

“Targeted Partnership” and Beyond: An Additional Theoretical Layer

Armed Forces & Society

2017, Vol. 43(1) 139-163

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DOI: 10.1177/0095327X16642042

journals.sagepub.com/home/afs



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Abstract

Jihadist terror is a multidimensional challenge that compels unique difficulties on compatibility between the military campaign and the political goal. Compatibility between military campaigns and political goal requires a deeper understanding about the Jihadi terrorism phenomenon that could be achieved by a strategic and diagnostic learning process. Such learning requires certain characteristics, which enable the creation of open discourse. This article introduced definitions of closed and open discourse, characterized the required conditions for creating open discourse, and explained the linkage between strategic learning and open discourse. This article aims to add another theoretical layer to Rebecca Schiff's "targeted partnership" concept by elaborating on the essence of the encounter and discourse between the political and the military echelons in the context of terrorism in the Middle East, using examples from the American and Israeli experience. The concepts of "Discourse Space" and "Diagnostic Learning" are corresponding with Schiff's concept and accomplish it.

Keywords

Jihadi terror, civil–military relations, strategy, strategic learning, civil control, counterterrorism, targeted partnership

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Introduction

One of the main challenges of civil–military relations (CMRs) in democratic states is assuring compatibility between the political goal and the military efforts. Eventually, it is the core essence of civil control. The challenge appears wherever there is a need to exercise military force in order to achieve political goals. In order to ensure such compatibility, the political echelon should be able to define its political goals and issue a clear political directive, while the military echelon should be able to define operational success. Both definitions create the meaning of victory in the relevant context.

The spread of Jihadi terrorism in the wider Middle East brought this challenge to an edge reflected in the encounter between political and military echelons of the Western democracies that are involved in the war against this terrorism. In reality, where the military echelon struggles to define operational success, the political echelon is likewise challenged in defining its desired political aims (Jeffrey, 2015). The lack of definition in each echelon's objectives increases the likelihood of political–military incompatibility and lays the ground for crises of trust and expectations (Banjo & Segal, 2014). Such incompatibility reflects weak civil control, which in a democratic state ought to maintain congruence between military action and political aims while at the same time ensuring the supremacy of political thinking over military thinking (Michael, 2007a, p. 522).

The complexity of the challenge of terror as an example of strategic challenges of CMRs obliges both levels, though principally the political echelon, to undertake complex learning and analytic processes. This kind of learning enables more complex and accurate interpretations of the operational environment. In order to assure that such a learning process takes place, a unique discourse space (Michael, 2007a) is required, defined in this article as “open discourse space.” This open discourse space requires, in turn, a change in the traditional pattern of relations—based on hierarchy and clear separation—between the two echelons.

This article aims to add another theoretical layer to theoretical contribution made by Rebecca Schiff's “targeted partnership” concept (Schiff, 2012) by elaborating on the essence of the encounter and discourse between the political and the military echelons in the context of the Israeli and American experience in the war against terrorism in the Middle East. The concepts of “Discourse Space” and “Diagnostic Learning” (Levy, 1994) correspond with Schiff's concept and accomplish it.

The articles tries to address the theoretical gap with regard to the learning process in the echelons' encounter. The theoretical literature about learning does not approach the “black box” in the encounter between the echelons as a unique phenomenon. The black box is neither military nor political in its essence; it is a unique combination of both. Therefore, the literature about military learning as well as organizational learning does not address the learning qualifications required or conducted in this encounter. Eventually, we do not really know how the actors conduct the learning process during the encounter and how exactly knowledge is

created there, but we do understand that at least in the case of the Jihadi terrorism, the results of this process are poor.¹

I will begin discussing, briefly, the essence of Jihadi terrorism in the Middle East as a unique phenomenon and the difficulties it causes in shaping a relevant strategy. Then, I will turn to discuss the need for diagnostic learning as an intellectual tool for understanding the strategic essence of the phenomenon and assuring the compatibility between the political goal and the military effort. Later, I will try to make the connection between the essence of the required learning process and the characteristics of the encounter and discourse between the echelons in order to explain the linkage between both and the need for an “Open Discourse” as a concept and organizational tool. In this section, I will try to correspond with Schiff’s targeted partnership concept by adding another theoretical layer to her model. I will conclude with mapping the barriers and obstacles for creating the open discourse and the consequences following these difficulties.

Some reflections about the Israeli experience, mainly with regard to the campaigns against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and the American experience in Iraq, Afghanistan, and recently with Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS; although there are some differences between them), will be used in order to clarify the theoretical aspects. Three major groups of questions will be addressed in this article that assist in discussing and analyzing the challenge and structuring the article:

- (1) What are the difficulties in ensuring congruence between military action and the political endgame in the context of the war against Jihadi terrorism?
- (2) What is diagnostic learning? Why is it required in order to tackle the challenge and shaping the relevant strategy? What Open Discourse is about and why is required for facilitating diagnostic learning?
- (3) What are the necessary conditions for shaping the relevant discourse space and the barriers that limit it?

The Jihadi Terrorism as a Challenge for CMR

The Arab Upheaval of the last 5 years has created a dramatic geostrategic change in the Middle East and beyond, increasing both the size and the significance of several non- and semistate actors, including fundamentalist, Jihadist organizations (Miodownk et al., 2014). New organizations have split off from existing ones or have arisen amid new circumstances created by the significant enlargement of frontier areas in Arab states experiencing accelerated processes of state failure (Guzansky & Berti, 2013). These developments have increased Jihadist terror activity, led by Al-Qaida and new organizations like ISIS that have occupied territories, erased international borders, and have succeeded in attracting many supporters, including young citizens of industrialized democracies. These youths have volunteered for combat in the ranks of terrorist organizations. Some have returned home as trained and ideological terrorists, establishing an infrastructure of terror cells in

their native countries. In certain states, such as France and Belgium, these infrastructures have been activated, making Jihadist terror a domestic security threat as well as a threat to core values. These democracies face a complex reality in which they have to tackle Jihadist organizations at home and abroad simultaneously.

Jihadi terrorism is a phenomenon characterized by a speedy emergence as well as brutal violence and sophisticated media strategy, based mainly on social networks. Unlike conventional and traditional terror, we used to know, the Jihadi terrorism is decentralized in its essence, based on ideological and operational networks that operate in semicoordinated manner all over the Middle East and beyond. However, unlike the traditional terror, there is Jihadi military thought evolving. It is still an enigma for the West and requires intellectual efforts in order to understand it. The West cannot ignore it because "... ignoring them [Jihadi military thought and operational art] will have serious analytical and practical consequences" (Adamsky, 2010, p. 3).

The American strategy against ISIS since the establishment of the Islamic State and even before reflects confusion and does not achieve any significant goals with regard to the effort to eliminate ISIS and to stabilize the region. Michael Eisenstadt (2015b) in his testimony submitted to the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities describes it, saying:

These developments undermine Obama administration claims of progress in the war, and highlight fundamental flaws in the administration's strategy that need to be rectified if the United States and its coalition of sixty-plus states are to succeed ... In fact, much of the dysfunction in U.S. strategy derives from American policies ... the United States needs to address the means-ends mismatch in its strategy.

Jihadi terrorism requires intellectual efforts and cultural sensitivity in order to improve our understanding about it and to enable developing relevant strategies. Unfortunately, "Many American political science scholars, with some notable and important exceptions, did not appreciate cultural fieldwork because it was considered unscientific" (Schiff, 2016, p. 230). Dima Adamsky (2010) refers to the military dimension of the phenomenon, saying:

The ability to anticipate conceptual innovation in *jihadi* military thought is of unquestionable importance. The Western academic community should establish a research program to closely follow the emergence of *jihadist* operational art. (p. 13).

Jihadi terrorism demonstrates resilience, innovation, and motivation to expand and continue challenging the regional and international order and Western values by replacing the existing "nation-state" model with the Islamic Caliphate. It is not only a military challenge but also a multidimensional phenomenon. It will be difficult to delegitimize it on religious grounds, and its decentralized character enables its

survival and expansion. Wrong strategies, shaped on insufficient understanding and learning process,

have strengthened Salafi-jihadist groups such as ISIL, thereby undermining the U.S.-led campaign . . . Washington needs to acknowledge that its own policies contributed to the rise of groups like Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIL in Syria, and the return of ISIL to Iraq. (Eisenstadt, 2015a)

In such circumstances, Brooks claims, “Strategic assessment is vital to state security and to international peace and stability.” Brooks argues that the nature of states’ CMRs is crucial for shaping the relevant strategy. She adds in this regard:

Domestic relations between political and military leaders shape the institutional processes in which leaders evaluate their strategies in interstate conflicts . . . In short, civil–military relations affect how states engage in strategic assessment. (Brooks, 2008, p. 2)

In the Israeli case, the challenge’s complexity stems from the scope of terror in areas adjacent to the state. Israel must cope with terror in the Palestinian Territories,² the developing frontiers in the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights, and along its border with Lebanon. The operational area available to terrorist organizations is broadening, making Israel’s borders easier to penetrate. In addition to these threats, some domestic organizations and activists (Palestinian citizens or residents) are willing to assist and cooperate with terror organizations under the banner of ethno-national conflict and the inspiration of ISIS (Amidror, 2015; Rappoport, 2015).

This reality makes Israel’s coping with Jihadist terror a task of myriad meanings and ramifications beyond the military and preventative intelligence scopes. It is a complex task for the political echelon, but it seems even more complex for the military establishment as a mission-oriented organization that has to develop and use different and competing paradigms. Some are natural for the military establishment while others are alien and difficult to internalize and implement (Ben-Ari, Lehrer, Ben-Shalom, & Vainer, 2010; Ben-Ari, Sher, & Vainer, 2013, pp. 87–98).

When democracies must cope with terror organizations that operate as non- or semistate actors, characterized, among others, as hybrid organizations, they face a real difficulty in defining strategic goals and the conditions needed to achieve them. General Petraeus characterized the difficulty regarding these organizations, saying “It is really a conventional army that also has elements of an insurgency and indeed significant terrorist elements as well” (Marcus, 2015).

This difficulty generates a gap in the expectations of the political and military echelons: “. . . it appears that there is no clear compatibility between the strategy of using military force and the operational response, given by the military’s commanders, and the political echelons’ expectations of the results of exercising military force” (Banjo & Segal, 2014, p. 6). It seems that the last confrontation between

Israel and Hamas, “Operation Protective Edge,” showed demonstrable incompatibility between the political aims and the military force. Former Deputy Chief of Staff, Major General (MG) Yair Nave, explains the gap in expectations between the military and the political echelons while blaming both for its occurrence.

I think that there was a new political outlook, and the military did not adapt its plans, inventories, or ‘state of mind’ to it. What happened in practice is the opposite of what the military prepared for in recent years If you want to change the military’s operational paradigm in such a dramatic manner, you have to conduct organized deliberations in the government, to decide what the ramifications are, to prepare accordingly, and not to find yourself surprised with a 50-day operation. (Rappoport, 2015)

The imperative of ensuring maximum compatibility between the military effort and the political goals compels a process of interpreting reality and understanding its characteristics in a way that creates a common language regarding the facts and diminishes their subjective interpretation (Banjo & Segal, 2014, p. 9). Such an effort reflects strategic-diagnostic learning process that will be discussed in the coming section.

The Nature of Learning and Its Importance for CMR

Strategic learning is based on abstract thinking, which entails creativity and a comprehensive view. Over the past decade, the military world has seen the development of literature and a significant knowledge base on this kind of thinking. Strategic learning has been seen as a necessary tool for improving methods of coping with complex military challenges developing in a world of asymmetric warfare between state armies and nonstate actors. The literature sees abstract thinking as based on the idea of *design* in an architectural sense and compels an overarching view that relates to the campaign as a *gestalt*, enabling the design of the political idea before an operational one which characterized in an engineering sense (Alon, 2013, p. 9).

The military echelon tends to focus on tactical and operational issues, relying on its own mechanism of inquiry to develop its operational knowledge infrastructure between campaigns. This mechanism is suitable for learning at the tactical and operational levels because it locates the gaps between planning and implementation and determines the lessons required for changes in operational approaches. In this regard, it is simple learning. This mechanism is not suitable for coping with strategic dilemmas and does not serve the development of knowledge required in complex contexts.

The military leaders focused on tactical and operational problems not connected to achieving the strategic goals of the civilian leadership. Focusing on tactical problems that were not supportive of the strategic vision is an excellent example of EIII [third type errors] decisions by military leaders. (Allen & Coates, 2009–2010, p. 79)

Learning derived from military investigation is inherently limited and does not sufficiently extract the cognitive dimension in the context of complex challenges like the Jihadi terror as an example, which compels complex and diagnostic learning. Such learning led by critical thought and doubtfulness (both require time and breaking existing hierarchies) is required to update and develop existing knowledge, improving its relevancy in order to analyze new and changing strategic events.

In a critical discourse space, which allows complex learning, a tension arises between the sources of the existing conception and its logic and future developments. The tension is studied with regard to case studies, identifying failures and understanding their causes. This process requires distinguishing between three levels: the descriptive level—contents, the critical level—interpretation, and the synthesis level—new creation and ramifications.

The product of learning in such a discourse space is a new and relevant strategic logic, created from challenging basic assumptions, conceptions, plans, organizational structures, and capabilities.³ In order to assure that the learning environment contains the three levels, the military echelon must express its views, expertise, and knowledge. The political echelon must listen to the military's advice, even when it contradicts its ideology (Allen & Coates, 2009–2010, p. 82).

Military personnel should challenge their civilian superiors intellectually, constantly probing the strategic vision of the latter and compelling those superiors to confront the potential weakness of that vision. (Walton, 2012, p. 103)

Complex learning, also known as systemic thinking, is not easy to digest; it undermines existing paradigms and discourse structures and evokes opposition. To think systemically, it is not enough to deal with content (the descriptive level); the other two levels must be reached as well. The difficulty in doing so results from, among other things, existing organizational structures and discourse patterns. The process of knowledge creation is circular, beginning with the existing system, transitioning to an emerging system and finally to a desired system. Once the desired system becomes entrenched, the process begins again. Strategic learning in such a circular process increases the probability of shaping a conception that enables transition from the abstract, strategic environment to a concrete, operational one.

Such learning processes are creative and architectural (in the sense of generalization and abstraction). They crystallize ideas and conceptions as opposed to the simple learning typical of planning and implementation stages. This is the difference between problem setting and problem solving. At this stage, the focus is on defining the problem and clarifying its current and emerging ramifications.

Learning and knowledge creation are, by nature, an intellectual challenge (Michael, 2007b) and compel a distinct partnership between the political and the military echelons as well as social agreement on its characteristics. The traditional differentiation between the echelons, including hierarchical, structural, and procedural patterns of relations, does not enable such a partnership. Such a partnership can

be developed in a climate that enables open and continuing discourse between the echelons. This discourse is an essential condition for developing learning processes, nourished from the unmitigated encounter between tensions created by different and contradicting perceptions (Jeffrey, 2015) and knowledge infrastructures. Such a discourse enables clarification of political directives and assures their relevancy to the characteristics of developing challenges. This type of discourse enables a better and more accurate understanding of the threat, the military's current capabilities, and a more relevant definition of the strategic purpose, in a reality where "strategic goals are frequently changing during operations . . ." (Banjo & Segal, 2014, p. 10).

The Israeli experience indicates weaknesses and restrictions with regard to knowledge production by the political echelon during its encounters with the military. "Observing Israeli governments over the decades raises the concern that they lacked, and continue to lack, the capacity to learn . . . Israel's governments have not developed a relevant strategy in the areas of security, violent conflict, and war" (Tamari, 2014, p. 4). Tamari refers to a report written in 1986 by a subcommittee of the Knesset's Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, which dealt harsh criticism to the Israeli government for its lack of meaningful, national security deliberations. The report rebukes "A government that does not learn remains behind changes in the area" (Tamari, 2014, p. 4).

In the Israel Defense Force (IDF), there is a learning tradition reflected in its organizational structure (intelligence, strategic planning, and operational division), work processes (intelligence assessment, situational and operational assessment, annual planning and lesson learning), and its organizational culture which emphasizes learning as part of military professionalism. The political echelon lacks these capabilities and, therefore, exists in an asymmetrical relationship with the military that favors the latter. Even when the political echelon established (1999) the National Security Council (NSC), most of its personnel were retired IDF officers. The NSC, moreover, deals mostly with the "here and now" and lacks the capacity to develop an independent knowledge infrastructure that can challenge military knowledge. Therefore, in the absence of a real challenge to the military's knowledge, the knowledge developed by the military remains the most significant and influential component of the political knowledge and decision-making process (Michael, 2007b). This gap could be narrowed by extensive discourse between the echelons, a discourse that enables meaningful and relevant knowledge creation that facilitates the reexamination of political goals and military action in order to ensure maximum compatibility in their implementation.

Closed and Open Discourse, Learning, and Their Implications for CMR

International experience, primarily that of America in Iraq and Afghanistan, demonstrates failed strategy and disappointing outcomes. "[. . .] why things had gone so badly wrong with America's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan [. . .] At this point, it is incontrovertibly evident that the U.S. military failed to achieve any of

its strategic goals in Iraq” (Fallows, 2015). This failure could be attributed to the traditional and hierarchical discourse (closed discourse) between the echelons that precludes the development of relevant strategies for coping with complex challenges.

Only when both echelons succeed in developing a partnership and improving their discourse by changing its structure, transforming to open discourse, do relevant strategies emerge and, along with them, better results. Partnership and open discourse allow the echelons to challenge existing perceptions, enhance knowledge infrastructures, and interpret the environment in a more accurate manner. This, in turns, enables the reexamination of the relevancy of political goals, the clarification of political directives, and the development of more efficient methods of achieving goals.

Without a realistic set of ends supported by appropriate means, U.S. counterterrorism cannot be a truly strategic enterprise regardless of how brilliant it might be tactically and operationally. (Walton, 2012, p. 102)

Modern wars, which are asymmetric and host to terror and guerilla strategies, demand analysis and planning that is comprehensive, complex, and abstract. Dudi Alon (2013) terms these patterns “cognitive designs” (p. 10). This nomenclature results from the difficulty in defining the problem and understanding its many aspects, which together impede the definition of both political aims and military achievements. A necessary condition for coping with this complex challenge is “open and broad discourse, which synthesizes different ideas and viewpoints through a process of competition between different ideas” (Alon, 2013, p. 10).

The Israeli experience, like the American one, proves that the military echelon has unique knowledge regarding the operational modes of nonstate actors as terror organizations. These capabilities were developed as a result of intensive and ongoing efforts to confront this challenge and from the accompanying learning processes. The acquired knowledge is significant because militaries are organizations based on an organizational culture that encourages continuing learning processes, investigation and drawing conclusions as a central method, sophisticated staff work, discipline and hierarchy, commitment to the task, and the ambitious pursuit of its achievement. The political organizational culture, described in the next sections, does not facilitate such processes.

Relations between the echelons, which were shaped by the preservation of the conservative and hierarchal formula that demands clear separation between the military and the political spheres, narrow the discourse space between the echelons. This does not allow the political echelon to extract the military’s knowledge infrastructure in a way that prevents the military echelon from challenging the political strategic vision:

Military officers cannot veto the decisions of civilian superiors; they should do as much as is practically possible to oblige the latter to craft coherent policy goals and grand

strategy that uses military power prudently to further national objectives. (Walton, 2012, p. 104)

In the reality of a restricted interechelon discourse space, the political echelon cannot attain the essence of civil control over the army, in the sense of adapting military action to political aims and ensuring the supremacy of political thought over military thought (Michael, 2009). On the other hand, every time the political echelon coordinates with the military and fully reveals its strategic intentions, the military echelon introduces its own interpretation of the situation, based on its understandings and knowledge infrastructure, allowing the political echelon to reexamine the relevancy of its strategic intentions and adjust them accordingly (Allen & Coates, 2009–2010, p. 79).

Referring to the concept of discourse space, it is important to distinguish between a closed process (discourse), characterized by deliberations and introducing alternatives as a structured and constant process, or ritual that represents simple learning, and an open and ongoing process (discourse) in ad hoc formations and characteristics, shaped by context and need that represents diagnostic/strategic/complex learning, resulted from the clash of current and new logics. It seems that this kind of learning did not occur in the Israeli case during Operation Protective Edge. Despite the high number of security cabinet discussions (27) during the operation, the discourse between the echelons was a closed discourse marked by the traditional characteristics of formation and rules:

Despite endless discussions, the cabinet did not provide innovative and appropriate strategic insights during the operation, and it seems that there is link between operational methodologies and demonstrable results . . . in order to advance learning there is a need to bring products that encourage continued learning, and not closed operational plans from which one must choose. (Hacohen, 2014)

Why Open Discourse Space? Theory Vis-à-vis Experience

Unlike closed discourse space, discourse space managed as an open process enables decision makers to develop a new and updated conceptual system and the necessary knowledge infrastructure for a relevant interpretation of a changing reality: “Decision makers don’t need another position, but a broader and better interpretive system” (Hacohen, 2014). Such a system compels release from stagnation and entrenchment within existing knowledge formations. Open discourse permits passage to imagined worlds that enable the formation of new cognitive structures, which are crucial for different and critical examinations of existing knowledge about the phenomenon or challenge.

From a learning perspective, the opening point is in the integration between political and military logics, which facilitates the development of newer and more relevant policy. In many cases, the political level lacks experience and knowledge

regarding complex military strategy and operational planning. The Targeted Partnership model (Schiff, 2012) suggests a method for the political echelon to bridge this gap by affording military experts a broader space for introducing their expertise in a way that enables the political echelon to shape more efficient and relevant strategic alternatives.

On the other hand, the political echelon should bear in mind that military thought is focused on threats, “without relating to threat, real or imagined, militaries have no basis for existence and operation” (Tamari, 2011, p. 1). If the political echelon is not sufficiently aware of this characteristic, security threats will be perceived as more serious and tangible than other threats (demographic, social, and political; Michael, 2009). Because possible consequences are perceived as near and immediate, the military’s modes of thinking and action will receive strong preference (Tamari, 2011, p. 1).

Tamari’s conclusions are similar to Schiff’s as both demand critical inquiry that compels relating to the military and political environments as a single environment that requires unified and coordinated thought and action from both levels (Tamari, 2011, p. 3). Schiff and Tamari’s observations align with the main ideas introduced in the Discourse Space model (Michael, 2007a), which were demonstrated during Operation Protective Edge. The security cabinet’s difficulty in developing innovative strategic insights stems from basic and inherent flaws in the cabinet’s work. Those were influenced by, among other things, existing patterns of CMRs. Actually, this is a recurrence of a phenomenon well known in cabinet deliberations from the 1973 October War until today. These shortcomings were well described by former IDF Head of Strategic Planning and Head of NSC, MG (res.) Giora Eiland (2014) who participated in many cabinet deliberations over many years.

Eiland claims that the reliance of ministers on information chosen by the Minister of Defense and Chief General of Staff (CGS) for presentation in formal meetings creates a dangerous situation of group thinking and exaggerated reliance on existing conceptions: “Most of the time in cabinet meetings is devoted to the presentation of intelligence and operational updates and too little time is devoted to the question of what is right to do.” Eiland emphasizes that an essential and methodological problem is created when cabinet members can approve or reject a plan proposed by the military and wonders: “Who says that these are all the options?” He also warns of the small details trap in which “dealing with details drags the discussion to shallowness” (Eiland, 2014). Such a ritual characterizes a closed discourse.

It is important, however, in the context of Protective Edge, to distinguish between the cabinet plenum (eight ministers and other professionals) and the “Trio” (prime minister [PM], defense minister, and CGS authorized by the cabinet to act in the spirit of the cabinet’s resolutions). The “Trio” worked with strong congruence and harmony by relying on professional staff (mainly the IDF and, in a more limited manner, the NSC). It seems that the discourse at this level was more open and

enabled complex learning processes, unlike those at the cabinet level, which focused on technotactical details and not on strategic alternatives. The Trio's discourse permitted the development of logics and principles that led to the formation of alternatives. Those in turn led to the definition of limited operational goals, which evoked harsh criticism from cabinet members (mainly Foreign Minister Liberman and Minister of Economic Affairs Bennett) who were not party to the process and continued to support much broader and far-reaching goals.

In order to advance the learning of complex issues, real discourse should deal

not with the proposed plan's details, but with choosing the right path among several options. The ministers dealt with details . . . and not enough time was devoted to the basic discussion of strategic questions like enemy's identity, the operation's goals or the potential achievements of different alternatives. (Eiland, 2014)

Schiff describes Defense Secretary Rumsfeld as an example of the quandary that stems from strict adherence to the model of formal separation in CMRs. In contrast, Schiff describes General Petraeus' operational model,⁴ which integrated experts from different knowledge spheres, including military, state department, and intelligence professionals, creating a clearing for partnership, which consequently encouraged vibrant argument and deep discussions on all aspects of handling the counter insurgency (Schiff, 2012). Secretary of State Gates, together with General Petraeus, shaped a discourse space that enabled military officers to provide decision makers with beneficial advice. Targeted partnership is, in effect, the formalization of a learning process and the creation of relevant knowledge through open and substantive discourse between the echelons.

Following Petraeus, the American army has enhanced developing the domain of knowledge defined as "Human Terrain." The military is assisted by experts from different disciplines including anthropologists, sociologists, and cultural experts (for further reading about cultural intelligence, see Michael & Kellen, 2009, pp. 260–289). These resources and methods have imparted the military with cultural awareness, which has improved its understanding of the sociocultural environments in Iraq and Afghanistan. This kind of understanding is a unique knowledge that affords a better understanding of antagonists' motivations and the priorities of local populations. This, in turn, allows the military to support local needs in a manner that decreases support for antagonists. "Without this professional voice . . . the [negative] strategic impact might become significant" (Allen & Coates, 2009–2010, p. 78). Therefore, it is necessary that the voice of military professionals be heard and taken into account to clarify policy and shape relevant directives (Allen & Coates, 2009–2010, p. 85). This voice can develop into influential input only through interechelon dialogue that encourages deep and significant discourse leading to the shaping of relevant and efficient policy and military strategy (Allen & Coates, 2009–2010, p. 76).

In the Israeli case, due to the absence of open discourse in many cases, there is a phenomenon known as "Black Holes" where "Israeli governments do not develop

organized knowledge”; instead, they are focused on known and familiar past problems, “[. . .] not on the environment in which they developed, nor on the movement from the past to the present and the future” (Tamari, 2014, pp. 4–5).

New Pattern of Partnership for Ensuring Learning and Relevancy

The grappling of democracies with Jihadi terror is a multidimensional and complex challenge. The terror attacks that occurred in Paris in November 2015 and in Brussels in March 2016 clearly represent the complexity and difficulties in handling terror at home, executed by state citizens who volunteered with Jihadi organizations, trained and returned home instilled with an ideology that directly challenges the state’s core values. Handling these complex challenges requires targeted partnerships that shapes a different form of decision-making process. A more flexible form with interechelon discourse enhances the probability of better strategy and provides more relevant responses for threats in multiple arenas. The strategy derived from this pattern of discourse will influence the military’s allocation of resources, composition, and operational strategy. Such patterns of relations between the echelons will be reflected in the public discourse as well and influence the military’s standing in society and lead to the shaping of updated social conventions with regard to the way CMRs in the state should be conducted.

More flexible relations between the echelons mandate a change in the dichotomist differentiations dictated by normative approaches and theories. Douglas Bland (1999) developed the concept of “shared responsibility” as a basis for a different form of CMRs. Similar to Bland, MG Gershon Hacohen suggests breaking the firm distinction between military and political echelons, “not due to confusion regarding their roles, but because of their shared responsibility” (Yotam Hacohen referring to Gershon Hacohen, 2014). Hacohen claims that dividing responsibility, be it juridical or theoretical, harms capabilities to think systemically. Shared responsibility, according to his understanding, is a crucial condition for developing shared and continuing learning. “Only shared learning in real time enables breaking the fixation barrier that controls the Israeli decision making process most of the time and more so during emergencies” (Yotam Hacohen referring to Gershon Hacohen, 2014).

Breaking the firm distinction between the echelons leads to a flattening of the dichotomist and hierarchical form, known as the normative model in the traditional theories of CMRs. The normative model emphasizes and empowers the importance of structures, processes, and role definitions and, therefore, does not really enable the conditions for significant (strategic) learning. Such a discourse form suppresses the intellectual essence of the discourse required for handling complex challenges like Jihadi terror. The intellectual essence of open discourse can be demonstrated in the encounter between statesmen and generals when it is characterized by “hierarchy, but not in thought” (Tamari, 2011, p. 7). The right approach should enable a bridging between “the edge of abstract political directive and the edge of [concrete] practice” (Tamari, 2011, p. 7). The world of new warfare, which the Jihadi terrorism

is part of, characterized by operational problems in all fighting dimensions (Banjo & Segal, 2014, p. 6), creates huge difficulties in the compatibility of military actions with desired political prospects. It represents a significant gap between the political endgame and the military practice.

A possible way to handle this gap is suggested by Schiff's targeted partnership model as a temporary and flexible model for a specific need or defined political goals. In the Israeli case, it might be required as a fixed model due to the variety of security challenges and threats (direct and indirect) that Israel has to manage constantly and simultaneously in many frontiers. On the other hand, there is a danger that in the reality of blurred boundaries between the military and the political spheres, and in a situation of strategic partnership between the echelons, the military might become identified with certain political positions and lose part of the broad public support it earns.

In the American case, we can isolate challenges that exist far from its borders and define them in time and space. In contrast, the Israeli case involves security challenges very close to—and within—the state's borders, which tangibly involve civic society. In addition, we have to remember the significant geostrategic differences resulting from the size of the country and its military service model. The IDF, unlike the professional military in the United States and a few Western militaries based on mandatory service, is a popular army based on mandatory and reserve service, and its activities directly touch most citizens in Israel. Therefore, shaping open and relevant discourse between the echelons is a complex challenge that compels broad civic and societal legitimacy.

Assuring Compatibility and Targeted Partnership

The political directive influences the compatibility between military action and political goals and defines the manner in which the military implements political goals through military action.

The military must insist on understanding the political goals, their underlying assumptions, their means of achievement, and it should insist on receiving them. And the country's political leadership and public must understand that it is their job, not the military's, to define victory and mobilize the resources to achieve it. The military's responsibility is prevailing on the battlefield. (Jeffrey, 2015)

If we define compatibility as the dependent variable and political directive and the discourse's characteristics as independent variables, we will find the highest compatibility between military action and political goals is achieved when the political directive is clear and determined and the discourse space is an open one that represents high-quality, diagnostic, and strategic learning. On the other hand, poor compatibility is created when the political directive is blurred, or does not exist, and the discourse space is a closed one. In the two other combinations, low levels of compatibility also result.

Political Directive		
Blurred	Clear	
Reasonable Compatibility	High Compatibility between military action and political aims	Open Discourse Strategic Learning
Poor Compatibility Incompatibility	Limited Compatibility	Discourse Characteristics
		Closed Discourse Tactical Learning

Figure 1. Conditions for achieving compatibility.

The idea of open discourse relies on the assumption of obligating partnership between the echelons. In this sense, it can be supported by the concept of targeted partnership (Schiff, 2012), as an alternative for the traditional and conservative relations between the echelons. The concept is based on her developed “concordance theory” (Schiff, 1995) and challenges the traditional separation between the echelons.

Concordance theory is based on the idea of social agreement between the government, military, and citizenry, which enables different patterns of CMRs and different levels of military intervention in the decision-making processes, where the military respects political superiority, does not challenge it, and does not interfere in domestic politics (Schiff, 2012, p. 319).

Her targeted partnership model might be found as more relevant, appropriate, and possibly even a condition of success for the United States in combating terror and violent insurgencies in places like Iraq and Afghanistan:

Targeted partnership may involve the temporary co-mingling of military, political, and societal boundaries even when the broader institutional and cultural relationship between military and society may be one of separation. (Schiff, 2012, p. 318)

Targeted partnership opens up greater flexibility in decision-making processes. According to Schiff’s approach, this partnership is suitable for limited periods in order to achieve certain goals and reflect the comprehensive pattern of CMRs in the state. Such a partnership allows for the formulation and implementation of civil policy and military strategy by a discourse between the echelons that promotes the determination of the best strategic and military policies for the state. It is important to emphasize that a necessary condition for such a partnership is a sense of shared responsibility (Bland, 1999) that assists in bridging the gaps between the echelons.

As mentioned, an important outcome of open discourse is diagnostic and strategic learning that increases the probability for shaping relevant strategy leading to significant achievement in coping with the challenge of Jihadist terror. Significant achievements in this regard create a positive experience that encourages the

institutionalization of the strategic culture that enables strategic learning. Such a strategic culture proved relevant for creating significant achievements backed by social legitimacy, which then empowers the echelons to conduct open discourse.

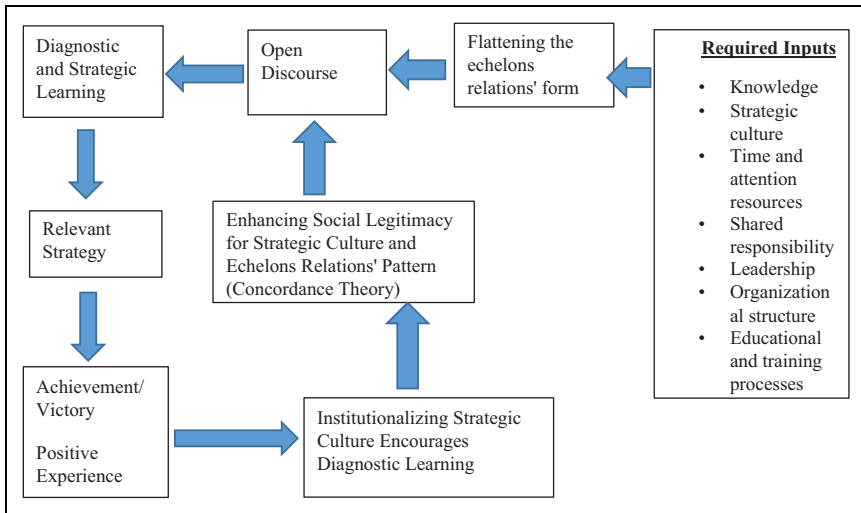


Figure 2. Inputs and conditions for open discourse.

Barriers to Open Discourse and the Required Conditions for It

Open and qualitative discourse between the echelons requires a structured, cultural foundation rooted in mutual trust. A series of inherent barriers and tensions impede the creation of such a discourse, not just in Israel but in all democracies. These barriers can be classified into four categories:

- (1) Essential barriers refer to the political echelon's leadership qualifications, its constraints and limitations in political maneuvering, primarily because of difficulties in defining political goals and the need for domestic and international legitimacy.
- (2) Structural barriers are connected to the organizational structures and functional dimensions of the military and the government, including its professional staff.
- (3) Procedural barriers relate to the way the interechelon encounter is conducted, the characteristics of discourse, and their influence on learning processes.
- (4) Cultural barriers reflect the influence of the organizational political culture on the echelons' encounter.

These barriers show that the emergence of open discourse—which enables strategic learning characterized by an intellectual culture of openness, doubt, curiosity, and research—cannot be taken for granted.

These characteristics create tensions by clashing with constraints imposed on the political echelon. In the Israeli case, coalitional regime enforces compromises between parties with different and even contradicting ideologies. Such a situation leads to “internal conflict between government members on strategy, near- and long-term policy, and likely to dismantle the government” (Tamari, 2011, p. 4). The conflict escalates when we deal with the leader’s responsibility to shape reality, because “the leader, unlike the decision maker, does not just choose between alternatives; he shapes reality” (Hacohen, 2014). This is the substantial purpose of the political echelon in general and, in particular, in meeting the current challenge of terror.

The characteristics of the political structure and culture in Israel turn the struggle for political survival into a significant “resource robber” for any acting PM. PMs in Israel have to devote endless efforts to maintaining their coalitions. In most cases, the PM faces difficulties in exposing his real intentions, developing clear political directives, and changing basic conceptions. He will fear leaks and maintain ambiguity to prevent the undermining of the coalition’s stability by critics at home and abroad (Ben-Meir, 1987, pp. 117–154; Freilich, 2012). Such a situation does not enable open and critical discourse. In the absence of those outlets, a significant learning process is not possible.

The political echelon must know when its knowledge infrastructure is insufficient and impeding decision-making. More importantly, it should be able to initiate learning (e.g., David Ben-Gurion and the seminars of 1947 and 1953). The chances of implementing a learning process are small without a comprehensive change in the political system. The existing political system perpetuates military dominance. It is worth questioning, “Whether the IDF and the knowledge it brings for security, crises and wars, is good enough to compensate for the governments weakness in the sphere of security and wars” (Tamari, 2011, p. 6).

The Israeli case is particularly challenging because the military is the only entity that consistently develops knowledge on potential wars and violent conflicts, making it an “Epistemic Authority” (Michael, 2009). The political level, on the other hand, does not develop relevant knowledge in sufficient depth and scope and, therefore, governments of Israel find themselves continually surprised. The reason for these surprises “[is not] the absence of intelligence warnings, but the government’s lack of an established basis of knowledge, which is the condition for [the kind of] learning that clarifies emerging realities” (Tamari, 2011, p. 5).

Indeed, the military in Israel systemically develops knowledge but that knowledge is influenced by the military’s organizational culture and biased toward mission performance (Ben-Shalom & Shamir, 2012, pp. 101–117; Dixon, 1979). Developed military knowledge does not necessarily provide the tools needed for resolving the tension between military organizational structure, operational doctrine, and the

essence of required military achievements (Tamari, 2011, p. 7). The military's operational orientation and tendency to adjust its functionality to existing operational forms and structures decreases the probability of complex processes of learning and discernment. The challenge for both echelons lies in their ability to merge political rationale with the pragmatism of warfare. The absence of this merger in the discourse between the echelons explains "the deadlock in discursive exchanges between statesmen and soldiers, the strategy of 'tacticalization,' and lack of consistency of political and national efforts" (Tamari, 2014, p. 7). This deadlock represents the difficulty in tackling the tensions between the tendency to maintain stability—to remain with the known and familiar—and the need to cope with change. The echelons' challenge is to find the bridge "between seeking stability and changes, initiated by us, others, or unexpected circumstances" (Tamari, 2011, p. 7).

Another tension, derived from basic differences between the military and the political establishments, is between political and military thought. Yehoshafat Harkabi distinguished between the essential characteristics of each type of thought and emphasized the tension between them: "Political thought and military thought are different in their courses and trends, military thought deals with the event—the operation, and is more fragmented, whereas the political thought deals with process, the flow of history and historical consequences" (Harkabi, 1994, p. 511).

Substantive discourse between the echelons should leverage the differences between them and utilize the tension between different modes of thought to create new knowledge. When the political knowledge infrastructure is insufficiently developed, the military echelon recognizes a kind of "strategic helplessness" (Michael, 2009, p. 436) in political thought. This same phenomenon was called an "emptiness" by Lieutenant General (ret.) Moshe Ya'alon. Referring to the discourse's characteristics during his term as CGS (Michael, 2009, p. 437), Ya'alon stated that it tends to "take control" of the discourse and shape the characteristics of political thought. Such a bias is typical among senior military in Israel due to a highly developed sense of responsibility and a tradition of "role expansion" (Ben-Eliezer, 1995, pp. 291–301). In such a case, military thought is likely to lose its focus and sharpness, which influences the military's motivation to fight.⁵ In such a reality, the tension between political and military is weakened and the quality of the learning process suffers.

The organizational culture of the military is based on orderly and long-term planning processes vis-à-vis defined threat scenarios. The result is operational strategies and doctrines upon which processes of building, empowerment, and training must be based. On the other hand, the organizational culture of the political echelon is oriented to the here and now and is characterized by coping with constraints and events. It is essentially less proactive. This variation assumes the form of a barrier in all matters connected to changing the characteristics of interechelon discourse. When the government must respond to violent events, it usually has no choice but to rely on the military's knowledge infrastructure. These organizational cultures set patterns of interaction, which are managed in a fixed and defined framework that

constrains the interpretive conceptual framework and range of alternatives that can be examined. Such a pattern does not enable the creation of ad hoc formations for the encounter between echelons that enables developing alternative cognitive structures as a basis for complex learning, required for handling a challenge like Jihadist terror.

One of the salient barriers to open discourse between the echelons is the bias to refer to problems as mostly technical issues that demand adjustment (simple learning). Complex problems require understanding that you *do not understand the problem* and, therefore, need complex diagnostic learning. One of the main reasons for the difficulty in transitioning from simple learning to complex strategic learning stems from a set of structured biases in organizations, mainly big, institutionalized, and conservative ones like militaries and governments:

- relating to components,
- overemphasized dichotomy between us and the enemy,
- fixation on events and situations,
- fixation on existing structures,
- difficulty in recognizing things that develop slowly, and
- the illusion of learning from experience.

These biases, in addition to the difficulty in planning campaigns in a comprehensive manner from beginning to end, impede planning and executing operations for tackling complex challenges like Jihadi terror. This is because from the moment a campaign begins, interaction with the adversary creates a dialectic that compels learning and adjustment.⁶

It is also important to relate to the difficulty stemming from the limited time and attention of the political echelon. “Learning demands time and valuable systemic resources (mainly from the decision makers) and, therefore, it is exceedingly difficult to advance learning at the strategic level (there is either no time or no attention)” (Hacohen, 2014). Coping with the intellectual challenge necessitates processes, organizational structures, relevant partners, and chiefly a unique strategic culture that attributes importance to scrutiny and inquisitiveness; all of this necessarily requires time and attention.

The issue of leadership requires deeper examination because it has the potential to enable a change in the characteristics of echelon discourse. A clear example is Ben-Gurion who left his ongoing obligations between 1947 and 1953 to run seminars. These seminars facilitated a significant development of the knowledge infrastructure and led to the development of a structured military doctrine for the IDF’s organizational structure and operational mode (1948) and to the formation of an Israeli conception of national security (1953). The last has stood the test of time, the principles of which still provide the foundation of Israel’s current notion of national security. Similar examples are found in the IDF, where senior officers have, through the power of their leadership, created deep changes in processes of evaluation, decision-making, and knowledge development. One noticeable example is MG

Moshe Ya'alon as the Commander of the Central Command and later on as Deputy Chief of Staff and CGS (Michael, 2009).

Another necessary condition required for shaping open discourse is an understanding of shared responsibility, which is the domain of both echelons and is translated into action and supported by social legitimacy. In the absence of shared responsibility, a disturbing gap is created between authority and responsibility, and the military echelon is likely to find itself heading toward failure or partial success (like the result of Operation Protective Edge as perceived by the public and part of the political establishment; Ben-Meir, 2014, pp. 129–134). The military's concern over the absence of political support and backing on the "day after" tends to restrain the military echelon and induces it to present the alternatives that it perceives as complimentary to the political echelon's intentions. Such a situation prevents the military echelon from truly clarifying the intentions of the political echelons and countering them with the military's understanding of the operational environment and the essence of the particular challenge.

In order to change the discourse's characteristics and assure diagnostic learning, the political echelon must take the responsibility for systemic learning. But because of the political system and culture in Israel, the probability for that is low and the military remains the primary "change agent." In order to succeed as a change agent, the military has to dramatically change the educational and training processes of senior officers and provide the commissioned rank with the tools for developing relevant strategic knowledge. For this to happen, the commissioned rank must "function as knowledge agents in the strategic and operational environments" and find the ways to "assimilate its knowledge among governments, legislators and ministries as a tool for interpreting reality" (Tamari, 2014, p. 10).

The transformation of echelon discourse space—in the sense of transitioning from a hierarchical and closed discourse to an open one—depends on a balanced mixture of conditions. Among these are structural and political, cultural (political and strategic), resources (time and attention), processes related to the encounter and its character, a sense of shared responsibility and public legitimacy, led by courage and shaping leadership. It seems that the current Israeli context lacks both the mixture and leadership required for changing the discourse's structure. On the other hand, we cannot ignore some positive developments in the last decade (e.g., the NSC law and its gradual empowerment, the development of dialogue between government and research institutions, the development of civil society, the proliferation of critical media, and more). However, these are evolutionary processes and, considering the restraints and challenges the echelons face, will last a long time.

Summary and Conclusions

The expansion of Jihadist terror in the Middle East has become a complex challenge for industrial democracies involved in the war against it. Jihadist terror is a multi-dimensional problem which cannot be constrained to an exclusive focus on the

military aspect. A significant reflection of this challenge is the expectations crisis between the military and the political echelons due to increasing incompatibility between military action and political prospects and goals. This crisis is a result of the military's difficulty in defining operational success and the political echelon's difficulty in defining the desired political outcome. Such incompatibility weakens the substantial civil control over the military.

Compatibility between military campaigns and political goals requires a strategic and diagnostic learning process. Such learning is only possible in an encounter with certain characteristics, which enable the creation of open discourse. This article introduced definitions of closed and open discourse, characterized the required conditions for creating open discourse, and explained the linkage between strategic learning and open discourse. The analysis in this article is supported by the conception of targeted partnership developed by Rebecca Schiff, which challenges the traditional conception of interechelon relations. The traditional theories represent an approach that relied on firm, hierarchal, and regulative relations between the echelons, characterized as closed discourse in the article that does not enable the strategic learning required for tackling the complexity of the challenge.

Referring to the Israeli case, mainly with regard to Operation Protective Edge and general overview of the American experience in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, we can conclude that when the echelons succeed in developing and elaborating, their discourse does a strategy that produces better results emerge. The partnership and open discourse provoked the echelons to challenge existing conceptions, elaborate knowledge infrastructures, and interpret the operational environment in a more accurate manner. The result was enhanced capacities for defining clearer and more relevant political goals and directives, developing efficient modes of coping to fulfill these goals, and improving the merging of abstract political logic and military practice. It is true about Jihadi terrorism, as it is true about any complex and multi-dimensional challenge that CMR in democratic states has to tackle.

Acknowledgments

The author wish to thank Eyal Ben-Ari and Yagil Levy for their knowledgeable and helpful comments and the three anonymous reviewers for their enlightened comments that helped me to sharpen and base my claims. Special thanks to Rebecca Schiff for her inspiration and to the dedicated editor, Professor Shields, for her good advice and guidance.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. For an in-depth discussion of the failures of U.S. strategy in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria and its irrelevance, see Robinson et al. (2014); Eisenstadt (June 24, 2015a; June 15, 2015b); Jeffrey et al. (January 21, 2015). Kaidanow (January 26, 2015).
2. Mainly in the Gaza Strip with the presence of the Palestinian Jihad organization and recently other Jihadi organizations affiliated with ISIS in addition to growing cooperation between Hamas and Ansar Biet Almakdas in Sinai Peninsula, which is affiliated with ISIS (for further details regarding this cooperation, see Daoud, December 4, 2015).
3. The Author thanks Col. (res.) Einat Gefner who enabled using her presentation used for teaching learning in the encounter between the strategic and operational levels in the military.
4. General Petraeus' broad academic education enabled him to demonstrate sensitivity to cultural issues and the importance of developing integrated knowledge. Unfortunately, this is not the reality regarding the education of senior officers in the IDF. For further reading, see Dov Tamari, "Israel's Security Conception," pp. 6–7.
5. During Operation "Protective Edge," some politicians indeed accused the military echelon, stating that the military lost its enthusiasm for fighting.
6. Main ideas regarding the organizational biases based on Col. (res.) Einat Gefner's instruction presentation.

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