dedication, discipline, skill, and cunning, the Hizbullah leaders assembled an arsenal of low-tech rockets as well as more advanced missiles; they built secret bunkers; they laid out defensible communications; they acquired capabilities in electronic warfare; they used drones and eaves-dropping equipment to gather information; they placed spies inside Israel; they studied their enemy; and, most importantly, they had planned and trained, while maintaining the highest secrecy. In a word, the small bands of Arab guerillas in southern Lebanon were prepared and ready.

Israel executed its long-planned offensive against Hizbullah on July 12, 2006, using the excuse of a border skirmish to launch a full-scale and devastating war against Lebanon. They launched massive air and artillery strikes against Lebanon's civilian infrastructure -- targeting Beirut and sites as far north as the port city of Tripoli. Israeli ground forces crossed the Lebanese border the same day, and continued to expand their ground invasion in stages throughout the war.

During the 33-day war, the Israeli air force flew more than 15,000 sorties and struck 7,000 targets in Lebanon; the Israeli navy imposed a blockade on Lebanon, and bombed 2,500 Lebanese targets; and, all told, the Israelis destroyed 15,000 homes, 900 commercial buildings, 400 miles of roads, 80 bridges, and Lebanon's international airport. Lebanon's human toll at the end of the war consisted of 845 dead, including 743 civilians, 34 soldiers and 68 Hizbullah guerillas. In addition, close to a million Lebanese were forced to flee their homes. The intent of these genocidal attacks was to turn the Lebanese against the Hizbullah. The Israelis failed in this objective, too.

In all their wars against Arab armies, the Israelis had achieved clear victories within days. In 1956, they captured nearly all of the Sinai in about seven days. In June 1967, they crippled the Egyptian air force within two hours: and the war against the three front-line Arab armies was over in six days. In the October war of 1973, the Israelis recovered from their initial losses to cross the Suez Canal ten days after the start of the war, and five days later they had encircled the Egyptian Third Army, a mere 40 miles from Cairo. On the Syrian front, the Israelis had advanced to within ten miles of Damascus. Since 1973, Israel has many times violated the sovereignty of Arab states with impunity.

Israel's decision to end the war 33 days later, even as Hizbullah kept up its barrage of Katyusha rockets into Israel, was a dark chapter in its military history.

In contrast, Israel's full-scale war against Hizbullah's small guerilla force of some 3000 fighters lasted for 33 days, without giving the Israelis the satisfaction of claiming victory. On July 12 2006, Israel started a full-scale war against Lebanon, convinced that it could destroy Hizbullah or greatly diminish its military force within a few days -- and do it with air power alone. Israel's decision to end the war 33 days later, even as Hizbullah kept up its barrage of Katyusha rockets into Israel, was a dark chapter in its military history. Israel's military might had been neutralised by a seemingly Lilliputian adversary.

In July 2006, agility and cunning favoured the Hizbullah. Consider the victories that Israel failed to score against this tiny but agile foe: it failed to destroy or jam Hizbullah's communications network; to knock out Hizbullah's television and radio stations; to kill or capture Hassan Nasrallah; or to dent Hizbullah's ability to launch Katyusha rockets into Israel. Hizbullah was firing Katyusha rockets at the rate of 100 a day during July, doubled this rate in early August, and, in the last few hours before the ceasefire came into effect, fired 250 rockets. On the day of the ceasefire, the Hizbullah still had 14,000 rockets in its arsenal, enough to continue the war for another three months.

Contrary to Israeli denials, the daily barrage of Katyusha rockets took a heavy toll on the Israeli economy. Altogether, a quarter of the 4,000 rockets Hizbullah launched during the war hit urban areas. They "paralysed the whole of northern Israel, its main port, refineries, and many other strategic installations. Over one million Israelis lived in bomb shelters, and about 300,000 temporarily left their homes and sought refuge in the south." For a change, the Hizbullah had brought the war to Israel.

Moreover, the Hizbullah scored several clear victories over Israel's military. According to an IDF Report Card published in the Jerusalem Post, Israel had deployed some 400 Merkava MK-4 tanks -- its safest and deadliest tank -- in Lebanon: 40 of these were hit by Hizbullah's anti-tank weapons, 20 of them were destroyed and 30 tank crewmen were killed. According to a report published by The Washington Institute for Near East Policy: "Hizbullah's success with anti-tank weapons during the July War reflects many years spent training on these weapons as well as a good plan to use these weapons once the battle began."

Hizbullah's infantry, or "village units" -- deployed along the border to slow down the advance of Israeli