
Preface and Acknowledgments

This project's roots were planted at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, where we had postdoctoral fellowships in 2007–2008. Having offices across the hallway from each other, we had many conversations about the still-fresh 2006 War between Israel and Hezbollah. We shared a deep dismay about the vast destruction and loss of life, and were particularly alarmed by the scope of Israel's bombardment of Lebanon. What began as a normative concern about excessive use of force spurred our attention to an intellectual puzzle about its targeting. Why would Israel pound Lebanon, a famously weak state, to demand that it block the actions of Hezbollah, a famously strong nonstate actor?

To answer these questions, we delved into both theory and history. Building on work on deterrence, intrastate conflict, and other dynamics of warfare, we crafted an analytical framework and developed generalizable hypotheses about the causes and effects of states' use or threat of force to coerce other states to stop attacks by nonstate actors. We then investigated these dynamics across the rich seventy-year trajectory of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Researching the foundations of Israel's security decision-making and thinking from statehood to the present, we discovered that its approach to fighting nonstate actors was not uniform. Israel had not always targeted host states in the demand that they "take responsibility" for stopping nonstate actors on their soil. Even when it employed

this policy, it did not do so in precisely the same way over time or space. Seeking to explain these shifts on the part of Israel in these three-actor conflicts, we were struck by how developments in its strategic culture went far in accounting for variation and, in particular, for what appeared to be its increasingly aggressive actions in recent years.

We also threw ourselves into the study of Arab states that Israel charged with harboring violent nonstate actors. We examined their governing regimes, with particular interest in regime origins, internal compositions, institutional structures, and connections to society. We were attentive to the complex relationships between host regimes and nonstate actors, noting how they could range from patronage to hostility. We saw that these relationships were typically driven less by regimes' claimed ideological commitments to armed struggle against Israel than they were by concern for their own political survival. In this context, we were drawn to a consistent pattern: only regimes that were strong, in terms of both cohesion and capacity, had the ability to determine when *raison d'état* demanded that they assert control over nonstate actors and then do what was needed to impose that control. This pattern had direct implications for Israel's strategy of using military pressure against host states to force them to act against nonstate actors. Such a strategy, history showed us, was bound to fail when that host's regime was weak.

The product of this multistranded research is this book on what we came to call "triadic coercion." We set out to study this topic with as much scholarly objectivity as possible in the belief that social scientific analysis of the empirical record was the best way to make inferences about causes and effects and thereby derive both academic conclusions and policy recommendations. At the same time, we have not lost sight of the moral intensity of the competing commitments that imbue every aspect of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In beginning our research with the wake of the 1948 War, we do so with attentiveness to the momentousness of that war itself as an historic justice or injustice, depending on one's point of view. We acknowledge that even the most seemingly simple terms that we employ in this book might be deeply contested. We understand that the violence that we refer to with such dry terms as "attacks," "reprisals," "retaliation raids," and "operations" are not simply events to be modeled and counted but actions that can obliterate lives, destroy families, terrorize or dehumanize entire communities, and rob individuals of their most basic rights to life and physical security. Similarly, the "nonstate actors" in our story are

not simply nuisances for state sovereignty and border security. For some they are terrorist groups deliberately killing civilians. For others they are the legitimate representatives of dispossessed peoples struggling for liberation. For the sake of consistency, we refer to the main actors that we examine by the names that they call themselves. When we use Israel's chosen name for its army, the Israel Defense Forces, we do so with sensitivity to those who view it as a force of aggression and occupation rather than defense.

As this book was many years in the making, the list of people to whom we owe gratitude is similarly long. We are thankful to the Belfer Center for the intellectual environment it provided us as newly minted PhDs. We could not have predicted that our casual chats would spawn an article and then an academic monograph but are grateful for institutes like Belfer and others that offer academics the time, resources, and community to explore new ideas and follow them to wherever they lead.

In the years since then many others helped us make this project better than we could have made it alone. Early in this project several scholars offered feedback on what became our first write-up about what we then called "triadic deterrence," an article in the journal *Security Studies*. We thank Jeff Colgan, Erica Chenoweth, Christopher Day, Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, Amir Lupovici, Joseph Olmert, and Janice Stein for valuable comments and suggestions during that stage. We are particularly grateful to Zeev Maoz, who offered us early advice and encouragement and made his datasets available for our use.

As we worked on this project over the course of years, we presented parts of it at workshops and talks at Northwestern University, American University, and the University of Chicago, and the annual conferences of the International Studies Association and Association of Israeli Studies. At each event we were lucky to gather feedback from engaged readers and listeners, all of which left important imprints on this work.

We are grateful to our institutions, American University and Northwestern University, for the multiple forms of support they gave us, from library services to time to commit to writing. We consider ourselves fortunate to be able to call these universities home. In addition, we express special thanks to American's SIS Research, especially Shannon Looney and Holly Bennett Christiansen, for funding and expert organizational help in sponsoring a daylong "book incubator" to discuss an early draft of the complete manuscript. We owe gratitude to Dima Adamsky, Ariel Ahram, Jon

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Lastly, we owe a great debt to our families and friends. Wendy gives special thanks to her partner, Peter Cole, and her grandmother, Margaret Pearlman. Boaz thanks his son, Tomer, daughter, Melanie, and wife, Orit. These and others dear to our hearts not only bore the burden of the countless months in which we were buried in our books and computer screens but also endured occasional lectures on the concept of strategic culture or now-forgotten skirmishes from the 1950s. For us, their patience and good cheer are proof of all that is good in human nature.

We dedicate this book to our fathers. Wendy's father, Michael Pearlman, passed away just a few weeks before we finished this book manuscript. She misses him tremendously but is grateful for what she learned from his love of history, passion for scholarship, tremendous wit, and inspiring humility. He taught her to try to keep things in perspective and be grateful for her immense good fortune in being able to study for a living. As he used to say, "it sure beats a real job." Boaz's father, Avraham Atzili, was wounded at the altar of triadic coercion, though he might not know that this was the larger context in which a bullet hit his leg. Beyond this event, Avraham, always the intellectual and the historian, instilled in his son curiosity about the past and a desire to improve the future.

TRIADIC COERCION

