (albeit not all) members of Israel's political and military elite on the eve of war. Thus, although the Israeli leadership continued to estimate — until the outbreak of hostilities — that it could maintain its perceived air superiority into the mid-1970s, this assessment became decoupled from the growing recognition that Egypt and Syria had made a strategic decision to go to war despite the high risks involved. Notwithstanding the innate human propensity to remain fully committed to preconceived beliefs and images in the face of discrepant information, such policy makers as Defense Minister Dayan became increasingly predisposed to set aside their long-standing strategic assumptions and expectations during the period immediately preceding the war as a result of their direct encounter with a broad cluster of tactical indicators which — particularly in the Syrian zone — portrayed a picture of imminent war.[31]

Alongside this growing propensity to differentiate between the strategic and the tactical, a new symbiosis between two hitherto distinctive perceptions clearly emerged on the eve of war. With the basic and long-term transformed and converted into the immediate and concrete, the gap between the potential and the actual finally disappeared.

Some military leaders, such as Major General Eli Zeira (the director of the Israeli Military Intelligence — AMAN), continued to believe that the opponent's recognition of its own inadequate military capabilities would ultimately outweigh and mitigate the desire to challenge the status quo and thus dictate a restrained Arab posture. Defense Minister Dayan, on the other hand, became increasingly convinced that an Arab decision to initiate war could well be reached even in a perceived asymmetric military context. He felt that the perception of insufficient capabilities by no means comprised an unbridgeable barrier to the Arab margin of maneuverability and latitude of choice in seeking to dramatically alter the strategic regional environment.

Believing that Arab frustration with the continued status quo and diplomatic deadlock might dictate a recalcitrant, defiant posture despite an overall military inferiority, Dayan ultimately assigned priority in his strategic assessment of the unfolding crisis to considerations and factors related to Arab intentions over those pertaining to their capabilities. It is to the analysis of this conviction, which became the source of Israel's defense posture on the eve of war, that this article now turns.

Changing Israeli Threat Perceptions

An analysis of the process by which the threat of an imminent Egyptian and Syrian attack came to permeate the thinking of Israel's decision makers, thus overshadowing the preexisting perception of the Arab threat as a long-term and diffuse contingency, reveals an asymmetry between the northern and southern fronts. Whereas, in the Golan Heights, the screens of deception and ambiguity completely evaporated as early as late September 1973, in Sinai the change was slower. There, residues of the initial perception of war as a long-term eventuality continued to preoccupy and distract the architects of Israel's foreign and defense policy up to the very eve of war.

The initial precipitant or "'trigger event," which provided the impetus for changing Defense Minister Dayan's assessment of the prospects of war with Syria, was the briefing by Major General Yitzhak Hoffi (Commander of the Northern Command) to members of the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) general staff and the defense minister on 24 September. Emphasizing the fact that unlike the situation on the Egyptian front. Israel lacked strategic depth or any natural barrier in the Golan area. Hoffi reported that Syrian armored forces were massing on the border at an unprecedented rate. Equally unprecedented, he further pointed out, were the surface-to-air missile (SAM) batteries, which were deployed along the border.[12] Reacting to Hoffi's report. Dayan — who expressed concern in view of the threat to the Golan Heights' settlements — instructed the general staff to assess the possibility of a limited Syrian offensive in the Golan. This was the first occasion on which Israel's defense minister portrayed a very concrete and highly menacing scenario of a strategically vulnerable region becoming the target of a Syrian surprise attack designed to achieve limited territorial gains (including the seizure of a few Israeli civilian settlements) despite Damascus' perceived overall strategic inferiority.[33] This perception of a local war in the Golan as an immediate rather than long-range contingency was to become increasingly dominant and salient in Dayan's thinking in the aftermath of his visit to the Golan front, which took place on 26 September. Whereas, prior to this visit, Dayan alluded to the "war scenario" as one among several contingencies that he considered possible in view of the mounting tension along Israel's northern border, it is clear that his first-hand impressions of Israel's tactical vulnerabilities in the Golan, which were reinforced by additional data indicating that the Syrian buildup was indeed unprecedented, led him to reframe the entire regional situation. Rather than applying to the highly-charged, emotion-laden Golan crisis his pre-conceived perceptions of the long-term strategic prerequisites for a full-scale war (which precluded war in 1973), the defense minister was now prepared to decouple the Syrian front from the Egyptian theater and thus to view a limited northern conflagration as a tangible and imminent, acutely menacing eventuality.[34]

In seeking to explore the origins of this frame change from the potential and hypothetical to the unfolding and impending, it appears that Dayan's perspective changed as soon as he became convinced that the specific pattern of Syrian behavior since late September was clearly incompatible with previous instances of troop reinforcements and military exercises, and could not be reconciled with any other contingency except offensive war. Indeed, the fact that at least several components of the observed Syrian troop concentration represented — in Dayan's eyes — a significant deviation and departure from certain tacit and implicit "rules of engagement'" and the patterns of recurrent behavior within the Israeli-Syrian dyad during the period following the 1967 war, convinced him that the rapidly developing crisis could not be attributed to non-threatening motives. He concluded that the pre-crisis expectation that the Arab opponent would not pose a comprehensive military challenge to the status quo before 1975, should now be set aside, at least along Israel's northern front.[35] Consequently, he resolved the contradiction between attitude-toward-situation (his belief that Egypt and Syria perceived the status quo as unacceptable) and attitude-toward-object (his belief that Egypt and Syria were too weak to initiate general war) by assigning priority to the cluster of situational factors (which indicated that war was imminent) over those derived from basic images of the Arab opponent (which precluded war as a short-term eventuality).[36] So compelling was the situation along the Syrian-Israeli border, that "the perceived danger of pursuing the old policy based on attitude-toward-object" prompted the defense minister to revise his assessments regarding the likelihood of an immediate conflagration along the Golan border.[37]

In this context the element which affected Dayan's definition of the situation most profoundly, and which played a dominant role in the frame change he underwent in the course of the crisis, was his recognition (which surfaced for the first time on 26 September), that the Syrians had concentrated their SAM

batteries at the front rather than around Damascus. Convinced that this missile deployment unequivocally indicated an offensive design and could not be explained in any non-threatening fashion. Dayan repeatedly asserted his belief that Syria sought to place the entire Golan Heights under a dense missile umbrella so as to provide its advancing ground and artillery units with greater freedom of action and maneuverability. Thus, viewing the new Syrian missile formation (which consisted of 31 batteries covering the Golan Heights, as compared with only one battery in January 1973) as a definitive clue to Syria's war intentions, the minister became highly sensitive to the dangers to Israel inherent in the approaching northern confrontation. With the war perceived now as a virtual certainty. Dayan — who was further alarmed by King Hussein's warning of an impending Arab attack on both fronts, issued in the course of his secret visit to Israel on 25 September — became increasingly affected by its anticipated short-term outcome.[38] In particular, he began to demonstrate — during the last week of September — an ever increasing concern for the safety of the Israeli settlements in the Golan Heights. As Dayan pointed out in the course of his 1 October meeting with his general staff:

> On the Jordanian border we have civilian settlements but no enemy. On the Egyptian border we have an enemy but no settlements. On the Syrian border we have both. If the Syrians get to our settlements, it will be calamitous.[39]

Reiterating his belief that the imminent outbreak of war posed a grave danger to the highly vulnerable civilian population, the defense minister became preoccupied with the urgent need to strengthen the Israeli forces in the Golan Heights and to find ways to effectively protect the settlements. And indeed, during the two weeks which preceded the outbreak of war Dayan — as well as Major General Hoffi and the Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Elazar — were not in the least distracted or misled by any barrier of noise, ambiguity or deception in their assessment of Syrian intentions. While all of them remained convinced that Israel would ultimately take advantage of its perceived overall military superiority to prevail in the war.[40] their attention shifted — during the fortnight which preceded the outbreak of hostilities — from overall strategic calculations and assessments to specific islands of vulnerability and weakness. As a result of this perceptual shift in the pattern by which the Golan crisis was defined and framed, several precautionary measures were taken in the immediate aftermath of Dayan's visit to the Syrian border to strengthen the Israeli forces in the Golan area. Specifically, elements of the Seventh Armored Brigade (including 25 tank crews) and some heavy artillery units were dispatched to the north. Concurrently, as a measure of precaution, anti-tank positions, ditches and mines were added and strengthened, and a higher level of alert was introduced.[41] On 3 October, after the Syrians had moved 850 tanks into jump-off positions. Dayan decided to reinforce the Seventh Armored Brigade. Instead of the 70 tanks in place two weeks earlier, the total reached 188 by 5 October. On the same day, Major General Hoffi was authorized to strengthen fortifications with an increase of manpower, bringing them up to an average of 20 men per fortification.[42]

In summary, although still convinced that the overall balance of military capabilities favored Israel, Defense Minister Dayan (as well as Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Elazar. his deputy Major General Tal, and Major General Hoffi) became increasingly preoccupied with the expected costs of the impending war. On numerous occasions he confessed to having a "trauma" about what might happen to the settlements on the Golan Heights in the course of the war.[43] Far from remaining complacent in the face of the signals which indicated that war was imminent, Dayan moved apace to strengthen Israeli forces along the northern border. That the precautions taken ultimately proved insufficient to instantly and comprehensively contain the Syrian offensive is, of course, quite a different matter.

Turning to the southern front, it is clear that the perceptual shift from the remote and abstract to the immediate and concrete was sequential and phased, with the pre-existing strategic perception which ruled out the outbreak of general war with Egypt as a short-term eventuality only slowly and unobtrusively receding into the background. Unlike the situation in the Golan Heights, where war was broadly perceived as imminent as early as 26 September, the significance of at least some of the tactical data gathered by Israeli military intelligence along the southern front did not fully penetrate the screens of strategic preconceptions and deception until the very eve of war.[44]

Thus, whereas on the northern front the specific precipitant or trigger for Hoffi's and Dayan's frame change and subsequent decisions and actions can be traced safely to their interpretation of a single indicator (the specific formation of the Syrian SAM batteries), no such ironclad and early clue regarding the

opponent's intentions emerged on the southern front. Instead, the shift in perspective and policy indications from the general to the concrete and immediate was, in the canal zone, of an incremental and gradual nature. It is true that during the week preceding the war, AMAN accumulated a broad complex of credible indicators concerning Egyptian activity along the Suez Canal, which deviated from certain established patterns of behavior in apparently similar circumstances. However, this recognition that Egypt infringed upon the tacit rules of the game with Israel and crossed the demarcation line between the permissible and the forbidden did not trigger an early and comprehensive Israeli response. To illustrate: while monitoring what had been initially viewed as an extensive military exercise (Tahrir 41), AMAN discerned, on 29 September, several unprecedented Egyptian measures and moves which were incompatible with the "exercise interpretation." Among other things, AMAN discovered that, unlike previous exercises, the Egyptian Army now was practicing division-level maneuvers with unprecedented logistic efforts supporting the largest stockpiling of ammunition yet reported. Concurrently, intercepted Egyptian radio communications revealed vastly improved field communications networks that were unwarranted for a routine military exercise.[45] Furthermore, on 1 October, an additional cluster of indicators, which could not be attributed to the exercise Tahrir 41 and which included detailed reports of accelerated engineering activity along the canal, reached Israel's Southern Command headquarters from observation posts along the Suez Canal. These reports indicated the clearing of mine fields along the approaches to the canal, the building of new roads, the preparation of areas for crossing, the deployment of pontoon bridges as well as bridging equipment to the canal area, and the manning of empty anti-aircraft and artillery positions.[46]

Notwithstanding the multitude of these early and credible indicators of the approaching Egyptian assault, Dayan was initially predisposed to accept the assessment of General Zeira, who interpreted Egyptian troop concentrations as part of an extensive exercise (which was to last until 7 October). In other words, in Dayan's thinking, there was no built-in, automatic and concurrent linkage between the two fronts. Whereas in the Golan Heights the perception of war as an immediate eventuality came to outweigh and replace his preliminary strategic belief that Israel would manage to effectively deter Syria from resorting to military action (at least until 1975) as early as on 26 September, this perceptual shift did not instantly spill over to the southern front. Not until the evening of 4 October was this gap between the two fronts in terms of the respective assessments of the opponents' immediate intentions fully closed. The precipitant for this frame change in Dayan's perceptions of the Egyptian intentions (as well as in the perceptions of most members of Israel's military and political leadership) was inherent in the accumulating reports which indicated that Antonov-22 aircraft had arrived in Cairo (and Damascus) to evacuate the families of Soviet advisers.[47]

Coming in the wake of a plethora of indicators, such as aerial photographs from a special reconnaissance mission of the canal zone (carried out on 4 October), which revealed an unprecedented buildup of Egyptian forces, the news of the Soviet airlift constituted for Dayan the "'last straw" or catalyst. This led him to abandon his belief that war would be confined to the northern front.[48] This perception of imminent war on both fronts was reinforced further early in the morning of 5 October, when Zvi Zamir, the director of the Mossad, obtained a piece of information which he considered to be most reliable and conclusive, which confirmed that war would break out on both fronts at sunset on 6 October. This information was delivered to the prime minister and the defense minister on the same day.[49] And indeed, in a meeting which took place at the Defense Ministry on the morning of 5 October, Dayan expressed his belief that the ongoing military exercise in Egypt was merely a cover and a prelude for an impending attack.[50]

In conclusion, by the morning of 5 October, Israeli decision makers and military leaders (with the notable exception of the director of AMAN) had already completely abandoned the preconception which categorically precluded the possibility of a full-scale war in 1973. Their decisions on the very eve of war were therefore not in the least affected by any obfuscating noise regarding their opponents' intentions to strike instantly. Faced with mounting indicators which were depicted as inextricably related to Egypt's and Syria's war aims and which could not be reconciled with any other interpretation, they moved to reframe the crisis as a matter of direct and immediate concern which called for an immediate response.[31] Furthermore, shortly after these definitive signals had reached Prime Minister Golda Meir, she approved Dayan's suggestion for a partial (100,000) defensive reserve mobilization. However, General Elazar's request for full mobilization of combat reserves and for a preemptive air strike against Syrian airfields and missile emplacements was rejected by Dayan and subsequently by the prime minister. After inquiring what was needed for optimal defense capability, Meir authorized (less than five hours before the war broke out) a

large-scale mobilization of forces.

As Dayan stated in the course of an emergency meeting which took place in Prime Minister Meir's office on the morning of 6 October:

> I will not resign if a decision is made in favor of full mobilization. but in view of the fact that the war will start in the Golan Heights and on the banks of the Suez Canal, limited — purely defensive — measures will be initially sufficient . . .. We are not facing the same situation that existed in 1967.[32]

That these expectations, which were based on the assumption "that the regular army, supported by the airforce . . . could withstand a combined attack on two fronts . . . thus allowing ample time to mobilize the reserves . . .,"[33] failed to materialize is, of course, quite a different matter and cannot be attributed to any misperception of the opponent's intentions.

Israeli Perceptions of Arab Capabilities

In seeking to elucidate the origins of this gap between accurate intention perception and inadequate response, the article will now shift its focus to the second major determinant of expectations about future adversarial behavior: capability assessment. Contrary to the widespread belief that intention assessment is far more difficult and complex than capability assessment, the case of the Yom Kippur War demonstrates just the opposite. The main impediment to an effective and timely Israeli response to the looming military challenge originated in static and outdated perceptions of the opponents' capabilities, rather than in misperception of their immediate intentions. Apparently, the relatively static cluster of attitudes pertaining to the Arabs' overall military capabilities and ability to fully absorb sophisticated and advanced weapon systems (attitude-toward-object), surfaced as a major constraint in the course of the debate as to the appropriate response to the impending onslaught.[54]

In trying to account for the discrepancy and asymmetry between these two categories, (mention assessment versus capability assessment) it appears that by virtue of the fact that they underwent drastic modifications in their structure. formation and configuration during the period immediately preceding the outbreak of war, indicators of the opponents' *short-term intentions* were susceptible to early detection and accurate interpretation. So drastic was the deviation from certain long-standing, well-established patterns of Egyptian and Syrian tactical and strategic behavior along the Israeli border, that this infringement of the rules of the game was quickly recognized and diagnosed by Israel as a statement of intent. Israeli decision makers correctly concluded that this was the prelude to the violent repudiation and disruption of the entire pre-existing system of intricate non-verbal communication and restraint within the Arab-Israeli relationship.[55]

By comparison, the fact that capability assessments (particularly on the strategic level) inevitably dealt with prolonged processes which changed only gradually and incrementally, led the Israeli leadership to fit new and discrepant capability indicators into their preconceived theories and images. To paraphrase Jervis, the contradiction between the incoming pieces of discrepant data (concerning the opponents' capabilities) and the prevailing view was small enough to go unnoticed or to be dismissed as unimportant.[56] Whereas the change in some of the indicators of the opponents' immediate intentions — particularly on the northern front — was quite overwhelming and unequivocal and thus precipitated a major cognitive reorganization among most members of Israel's high policy elite, no clear-cut and conclusive criteria for updating and revising the opponents' capabilities emerged on the eve of war. Furthermore, the fact that capability assessments were inextricably related to an entire cluster of deeply-ingrained political, cultural and philosophical beliefs, made discrepant information particularly susceptible to the dangers of misperception, rejection and erroneous interpretation. Thus, in the absence of ironclad and definitive evidence (of the sort that was obtained with respect to the opponents' intentions) that a dramatic change in the Arabs' capabilities indeed took place, Israel's policy makers were predisposed to adhere tenaciously to their preexisting images of the opponent's overall military capabilities in defiance of all fragments of contradictory information.[57] In this context President Sadat's decision to expel some 20,000 Soviet advisers from Egypt in July 1972, became a crucial indicator of Egypt's military weakness, and thus comprised a major part of a coherent complex of capability assessments which remained largely intact until the outbreak of war.

As will be shown, it was this category of capability assessment that ultimately modified, mitigated, and softened Israeli expectations regarding the magnitude and ramifications of the impending attack. Comprising a cluster of intervening or "filtering" variables between the phases of intention assessment and response, capability assessments, which were based on an overly optimistic estimate of the balance of capabilities between the protagonists, ultimately outweighed and considerably neutralized the accurate assessments of the opponents' determination to initiate war in October 1973.[58] In other words, it was this asymmetry between intention assessments and capability assessments which enabled Israel's policy makers to retain at least some of their preconceived images of their Arab opponent, but at the cost of responding belatedly and inadequately to the approaching challenge of war. It is to an analysis of this cluster of factors that counterbalanced the impact, which the timely diagnosis (particularly in the Golan Heights) of the threat of war might have had upon the nature and scope of Israel's response, that the article now turns.

Whereas several key indicators of Egypt's and Syria's immediate intentions underwent a rapid and far-reaching transformation during the week preceding 6 October 1973, the changes in the indicators of their military capability was considerably slower and. as such, could not erode the preconceived Israeli conviction that an asymmetry in military capabilities favoring Israel still existed on the eve of war. Furthermore, whereas intention assessment was closely patterned on the distinction between the routine and the deviant, no self-evident, clear-cut demarcation lines and boundaries between divergent categories and components of the opponents' capabilities emerged in Israel's strategic thinking during the period preceding the war.

In assessing the Arabs' capabilities, the Israeli political and military leadership was particularly impressed with evidence of the Egyptian perception of its own military and political weakness. Perceived as an ironclad and single index of future behavior, which was inextricably related to basic dimensions and characteristics that could not be controlled or manipulated by Egypt,[59] this evidence of the Egyptian evaluation of its own inferior capability vis-a-vis Israel (which was accumulated from 1971 through 1972) became a central and immutable component in Israel's strategic planning. Israeli planners relied heavily on the early assessments of the Egyptian general staff, which argued before 1973 that even a limited ground operation without adequate defensive capability in the air could be turned into a disastrous defeat, and which expressed skepticism regarding Egypt's capacity to absorb and integrate modem Soviet weaponry into its armed forces. The conservative Israeli general staff remained oblivious to the overall significance of subsequent incremental indications of change in this category. Irreversibly committed to a static and immutable vision of Egypt's capabilities and highly skeptical regarding its ability to effectively operate sophisticated weapon systems, it failed to recognize the fact that by the spring of 1973 this pessimistic Egyptian evaluation of the military balance had largely changed, giving way to a considerably more optimistic cluster of predictions regarding the likely outcome of war:[60]

> Israel's leaders relied heavily on a stream of evidence entailing Egyptian evaluation of its own capabilities. Their perception was fairly accurate from 1971 through 1972, but much less so after Egypt began to receive enormous amounts of military equipment from the Soviet Union in the spring of 1973 .. .. Israel's general staff underestimated the impact of a dense antimissile system on the capacity of its air force to operate over the canal zone and the consequent damage that the Egyptian army could inflict on the standing army in the forty-eight hours of an attack.[61]

During the months immediately preceding the war, the Egyptian general staff's evaluation of the military balance had changed significantly as a result of both accelerated arms deliveries from the Soviet Union (which had resumed in early 1973) and the reorientation of Egypt's military strategy.[62] As Stein points out, "the general staff was now planning a canal crossing and a ground crossing that would not exceed the range of a dense anti-aircraft system. Consequently, the absence of offensive capability in the air became considerably less important."[63] The receipt in late August 1973, of SCUD missiles which could strike at Israel's population centers, as well as of the highly effective and mobile anti-aircraft missiles (the SAM-6, and the infantry-fired SAM-7) and the antitank missiles (the SAGGER and SWATTER) constituted for President Sadat the last precipitant. Acquiring these weapons convinced him that Egypt, though still inferior to Israel, had nevertheless reached the zenith of its military capability and should therefore exploit this window of opportunity to accomplish a set of limited military objectives as a springboard for promoting a considerably broader cluster of political and strategic goals.[64]

Although AMAN closely monitored and fully reported the Egyptian acquisition of these improved

military capabilities, these reports could not effectively penetrate the barriers of staunchly-held preconceptions and beliefs, based on Egypt's *early* assessments of the military balance of power, which envisaged it as being incapable of effectively absorbing advanced weapon systems, and hence of launching a successful general attack across the canal before 1975. And while the situation in the north was perceived as somewhat different, with Syria depicted as capable of occupying Israeli civilian settlements and of securing temporary tactical gains in the Golan, the overall Israeli picture of the military balance on both fronts remained one of total asymmetry (in Israel's favor) up to the very eve of war. Indeed, the Israeli military leadership was fully and irrevocably committed to such notions as the belief that Israel's aerial superiority was of such magnitude that its air force could not only comprehensively defend Israel's entire air space in case of war, but concurrently provide an umbrella of effective support for ground operations during the early phases of any large-scale conflagration. Consequently, they remained unaware of the possibility that, deployed to the front, the advanced SAM-6 and SAM-7 anti-aircraft missiles could well engage the Israeli air force to such a degree that it would not be capable of significantly contributing to the containment effort during the early stages of the war.[65] Thus. while believing that Egypt and Syria did intend to attack Israel in the immediate future, Israel's political and military leaders remained confident that the perceived balance of power guaranteed a comprehensive victor}' for the IDF and thus approached the confrontation with relative equanimity. Oblivious to the fact that their opponents had acquired the necessary capabilities for launching an effective limited offensive, they clung on tenaciously to their initial, obsolete perceptions of the balance of military power, and were therefore largely preoccupied, on the very eve of war, with questions pertaining to the global political context rather than to the more immediate strategic setting along Israel's borders with Egypt and Syria.[56]

Against this backdrop it is clear that, on the eve of war, capability assessment — unlike intentions assessment — lacked components which could be used as indices conveying unequivocal and definitive significance. By virtue of their innate gradualism and incrementalism, assessments of adversarial capabilities were capable of assimilating and accommodating a broad complex of discrepant, yet fragmented information without having to confront head-on these incompatibilities, and thus without having to adjust or reorient their basic premises. And indeed, further reinforced by certain historical analogies and lessons (derived from such events as the Six-Day War of June 1967), the cluster of long-standing "background images" of the opponents' capabilities remained static and fixed until 6 October 1973.[67] By comparison, while incorporating certain sequential and phased components, the category of intention assessment — by virtue of establishing clear and salient demarcation lines between the standard and the exceptional — provided the impetus for timely and comprehensive cognitive modifications.

Motivated by a pervasive perception of Arab military weakness (and assuming that the territories occupied during the Six-Day War provided Israel with strategic depth and formed a defensive belt sufficient to absorb the first blow), the Israeli leadership proceeded to search for the most appropriate means for coping with the crisis. Furthermore, committed to a rigid and static military doctrine which was predicated upon the belief that the Suez Canal zone could be defended despite the perceived local military asymmetry favoring Egypt, Dayan and Elazar remained highly optimistic regarding the outcome of the approaching Arab onslaught.[68]

ANALYSIS

As the preceding case study has sought to demonstrate, on the eve of war the immediate intentions of both Syria and Egypt were clearly diagnosed by most members of Israel's high policy and strategy elite. And although an asymmetry clearly existed between the northern front, where the belief in the certainty of war emerged early, and the southern front, where the process of perceptual change from the general and long-term to the concrete and immediate was considerably slower, still the pre-existing strategic, cognitive and political impediments to accurate intention assessment largely disappeared before the outbreak of the war. However, whereas intention assessment proved (particularly on the northern front) situationally easy, capability assessment (particularly on the southern front) proved strategically difficult. In this sphere the Israeli leadership remained fully committed to the belief that, despite certain initial tactical asymmetries in terms of troop formation and deployment favoring Syria (which the early Israeli countermeasures were designed to adequately address), a major strategic asymmetry in overall military capabilities between Israel and both its

opponents continued to exist. In view of this discrepancy between the two determinants of expectations about future adversarial behavior, Israel's high-policy elite ultimately assigned priority to the cluster of capability indicators over those pertaining to Egypt's and Syria's immediate intentions.[69] As a result, while the certainty of war was not questioned by Israel's policy makers, its threatening military ramifications were considerably downgraded and mitigated as a result of a set of intervening indicators of the opponents' capabilities. In other words, the accurate perception of the threat of war did not precipitate, in this case, an adequate and timely response. Indeed, with attitude-toward-object ultimately emerging as the dominant cognitive category, and with attitude-toward-situation receding into the background, Dayan's advocacy of partial mobilization became Israel's official posture on the very eve of war.[70]

Specifically, on the morning of 6 October 1973, Israel's decision makers were virtually certain that the Arabs would launch a massive attack later in the day. With all remaining doubts regarding this eventuality rapidly evaporating in the wake of the arrival of a conclusive and definitive warning from a highly reliable source, which confirmed that war on both fronts was imminent, the question which preoccupied Meir, Dayan and Elazar was how and when to respond to the impeding military challenge. It is precisely at this juncture that an entire cluster of factors, which were closely patterned on the category of capability assessment, came to intervene between the phases of war recognition and response, thus dictating a behavioral pattern which proved inadequate and insufficient. Continuing to believe that a major gap in the overall military capabilities favoring Israel still existed, Dayan — during the morning hours of 6 October — remained unwavering in his opposition to launching a preemptive air strike against Syria and to authorizing a large-scale mobilization of reserves. Notwithstanding his recognition that the Arab attack would take place before the mobilization of reserves could be completed, Dayan continued to believe that the military situation did not call for such a politically costly decision.[71] As we have already witnessed, although the chief of staff repeatedly called for a preemptive strike (and a large-scale mobilization), the minister of defense "gave greatest weight to the international political implications of military action."[72] Convinced that, by virtue of its superior military capabilities and secure borders (particularly in the south), Israel could absorb and contain the Arab attack while avoiding international condemnation (and possibly sanctions) which a preemptive strike was bound to precipitate, he was therefore prepared to pay a perceived marginal military price for securing a highly-desired set of political goals. As the defense minister pointed out a few hours before the outbreak of the war:

> As far as the question of 'preemptive strike' is concerned, although — operationally — it is preferable to attack the opponents before they launch their own attack against us, in my opinion we cannot [politically] afford such a measure …. In principle, we cannot open fire before they open fire . . .. While the idea of a preemptive strike may appear most appealing, we do not face now the circumstances of 1967 ... I do believe that ... we should enjoy a sound international standing when the war starts.[73]

Thus, seeking to eliminate any residue of ambiguity or doubt regarding Arab responsibility for the war. Israel's defense minister based his decisions on a cluster of at least partially outdated assumptions of the overall balance of military capabilities within the Arab-Israeli dyad. Believing that the other side had "deep-rooted, permanent deficiencies," Dayan held that "the aerial superiority of the Israeli airforce over the Arabs' airforces guaranteed the failure of any Arab offensive; that no meaningful loss of ground would occur that could not quickly be regained; [and] that once the enemy's advance was blocked, Israeli offensive moves would be immediately decisive."[74]

In this light, it is clear that deeply-held and long-standing national images of a profound asymmetry in the balance of military power favoring Israel continued to permeate and shape the thinking of Israel's high-policy elite even though the situational, operational picture on the eve of war was one of growing military symmetry as a result of the massive shipment to Egypt of sophisticated Soviet weapons systems in 1973.[75]

Indeed, the recently published reports of the intensive discussions, which took place among Israel's political and military leaders during the morning hours of 6 October, clearly indicate that, except for the director of military intelligence, they all concentrated on the question of response rather than on the prospects of war (which was perceived as certain and imminent). Asserting repeatedly that the post Six-Day War borders provided Israel with an added margin of security, Dayan remained convinced that this "'strategic depth" enabled Israel to take risks and confidently wait for the approaching onslaught.[76] Furthermore, at her

meeting with the American Ambassador to Israel, Kenneth Keating, which was held four hours before the war started, Prime Minister Meir informed the ambassador that "Israel had decided not to launch a preemptive strike so as to avoid any doubt — in the world and the United States — as to the identity of the side which fired the first shot."[77] At a meeting with Dayan, the chief of staff and a few cabinet members, Meir strongly concurred with her defense minister, maintaining that "the world will not tolerate an Israeli preemptive strike."[78]

The decision not to preempt was confirmed in an emergency cabinet meeting that started at noon on 6 October, and which was interrupted two hours later by the news that a full-scale attack had been launched by Egypt and Syria. Ultimately, while the anticipated political gains may have been achieved as a result of this decision, they were clearly overshadowed by what proved to be exceedingly high military, human and psychological costs, which had far-reaching strategic and political ramifications in the aftermath of the war.[79]

CONCLUSIONS

The central conclusion that emerges from the foregoing analysis is the need to approach the question of the origins of surprise sequentially.[80] Whereas most of the cognitive literature has remained preoccupied with the effort to identify and underscore the patterns and types of misperception that repeatedly prevented the "victim state" from recognizing their adversary's belligerent intentions, much less emphasis has been placed on subsequent cognitive (and bureaucratic) processes which help shape the actual response to the perceived threat of attack. Accurate intention assessment, then, should be viewed as the tip of the iceberg and as nothing more than the initial phase in a long and multifaceted cognitive process. Deciphering the opponent's intentions and immediate goals by no means guarantees, therefore, that one's response will be appropriate or satisfactory. Hence, attention should be paid to a variety of constraints and factors which may surface *after* the initial barriers to accurate intention assessment have been overcome, and which may ultimately reduce the chances of coping effectively with the anticipated assault. Surprise, then, should be viewed in relative rather than absolute terms, and may well be the outcome of inaccurate capability assessments rather than of the inability to decipher the adversary's immediate intentions. Indeed, as the preceding review of the Yom Kippur case sought to demonstrate, perceptions of the opponent's military capabilities (which were inextricably related to a wide complex of strategic, cultural and technological factors) proved to be the major obstacle to effective and timely response by downgrading and minimizing the threatening ramifications (particularly in the southern zone) of the approaching confrontation.

And, while it is virtually impossible to completely separate the assessment of the opponent's intentions from the appraisal of its capabilities, since any assessment of the opponent's immediate intentions is at least partially based on the analysis of the specific configuration, deployment and location of its military forces, more attention should be given to the tactical and tangible indicators of the adversary's war-relevant actual behavior than to its basic strategic preconceptions, aspirations and predilections. In other words, rather than focusing on the general components of the military balance, the leadership of the status quo power should assign priority — in its effort to assess the likelihood of war — to the cluster of ingredients which pertain to an imminent planned action (local, partial or general), by the challenger, which may be carried out even when the perceived overall balance of military capabilities favors the status quo or defending state.[81] Indeed, whether flawed (as was the case before the Yom Kippur War) or accurate, assessments of the *overall* military balance should not be viewed as the dominant index for evaluating the prospects of a limited or even general military action. Such a challenge may be derived from a broad cluster of political, ideological, economic, psychological and domestic factors, and is, therefore, only seldom predicated entirely upon purely military considerations.

Although the foregoing reconstruction of the divergent patterns of perception and misperception was confined to one specific case study, the Yom Kippur episode should by no means be approached in purely idiosyncratic terms, but should provide part of the infrastructure for the development of a differentiated and sequential theory of threat perception and action. Additional cases in which apparently similar forms of misperception were evident — such as the Chinese intervention in the Korean War in November 1950, the Sino-Indian Border War of October 1962, the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, as well as a large number of asymmetric low-intensity conflicts — should be reconstructed scrupulously in the hope of establishing the

necessary empirical building blocks for the cumulative development of a typological theory of cognition and action in the shadow of war.[82]

Endnotes

1. The first major study which attempted to integrate a contextual analysis of a specific case study into a broader theoretical context is Roberta Wohlstetter. *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962). See also Abraham Ben-Zvi. "Hindsight and Foresight: A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of Surprise Attacks," *World Politics,* 28, no. 3 (April 1976), pp. 381-82.

2. Abraham Ben-Zvi, "The Study of Surprise Attacks," *British Journal of International Studies,* 5 (Spring 1979), p. 129. The present article seeks to build upon, update and occasionally modify, the findings and conclusions of the author's earlier works on surprise, both theoretically and in the context of the case of the Yom Kippur War.

3. Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown. 1971). p. 13.

4. Jack S. Levy, "Misperception and the Causes of War: Theoretical Linkages and Analytical Problems." *World Politics,* 36, no. 1 (October 1983), p. 76. See also David A. Welch, "The Organizational Process and Bureaucratic Politics Paradigms: Retrospect and Prospect," *International Security;* 17, no. 2 (Fall 1992), p. 114.

5. Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 321.

6. Ben-Zvi, 'The Study of Surprise Attacks," p. 130.

7. For analytic-revisionist interpretations of the Pearl Harbor attack see Anthony Kubek. *How the Far East was Lost* (Chicago, IL: Regnery. 1965); G. Morgenstern. *Pearl Harbor: The Study of the Secret War* (New York: David Adair, 1947); Charles A. Beard, *President Roosevelt and the Coming of War, 1941* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1947); T.R. Fehrenbach, *F.D.R.'s Undeclared War: 1939-1941* (New York: David McKay, 1967); F.R. Sanborn. *Design for War: A Study of Secret Power Politics. 1937-1941* (New York: David Adair, 1951), **and** Charles C. Tansill, *Back Door to War: Roosevelt Foreign Policy, 1933-1941* (Chicago, IL: 1952). For illustrations of the analytic-revisionist orientation in the context of the Korean War see Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); I.F. Stone, *The Hidden History of the Korean War* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1951), and D.F. Fleming, *The Cold War and its Origins, 1917-1960* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961). The main analytic-revisionist explanation of the Yom Kippur War is Zvi Klein, "The Yom Kippur War: Surprise or Entrapment." *State, Government and International Relations,* (Hebrew), 6 (Fall 1974), pp. 127-41.

8. Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor,* p. 397. See also Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: The Free Press. 1990), p. 40.

9. Robert Jervis, "Perceiving and Coping with Threat," in Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 18. See also Yaacov Y. Vertzberger, *The World in Their Minds: Information Processing, Cognition, and Perception in Foreign Policy Decisionmaking* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 57.

10. Jervis, *Perception and Misperception,* pp. 187-90; Ephraim Kam, *Surprise Attack: The Victim's Perspective* (Cambridge. MA: Harvard University Press. 1988), p. 89; Ole R. Holsti and Richard R. Fagen, eds., *Enemies in Politics* (Chicago, IL: Rand McNally, 1967), pp. 15, 19.

11. Vertzberger, *The World in Their Minds,* pp. 57-58; Ariel Levite, *Intelligence and Strategic Surprises* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 18: Robert Jervis, "Deterrence Theory Revisited," *World Politics,* 31, no. 2 (January 1979), p. 306.

12. For a classification of the literature see Ben-Zvi. "The Study of Surprise Attacks," pp. 131-32.

13. Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), p. 574; Jervis, "Coping with Threat." pp. 24-27; Raymond Cohen. *Negotiating Across Cultures* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1991), pp. 25-27; Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), pp. 57-97; and Barbara Farnham, "Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis: Insights from Prospect Theory." *Political Psychology,* 13, no. 2 (1992), pp. 205-33.

14. For a detailed critique of the analytic-revisionist category of research see Ben-Zvi, "The Study of Surprise Attacks," pp. 135-41. The major analytic-revisionist contention regarding the origins of the Yom Kippur War, according to which Israel deliberately provoked Egypt and Syria as a means of securing another comprehensive victory and thus of perpetuating its control over the occupied territories, lacks any supporting evidence. See Klein. "The Yom Kippur War." pp. 130-34.

15. See Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, DecisionMaking, and System Structure in International Crisis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 291-97.

16. For exceptions see Richard K. Betts, *Surprise Attack: Lessons for Defense Planning* (Washington. DC: The Brookings Institution, 1982), *passim:* and his "Surprise, Scholasticism, and Strategy: A Review of Ariel Levite's Intelligence and Strategic Surprises," *International Studies Quarterly,* 33, no. 3 (September 1989), pp. 330-34; Abraham Ben-Zvi, "Intention, Capability and Surprise: A Comparative Analysis," *The Journal of Strategic Studies,* 13, no. 4 (December 1990), pp. 21-22.

17. Alexander L. George, "The Causal Nexus Between Cognitive Beliefs and DecisionMaking Behavior: The 'Operational Code' Belief system," in Lawrence S. Falkowski, ed.. *Psychological Models in International Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1979), p. 109. See also Ben-Zvi, "Intention, Capability and Surprise," p. 22; Levite, *Strategic Surprises,* pp. 136, 151. See also the conceptual contributions of Deborah Welch Larson. *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation* (Princeton. NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 24-65.

18. Levite, *Strategic Surprises,* pp. 151. 158.

19. Ariel Levite. "Intelligence and Strategic Surprises Revisited: A Response to Richard K. Betts's 'Surprise, Scholasticism, and

Strategy'," *International Studies Quarterly.* 33, no. 3 (September 1989), p. 347. See also Kam, *Surprise Attack,* p. 51.

20. Avi Shlaim, "Failures in National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Yom Kippur War," *World Politics,* 28, no. 3 (April 1976), p. 362; Kam, *Surprise Attack,* p. 57. See also Jervis, "Coping with Threat." p. 14; Levy. "Misperception and the Causes of War," pp. 82, 92.

21. Levy. "Misperception and the Causes of War." p. 82.

22. Ibid., pp. 82-83; Kam, *Surprise Attack,* pp. 76-77; Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes,* p. 120.

23. See Jervis' definition of "basic intentions" in Jervis. *Perception and Misperception,* p. 50.

24. George and Smoke. *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy,* pp. 582-83.

25. Ibid.; Kam. *Surprise Attack,* p. 66.

26. Kam. *Surprise Attack,* p. 60. See also Klaus Knorr. "Threat Perception," in Klaus Knorr. ed., *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1976), pp. 78. 84.

27. Ben-Zvi. "Intention, Capability and Surprise," p. 23; Michael I. Handel, "'Intelligence and the Problem of Strategic Surprise." *Journal of Strategic Studies,* 7, no. 3 (September 1984), p. 239. For similar illustrations see Yigal Sheffy, "Unconcern at Dawn. Surprise at Sunset: Egyptian Intelligence Appreciation Before the Sinai Campaign. *1956" Intelligence and National Security.* 5. no. 3 (July 1990), p. 46.

    It should be added that although Hybel's book does address the issue of capability assessment in the context of the Yom Kippur War, his analysis concentrates mainly on Israel's failure to decipher its opponent's immediate intentions. According to his analysis, the Israeli miscalculation of the Arab capabilities can be seen as an auxiliary factor, but not as the principal source of surprise in the war. See Alex Roberto Hybel, *The Logic of Surprise in International Conflict* (Lexington. MA: Lexington, 1986). pp. 75-85, 95-101.

28. Quoted in Arie Braun. *Moshe Dayan and the Yom Kippur War* (Hebrew). (Tel-Aviv: Edanim, 1992), p. 21; see also pp. 27-29.

29. Quoted by *The Agranat Commission Supplementary Report: The Yom Kippur War* (Hebrew). (Givatayim: IDF Archives, declassified in 1995), 1, p. 173. See also Vertzberger, *The World in Their Minds,* p. 129.

30. Quoted by *The. Agranat Commission Report,* 1. p. 173. See also Farnham. "'Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis." pp. 205-33.

31. For similar illustrations see Jervis. *Perception and Misperception.* pp. 249-50: Abraham Ben-Zvi. "'The Outbreak and Termination of the Pacific War: A Juxtaposition of American Preconceptions." *Journal of Peace Research.* XV. no. 1 (1978), pp. 39-42.

32. Michael I. Handel, *Perception, Deception and Surprise: The Case of the Yom Kippur War. Jerusalem Papers on Peace Problems* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. 1976). p. 32; Michael Brecher. *Decisions in Crisis: Israel, 1967 and 1973* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1980), p. 64; Braun. *Dayan and the Yom Kippur War,* p. 38; Brian A. Keller. *Avoiding Surprise: The Role of Intelligence Collection and Analysis at the Operational Level of War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, 1992). p. 16: Cohen and Gooch. *Military Misfortunes,* p. 106.

33. Dayan's statement of 24 September is quoted by Braun. *Dayan and the Yom Kippur War.* p. 38. See also *The Agranat Commission Report.* 1. pp. 18-21.

34. For a similar interpretation see Farnham, "Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis." pp. 206-7, 226-27. See also Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky. "On the Psychology of Prediction," *Psychological Review.* 80, no. 4 (1973). p. 241. See also the distinction between "background images" and "immediate images" in Snyder and Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations,* p. 291.

35. See Raymond Cohen, "Threat Perception in International Crisis." *Political Science Quarterly.* 93, no. 1 (Spring 1978), pp. 103-6; Jervis. "Coping with Threat." pp. 14-18; Abraham Ben-Zvi. *The Illusion of Deterrence: The Roosevelt Presidency and the Origins of the Pacific War* (Boulder, CO: Westview. 1987), pp. 38-39.

36. For an analysis of the interaction between attitude-toward-situation and attitude-toward-object see Vertzberger, *The World in Their Minds,* pp. 128-30. See also Jervis. "Coping with Threat," p. 17: Braun, *Dayan and the Yom Kippur War.* pp. 41-56.

37. Yehudit Auerbach, "Turning-Point Decisions: A Cognitive-Dissonance Analysis of Conflict Reduction in Israel-West German Relations," *Political Psychology,* 7, no. 3 (1986). pp. 538-39. Auerbach's analysis seeks to elucidate the general pattern by which turning-points decisions are made. See also *The Agranat Commission Report,* 1, pp. 18-21: Cohen and Gooch. *Military Misfortunes,* p. 107. However, the fact that this cognitive readjustment did not entail the complete abandonment of Israel's strategic-military doctrine, was to precipitate a response to the perceived challenge which was based on a cluster of outdated and partially flawed assessments of the opponent's overall military capabilities.

38. On King Hussein's warning see *Ha'aretz,* 2 January 1995. p. A2 (a report by Yossi Melman). See also Robert Jervis. *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1970), pp. 26-27.

39. Quoted by *The Agranat Commission Report,* 1, pp. 13-14. See also Brecher, *Decisions in Crisis.* p. 66. See also Shlomo Nakdimon, *Law Probability* (Hebrew). (Tel-Aviv: Revivim, 1982), pp. 62. 68, 69; Braun. *Dayan and the Yom Kippur War.* pp. 54-55.

40. For illustrations see Ben-Zvi. "Intention, Capability and Surprise," pp. 24-25: Braun. *Dayan and the Yom Kippur War.* pp. 54-55.

41. For similar perceptions see Farnham. "Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis," p. 221. See also Handel, *Perception. Deception and Surprise,* p. 32; Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes.* p. 106; Nakdimon. *Low Probability,* p. 82; Vertzberger, *The World in Their Minds,* p. 66.

42. *The Agranat Commission Report,* 1, pp. 18-20.

43. Ibid, 1. p. 20. See also Braun. *Dayan and the Yom Kippur War.* p. 55. On the need to integrate affective processes into the analysis of threat perception, see Janice Gross Stein. "Building Politics into Psychology: The Misperception of Threat."' *Political Psychology,* 9, no. 2 (1988), p. 246.

44. Levite, *Intelligence and Strategic Surprises,* p. 27.

45. Keller, *Avoiding Surprise,* p. 16: Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes,* pp. 106-7: Handel. *Perception, Deception and Surprise,* pp. 32-33.

46. Handel, *Perception. Deception and Surprise,* p. 33; Keller, *Avoiding Surprise,* p. 17: Hybel, *The Logic of Surprise,* pp. 98-99.

47. Janice Gross Stein. "Calculation, Miscalculation, and Conventional Deterrence II: The View from Jerusalem," in *Psychology and Deterrence,* p. 74; Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes.* p. 107: Hybel. *The Logic of Surprise,* p. 99.

48. *The Agranat Commission Report.* 1. pp. 21-29: Stein. "Calculation. Miscalculation, and Conventional Deterrence II," p. 74; Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes,* p. 107. See also Betts. *Surprise Attack,* p. 76. Egypt had 1.100 artillery pieces and five forward-deployed infantry divisions poised on the canal's west bank. As well, there were reports of an unusual and massive earth-removal operation, which was carried out by the Egyptians along the northern sector of the Suez Canal.

49. Braun. *Dayan and the Yom Kippur War,* p. 70; Nakdimon, *Low Probability,* pp. 105-8: Eytan Haber, *Today War Will Break Out* (Hebrew), (Tel-Aviv: Edanim. 1987), p. 20: Eli Zeira, *The October 73 War: Myth Against Reality* (Hebrew), (Tel-Aviv: Yedioth Ahronot. 1993). p. 160: *Ha'aretz,* January 2, 1995 (a report by Yossi Melman), p. A2.

50. *The Agranat Commission Report,* 1. p. 21.

51. For an analysis of the tactical indicators on the eve of war see Michael I. Handel. "Intelligence and the Problem of Strategic Surprise." *The Journal of Strategic Studies,* 7, no. 3 (September 1984), p. 239, and Janice Gross Stein, ""Intelligence and Stupidity' Reconsidered: Estimation and Decision in Israel. 1973," *The Journal of Strategic Studies.* 3, no. 3 (September 1980). p. 151. See also Abraham Ben-Zvi, "Misperceiving the Role of Perception: A Critique," *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations, 2,* no. 2 (Winter 1976-77), pp. 89-91: Farnham. "Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis." p. 227.

52. Quoted by *The Agranat Commission Report,* 1. p. 39. See also Braun. *Dayan and the Yom Kippur War.* pp. 72-73: Handel, *Perception, Deception and Surprise,* p. 38.

53. Vertzberger. *The World in Their Minds,* p. 66.

54. For a similar use of these categories see Auerbach. "Turning-Point Decisions." p. 543.

55. See Cohen, "Threat Perception," pp. 106-7; Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 126-89.

56. Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses on Misperception," *World Politics,* 20, no. 3 (April 1968), pp. 465-66. See also Richards J. Heuer, "Cognitive Factors in Deception and Counterdeception," in Donald Daniel and Katherine L. Herbig, eds., *Strategic Military Deception* (New York: Pergamon, 1982), p. 39.

57. *The Agranat Commission Report,* 1, p. 85. See also Kam, *Surprise Attack,* pp. 94-95; Richard E. Nisbett and Lee Ross. *Human Inference: Strategies and Shortcomings of Social Judgment* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1980), p. 370; Auerbach, "Turning-Point Decisions," pp. 542-43.

58. Ben-Zvi, "Intention, Capability and Surprise," pp. 32-33; Vertzberger. *The World in Their Minds,* p. 167; Hybel, *The Logic of Surprise,* pp. 78-79; Handel, "Intelligence and the Problem of Strategic Surprise," p. 239.

59. This definition is based on Jervis, *The Logic of Images,* pp. 18, 44. See also Vertzberger, *The World in Their Minds,* p. 66.

60. Stein, "Calculation, Miscalculation, and Conventional Deterrence II," pp. 79-80.

61. Ibid. See also Vertzberger, *The World in Their Minds,* pp. 61, 66.

62. Janice Gross Stein, "Calculation. Miscalculation and Deterrence I: The View from Cairo," in *Psychology and Deterrence,* p. 46.

63. Ibid., **pp. 46-47.**

64. Ibid., p. **47;** Michael I. Handel, "Crisis and Surprise in Three Arab-Israeli Wars." in Klaus Knorr and Patrick Morgan, eds.. *Strategic Military Surprise: Incentives and Opportunities* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1984), p. 138; Keller, *Avoiding Surprise,* p. 20. Earlier, in April 1973, 18 Libyan Mirage 5 fighters were deployed to Egypt; Braun. *Dayan and the Yom Kippur War.* p. 23.

65. Vertzberger, *The World in Their Minds,* p. 61. See also Patrick Morgan, "The Opportunity for a Strategic Surprise." in *Strategic Military Surprise,* pp. 200-1; Hybel, *The Logic of Surprise,* p. 65.

66. Handel, "Crisis and Surprise," p. 139.

67. Michael R. Oakes, *The Operational Use of Intelligence: What to Avoid* (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1992), p. 32; Zeira, *The October War,* p. 5. See also Vertzberger, *The World in Their Minds,* p. 139.

68. *The Agranat Commission Report.* 1, pp. 39-40. See also Morgan, "The Opportunity for a Strategic Surprise," p. 237; Zeira. *The October War.* pp. 59, 61-65: Hybel, *The Logic of Surprise,* p. 99.

69. *The Agranat Commission Report,* 1, pp. 62, 95-96. See also Handel, "Crisis and Surprise." p. 20; Knorr, "Threat Perception," pp. 98-99: Auerbach, "Turning-Point Decisions," p. 543.

70. Levite, *Intelligence and Strategic Surprises,* p. 156.

71. *The Agranat Commission Report,* 1, pp. 39-40. See also Ben-Zvi, "Intention. Capability and Surprise," p. 33; Stein, "Calculation, Miscalculation, and Conventional Deterrence n," p. 77; Vertzberger, *The World in their Minds,* p. 159; Kam. *Surprise Attack,* p. 33; Levite, *Intelligence and Strategic Surprises,* p. 157.

72. Stein, "Calculation, Miscalculation, and Conventional Deterrence II," p. 77; *The Agranat Commission Report,* 1, p. 43.

73. Quoted by *The Agranat Commission Report,* 1, p. 39. See also Braun. *Dayan and the Yom Kippur War.* pp. 72-73; Stein, "Calculation, Miscalculation and Conventional Deterrence II," p. 76; Zeev Schiff, "The Agranat Commission's Shortcomings," *Ha'aretz.* 6 January 1995, p. B1.

74. Quoted by Kam, *Surprise Attack,* p. 80. See also Haber, *Today War Will Break Out,* p. 27: *The Agranat Commission Report,* 1,

pp. 39-90.

75. See B. Thomas Trout, "Rhetoric Revisited: Political Legitimation and the Cold War," *International Studies Quarterly,* 19, no. 3 (September 1975), pp. 251-81.

76. *The Agranat Commission Report,* 1, p. 40. See also Avner Yaniv, *Deterrence Without the Bomb: The Politics of Israeli Strategy* (Lexington, MA: Lexington. 1987), pp. 127-28.

77. Quoted by Braun, *Dayan and the Yom Kippur War,* p. 77. See also William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1993), pp. 148-51.

78. Quoted by *The Agranat Commission Report,* 1, p. 42. See also Nakdimon, *Low Probability,* p. 127.

79. See Robert Jervis, "Deterrence and Perception," *International Security,* 7, no. 3 (Winter 1982-83), pp. 3-31.

80. See Stein, "The Misperception of Threat," p. 248.

81. See Patrick Morgan. *Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1977). pp. 25-43; Yair Evron, *War and Intervention in Lebanon: The Israeli-Syrian Deterrence Dialogue* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 177-79.

82. For a preliminary effort to juxtapose the cases of the Yom Kippur War and the Sino-Indian Border War of October 1962, see Ben-Zvi, "Intention. Capability and Surprise," *passim.* See also, on the Sino-Indian Border War, Yaacov I. Vertzberger, *Misperceptions in Foreign Policymaking: The Sino-Indian Conflict, 1959-1962* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1984), p. 124; and his "India's Strategic Posture and the Border War Defeat of 1962: A Case Study in Miscalculation," *The Journal of Strategic Studies,* 5, no. 3 (September 1982), pp. 370-89; B.N. Mullik, *The Chinese Betrayal* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1971). For similar findings see Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes,* pp. 176-78; Lebow, *Between Peace and War,* p. 150. For a similar analysis of the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, see Sumit Ganguly, "Deterrence Failure Revisited: The Indo-Pakistani War of 1965," *The Journal of Strategic Studies,* 13, no. 4 (December 1990), pp. 76-80.

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