

can, and willbe, easily corrected in a rematch with the Hizbullah.

We cannot credibly blame the Israeli defeat on failures in decision-making. Israel had many years to destroy the Hizbullah during its long occupation of southern Lebanon; but it withdrew unilaterally in April 2000, with the Hizbullah claiming victory. In July 2006, too, the Israeli military fell far short of matching its earlier easy victories over Arab armies: but this was not because of failures of leadership, the failure to use sufficient firepower (which it did), or the failure to launch a timely ground offensive (it would get grounded the way it had before).

The Israeli military offensive of July 2006 failed because Israel was fighting a war that did not play to its advantages in size and technology. Israel had finally met its match -- a foe that was prepared to fight, that knew how to fight on its own terms, a foe that was elusive and cunning, skilled and daring, ready to adapt its methods to neutralise Israel's technical superiority, that controlled its terrain, and, most importantly, was backed by Iran and Syria. For the first time in history, an Israeli invasion had been reversed by cunning guerilla resistance.

In the past, Arab armies had