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**Israeli Targeting Operations during the
Second Intifada: On Target or Missing the
Mark?**

Master's Thesis

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Abstract

During the Second Intifada, Israel shocked the international community by becoming the first country in the world to publically announce an overt policy of targeted-killing. While utilized by Israel in previous conflicts, the Second Intifada was a turning point in Israeli history due to a series of dramatic changes introduced to its targeting policy which would sharply contrast those which were previously utilized. This diploma thesis analyzed thirty-eight cases of Israeli targeting operations conducted both before and during the Second Intifada to determine if the changes made to its policy during the Second Intifada resulted in more or less successful targeting operations compared to those conducted prior to this time period. The results of this study indicated that, following the introduction of the aforementioned policy changes, Israeli targeting operations during the Second Intifada were less successful than those conducted prior to this time period.

Keywords

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Abstrakt

Během Druhé Intifády, Izrael šokoval mezinárodní společenství tím, že se stal první zemí na světě, která veřejně přiznala užití politiky cíleného zabíjení. Přestože byla tato metoda využívána Izraelem už v předchozích konfliktech, Druhá Intifáda byla zlomovým bodem v izraelské historii z důvodu série dramatických změn, která jejich cílená politika představovala, jež se ostře lišila od té využívané předtím.

Za použití srovnávací analýzy, se tato diplomová práce zabývá 38 případy izraelských cílených operací provedených před a během Druhé Intifády s cílem určit, zda změny provedené v politice během Druhé Intifády vyústily ve více či méně úspěšné cílové operace ve srovnání s těmi vykonanými před touto dobou.

Výsledek této studie naznačuje, že s příchodem politických změn, izraelské cílové operace během Druhé Intifády byly méně úspěšné než ty vykonané před ní.

Klíčová slova

Izrael, Druhá intifáda, cíleného zabíjení, protiterorismus, Mossad

Rozsah práce: 241,288 znaků

Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or similar degree.

In Prague on May 15, 2015

Andrew J. Hawkins

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Broadcasting live from Olympic Village in Munich, West Germany on the morning of September 5, 1972, sports journalist Jim McKay would deliver a breaking news report that would shake the international community to its core, gripping millions to their television sets over the next sixteen hours as a series of tragic events unfolded. “The peace of what had been called the serene Olympics was shattered just before dawn this morning,” reported McKay.¹ The coverage came as eight Arab terrorists belonging to the Palestinian Black September terrorist organization took eleven Israeli athletes hostage in their living quarters—killing two immediately— and demanding the release of 234 Palestinian prisoners held in Israel, in addition their own safe passage out of Germany, for the release of the remaining nine.²

After hours of tense, yet ultimately unsuccessful negotiations, and a failed rescue attempt at Fürstenfeldbruck Airport as the terrorists attempted to board a 727 jet they believed to be their safe passage out of Germany, the remaining nine athletes met their tragic fate and were killed by Arab gunfire.³

Shortly after the tragic events in Munich, deep in the bowels of Mossad’s headquarters in Tel Aviv, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir would preside over “Committee X”—a top secret committee consisting of Israel’s highest authorities and policymakers— which was specially formed and convened for one specific reason: to formulate a response to those responsible for the atrocities committed against Israel in Munich.⁴

Meir’s final deliberation would be one marred in controversy, and one which would not appear in the headlines of the daily Haaretz newspaper, yet one which was taken with extreme care and consideration. Meir, along with the highest echelons of Israeli policymakers including Israeli Defense Force General Ahron Yariv, Mossad

¹ Sokolove, Michael. *The Unexpected Anchor*. The New York Times, 27 Dec. 2008.

² Schiller, Kay, and Christopher Young. *The 1972 Munich Olympics and the Making of Modern Germany*. Berkeley: University of California, 2010: p. 196

³ Jonas, George. *Vengeance: The True Story of an Israeli Counter-Terrorist Team*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984: pp. 1-7.

⁴ Ensalaco, Mark. *Middle Eastern Terrorism: From Black September to September 11*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008: pp 40-41.

Chief Zvi Zamir, and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan authorized the formation of several operationally independent teams of Mossad operatives, which would operate covertly and out of the bureaucratic reach of the Mossad and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), with the task of finding, targeting, and ultimately eliminating those responsible for coordinating and carrying out the Munich Massacre.⁵

Once formed, the teams were given eleven names—each one suspected of having a leading role in planning and executing the attacks just weeks before in Munich—and instructed to target and eliminate them. The aim of the operation was not only to exact vengeance on those responsible for the Munich Massacre, but also to “strike fear into the hearts of terrorists,” which would send a clear message to Israel’s enemies that further acts of violence against its citizens would no longer be tolerated.⁶

Over the next seven years, more than a dozen individuals suspected of having a leading role in the Munich Massacre were targeted, and subsequently killed throughout Europe and the Middle East.⁷ This operation, which would only be revealed years after it took place, was codenamed *Operation Wrath of God*.

Operation Wrath of God was not the first time that Israel preemptively targeted suspected terrorist leaders for selective removal by lethal means; however, this operation was unique in that it would set a precedent, albeit a deadly one, for future Israeli counterterrorism policy. While the members of “Committee X” certainly did not take the decision to launch such a controversial operation lightly, it is unlikely that they were aware that their decisions would have lasting implications for future Israeli policy, with similar operations subsequently becoming commonplace in the country’s counterterrorism policy toolkit.

Although it has inherited many names over the course of time, the practice of this controversial method for countering terror would later come to be known in a number of research and policymaking circles as *targeted killing*—the selective targeting and elimination, by use of lethal force, of an individual or group of

⁵ Raviv, Dan, and Yossi Melman. *Every Spy a Prince: The Complete History of Israel's Intelligence Community*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990. p. 186.

⁶ Munich: Mossad’s Revenge. Atlantic Productions. Britain’s Channel 4. Aired January 26, 2006. Quoting retired Mossad deputy head David Kimche.

⁷ BBC News. *Munich: Operation Bayonet*. BBCNews.com, 18 Jan. 2006.

individuals deemed to pose significant security threats, and carried out with explicit State approval.⁸

While vehemently contested on both legal and moral grounds, the practice of targeted killing has been utilized as a tool of government statecraft by a number of countries and political administrations throughout history to achieve various political ambitions. Although utilized as a means to achieve various ends, the practice is primarily aimed at targeting those deemed to be *high value targets*— individuals who usually hold positions of leadership within a particular organization, or individuals known to possess certain specialized skills which are not readily or easily transferable to other members of that organization.

Israel is not the only country which utilizes the practice of targeted-killing as a counterterrorism policy tool.⁹ However, the Israeli experience serves as a preeminent example for analysis because it was the first country in the world— and incidentally the first liberal democracy— to publically announce an overt policy of targeted killing as part of its official, long-term counterterrorism policy.¹⁰ Furthermore, the Israeli experience is especially interesting considering its extensive historic record of targeting operations.

Israel's extensive experience with the practice is likely due to the precarious security environment it has found itself in since its violent emergence into statehood following the 1948 War of Independence. Due to the unique nature of threats posed by neighboring countries in the region, as well as a number of hostile movements within its own borders stemming from the occupied territories captured during the 1967 Six Day War, Israel has utilized the method of targeting and eliminating individuals deemed to pose security risks as an active measure of its counterterrorism policy since it emerged as a nation in 1948.¹¹ However, as with many policy tools

⁸ Adapted from Steven David's definition of the practice. See David, Steven. *Fatal Choices: Israel's Policy of Targeted Killing*. The Review of International Affairs. 2003.

⁹ While Israel and the United States are the only two countries to have publically acknowledged utilizing targeted killings, Goppel notes that they are not the only states which have made the practice part of their counterterrorism strategies. Other countries such as the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Germany are all known to have utilized the practice to counter various security threats, with countless other countries suspected of carrying out similar, politically-motivated operations. See Goppel, Anna. *Killing Terrorists: A Moral and Legal Analysis*. Boston: De Gruyter, 2013 and Melzer, Nils. *Targeted Killing in International Law*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

¹⁰ Stahl, Adam. *The Evolution of Israeli Targeted Operations: Consequences of the Thabet Thabet Operation*. Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 33.2. 2010. p. 124.

¹¹ Several scholars posit that the practice pre-dates and even played a major role in the founding of the state of Israel in 1948. Refer to Stahl. p. 113.

utilized by governments, Israel's policy of targeted killing has not remained static over time. Rather, it has undergone dramatic transformations in both theory and practice. Herein these transformations lies the crux of this study.

1.2 Problem Discussion

The preemptive targeting and elimination of individuals suspected or known to pose critical threats to state security has long been a policy fixture in Israel's toolkit for countering terror.¹² While threats to national security of varying nature and degree from hostile neighboring Arab governments and terrorist movements within the occupied territories have remained consistent over time, the same cannot be said about Israel's policy of targeted killing.¹³ Since the end of the fateful operation which was conceived by former Prime Minister Meir and her top-secret "Committee X" in response to the Munich Massacre, Israel's policy of targeting and eliminating individuals deemed to be *high value targets* has undergone a series of dramatic transformations. The most dramatic of these transformations became apparent during a period of vast civil unrest and social upheaval in Israel and its disputed territories which would usher in a new era of Israeli counterterrorism policy— a period which would come to be known as the Second Intifada.

Deriving its name from the Arabic term for "shaking [something] off," an "intifada" has come to represent a Palestinian popular uprising against what Palestinians view as a military occupation by Israel.¹⁴ The Second Intifada (2000-2005), also known as the al-Aqsa Intifada, was a large-scale Palestinian revolt against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and was the second and most intense of its kind in the history of Israeli-Palestinian tensions.¹⁵

The Second Intifada is an ideal reference point for analyzing and assessing Israel's past and current policy of targeted killing.¹⁶ This is due to three primary

¹² See Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-116.

¹³ This is not to say that threats have remained static over time; rather, that Israel has faced a multitude of various security threats from various entities since its emergence as a state in 1948.

¹⁴ Gregory, Derek, Johnston, Ron, and Pratt, Geraldine, eds. *Dictionary of Human Geography* (5th Edition). 2009.

¹⁵ Exact dates of the Second Intifada are disputed and no official end-date was ever announced. Some regard the November 2004 death of Yasser Arafat, and the February 2005 informal ceasefire agreed upon by Ariel Sharon and Mahmoud Abbas as credible end-dates to the conflict. For the purposes of this study, Israel's unilateral disengagement from Gaza in September 2005 will serve as the *de facto* end-date for the conflict. See Baroud, Ramzy. *The Second Palestinian Intifada: A Chronicle of a People's Struggle*. Pluto Press, 2006.

¹⁶ Kober, Avi. *Targeted Killing during the Second Intifada: The Quest for Effectiveness*. *Journal of Conflict Studies* 27.1 (2007)

reasons. The first reason stems from a legal perspective which, for the first time in modern history, witnessed a public announcement that targeted killing— a practice which for centuries has been heavily contested on both legal and moral grounds— would be codified into Israel law, thus solidifying the practice as a key component of its counterterrorism policy which continues to-date, and one readily accessible to Israeli policymakers. Although it has been an “open secret” since the days of *Operation Wrath of God* that Israel has engaged in a number of operations aimed at eliminating suspected and known perpetrators of terrorism, it was never publically acknowledged by sitting administrations that Israel was behind these operations— even when Israeli involvement was blatantly obvious. That, however, abruptly changed shortly after the eruption of violence that marked the beginning of the Second Intifada. Since its beginning, Israel has not only assumed responsibility for numerous operations, but also repeatedly declared that such operations were, and continue to be legal, and part of a deliberate, long-term strategy.¹⁷

The second reason, which is likely a resulting factor of the newfound legality of the practice, was the scale of operations conducted during the Second Intifada. Never before, notes Kober, has the practice of targeted killing been implemented in such a systematic, continuous, large-scale, and overt manner elsewhere.¹⁸

Previously, targeting operations conducted by Israel were considered the exception rather than the norm, and carried out relatively infrequently; however, this too would change following the eruption of violence which marked the beginning of the Second Intifada as scores of targeting operations were conducted within the first few months of the conflict.¹⁹ This point also marked dramatic changes to Israel’s policy of who was considered a legitimate *high value target*. Prior to the Second Intifada, Israeli targeting operations were primarily limited to targeting high-ranking political and military figures, as well as individuals ranking high within the hierarchy of their respective terror organizations.²⁰ However, following the onset of the Second Intifada, and contrary to its previous policy, Israel adopted a policy of targeting scores of mid- and low-ranking members of terrorist organizations, in addition to the

¹⁷ Melzer, Nils. *Targeted Killing in International Law*. Oxford University Press, 2008. p. 30.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ According to The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, 9 targeting operations were conducted in 2000; 38 in 2001; 37 in 2002; 44 in 2003; 28 in 2004; and 22 in 2005. See <http://www.btselem.org/statistics/fatalities/before-cast-lead>

²⁰ Kober, op. cit.

successors of previously eliminated leaders who assumed positions of leadership in the wake of their predecessors' absence.

The third reason which makes the Second Intifada an ideal reference point for examining Israel's past and present policy of targeting killing stems from the changing nature of targeting methods employed by Israel to target individuals during this time period which again continues to-date.

Prior to the Second Intifada, Israel's targeting methods largely mimicked those which were utilized by the suspected terrorists which were being targeted and were, for a large part, limited to the use of light weaponry such as small-caliber arms and booby-trapped– yet highly controlled– explosive devices. However, this abruptly changed with Israel's announcement to adopt an overt targeting policy during the Second Intifada, and the Israelis announced it loudly.²¹ Apache helicopters armed with Hellfire missiles, F-16 fighter jets carrying heavy-load bombs, and even public announcements of sniper units being sent to the disputed territories replaced the small-arms and light explosives previously utilized, and were regularly deployed in densely populated residential areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.²²

The transformations made to Israel's targeting policy during the Second Intifada, which incidentally continue to-date, present a multitude of questions regarding its purported efficacy; however, when considering Israel's historic record of the practice, one central question becomes paramount: Have these policy changes resulted in more or less successful targeting operations compared to those conducted prior to the Second Intifada?

Examining this question is important for a number of reasons. To begin, if history is any indicator, a number of unique security challenges and threats will continue to confront Israel by those who challenge its very existence. As a result, it is safe to assume that Israel will continue to implement a number of countermeasures aimed at securing itself against its foes; which, judging from the historic and present record, will likely include continued use of the controversial and unsavory practice of targeted killing. Furthermore, the changes introduced during the Second Intifada were not confined solely to that conflict. Rather, they continue to-date and represent Israel's current policy of targeting *high value targets*. As these policy changes are

²¹ Stahl, *op. cit.* 124

²² *Ibid.* See also David, Steven R. *Israel's Policy of Targeted Killing*. Ethics & International Affairs 17.1. 2003.

retained and utilized, it is vital that policymakers and security experts alike become aware of the comparative efficacy of a particular course of action within the wider framework of Israel's counterterrorism policy. For Israel especially, it is necessary to know whether its current policy is pragmatically justified.²³ If indeed it is, there may be equity in continued utilization of its current practices; however, if it is fundamentally flawed, it is better to understand these flaws now as opposed to continued utilization of a defunct policy.²⁴ Therefore, by examining Israeli targeting operations conducted both before and during the Second Intifada, an argument may be made for which policy, if any, has resulted in the most success, and thus more aptly suited to counter future threats.

Research dedicated to the study of targeted killing has garnered considerable scholarly attention since the beginning of the new millennium. The surge in scholarly interest has largely been a result of the increased and systematic utilization of the practice since the beginning of the twenty-first century by countries such as the United States— in its War on Terror; and Israel— in its attempt to counter threats posed by various Palestinian terrorist and insurgent entities since the outbreak of the Second Intifada. The Israeli experience has been of particular interest among scholars, with most studies focusing on Israel's policy during the Second Intifada. This is in large part due to no other country implementing the practice in such a systematic, continuous, and overt manner elsewhere.²⁵

As will be discussed in the subsequent chapters of this study, several studies have attempted to empirically examine Israeli targeting operations during the Second Intifada, with various conclusions drawn regarding its comparative efficacy. However, to the best of my knowledge, there appears to be no previous research which has attempted to conduct a comparative analysis of Israeli targeting operations using the Second Intifada as a reference point, with the aim of determining which time period, if any, was most successful. Researching this topic is therefore an ideal opportunity to further examine a subject area of personal interest while analyzing an issue which is germane to researchers and policy makers involved in the study of counterterrorism and security studies, and especially those with particular interest in the Israeli experience.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Kober, *op. cit.*

Additionally, at the time of writing this thesis, tensions have continued to flair in East Jerusalem over continued Israeli settlement development and animosity stemming from disputes over contested prayer rights at the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex—the second holiest site in Islam— and known by Israelis as Temple Mount.²⁶ These tensions follow in the wake of *Operation Protective Edge*— the 2014 summer Israeli military operation conducted in the Hamas controlled Gaza Strip following what Israel claimed as incessant rocket fire from the territory.²⁷ As a result, some have speculated that a third Intifada is imminent.²⁸ As it is unlikely that Israel will cease to utilize its policy of targeted killing against its foes in future conflicts, examining the successes and failures of its policy both before and during the Second Intifada may shed valuable insight into which policy is more aptly suited to combat future security threats.

1.3 Research Objective

The aim of this study is to analyze and assess Israeli targeting operations both before and during the Second Intifada. The primary objective is to determine if the changes made to Israel’s policy of targeted killing during the Second Intifada have resulted in more or less successful targeting operations compared to those which were conducted prior to this time period. To achieve this objective, the following primary research question will form the focal point of this study:

Have Israeli targeting operations been more or less successful following the changes made to its targeting policy during the Second Intifada?

1.4 Research Approach

The research approach for this study is that of a comparative case study. The method of analysis will follow an inductive approach which will combine elements of an original analytic model developed to quantify rates of success for individual targeting operation cases, while utilizing existing theories based on previous research dedicated to the study of targeted killing, and the Israeli experience in particular. The advantage of utilizing comparative analysis as a research approach is

²⁶ Shuttleworth, Kate. *Israel on Brink of Third Intifada after New Car Attack*. The Telegraph. 4 Nov. 2014

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ *Is the Third Intifada Imminent?* Middle East Policy Council: Middle East in Focus. 6 Nov. 2014.

that two distinct time periods in Israeli history will be empirically analyzed using a combination of both quantitative and qualitative elements. This will enable the detection of developments and changes in the characteristics of the data sets— in this case, the targeting operations selected for analysis which were conducted before and during the Second Intifada.

To conduct this case study, a total of thirty-eight cases of Israeli targeting operations were selected for analysis. Nineteen cases were selected for the time period from 1956-1999. This time period represents the first year in which a targeting operation is known to have been conducted in post-independence Israeli history, and the last year before the beginning of the Second Intifada.²⁹ Similarly, a total of nineteen cases were selected which were conducted during the time period from 2000-2005. This time period represents what is widely held as the first and last years of the Second Intifada.³⁰ The criteria which governed the selection of these thirty-eight cases were based on two factors: known Israeli involvement, and operations which targeted individuals deemed by Israel to be *high value targets*.³¹

To answer the research question of this study, the selected cases of this research will be individually examined by using an original analytic model comprised of four “indicators” which will serve to establish a baseline for measuring the overall success of an operation. These indicators are listed below and will be measured in terms of percent increase or decrease following the completion of an operation.

Indicator 1: *Elimination of the intended target of an operation.*

Indicator 2: *Adverse political consequences resulting from an operation.*

Indicator 3: *Civilian and non-target casualties resulting from an operation.*

Indicator 4: *Directly-linked retaliatory attacks resulting from an operation.*

²⁹ Plaw, Avery. *Political Extremities: The Ethics and Legality of Targeted Killing*. Ashgate Publishing, Limited, 2008. p. 38-39

³⁰ Baroud, op. cit., pp. 168-193. See also Pressman, Jeremy. *The Second Intifada: An Early Look at the Background and Causes of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. Journal of Conflict Studies 22, no. 2 (Fall, 2003)

³¹ Due to the clandestine nature of Israel’s targeting policy which lasted until shortly after the outbreak of the Second Intifada, Israeli government officials neither confirmed nor denied involvement in the operations which were conducted during the time period from 1956-1999. The criteria which governed the selection of these cases was therefore based on known Israeli involvement which subsequently came to light in the years following these operations through various investigative research conducted by reliable academic and journalistic sources obtained through testimonies from various Israeli sources close to these operations.

These indicators contrast those which are utilized in the vast majority of studies which attempt to quantify the efficacy of a particular counterterrorism policy tool such as targeted killing; however, several primary advantages of using these indicators were identified and considered ideal for the purposes of this study. The first advantage of utilizing these indicators lies in the fact that they are measurable in terms of direct outcomes resulting from a conducted targeting operation. The second advantage is that these indicators will preclude the possibility of drawing inferences which are based on so-called “counterfactuals,” or events which may be construed as possibly, or likely linked to an event, but lack conclusive causation.

A discussion concerning the most commonly used indicators within academic scholarship which seek to analyze the efficacy of targeted-killing as a counterterrorism policy tool and their primary shortcomings will be presented in section 2.10, which is dedicated to examining various methods for analyzing success and effectiveness within counterterrorism studies. Furthermore, a detailed rationale concerning the selection of these indicators and my reasoning regarding their utility will be presented in Chapter Three which will outline in detail the method of this study.

Following analysis of each individual case, the aggregate quantitative results of all cases occurring within the two selected time periods will be compared. These results will then be analyzed alongside various qualitative factors relevant to the time periods analyzed. Furthermore, existing theories developed by several prominent researchers engaged in the study of targeted-killing as a counterterrorism policy tool, and namely those involved in the study of the Israeli experience in particular, will be utilized to build a sound argument regarding which time period, if any, was most successful. Most notably, previous research conducted by Jordan (2009, 2014); Patrick Johnston (2012); and Bryan Price (2009, 2012) will be utilized to examine targeted killing within its broader context of *decapitation theory*; while the work of Mannes (2008); Kober (2007); Byman (2009); Stahl (2010); and Carvin (2012) will be used to contextualize the practice within the Israeli experience.

The ultimate aim of this research approach is to utilize a plurality of both quantitative and qualitative data to analyze the selected cases of this study in order to determine if Israeli targeting operations during the Second Intifada were more successful following the changes made to its targeting policy compared to those operations conducted prior to this time period.

1.5 Research Limitations

This study seeks to examine Israeli targeting operations which were conducted both before and during the Second Intifada to determine if the changes made to its targeted killing policy during the Second Intifada resulted in more or less successful operations compared to those conducted prior to this time period. The overall objective of this thesis is to draw a reasoned conclusion which will hold up against academic scrutiny; however, inherent in all studies are a number of research limitations. As a result of these limitations, it is likely that this study will, admittedly, raise more questions than it answers. And while these limitations are not seen as detrimental to the overall objectives of this study, and indeed may give rise to future academic scholarship, they nonetheless deserve acknowledgement. While not exhaustive, this section will outline several of the most salient limitations of this study.

To begin, measuring success and effectiveness within the political sciences is a daunting task due primarily to difficulties associated with determining definitive causalities between variables. The difficulty of this task is compounded within the field of terrorism and counterterrorism studies due in part to the elusive nature of the concept of terrorism itself; no consensus regarding what exactly constitutes terrorism; difficulties with analyzing its determinants and deterrents; and no consensus regarding what constitutes success within counterterrorism efforts.³² Furthermore, several scholars argue that attempts which seek to make generalizations about what constitutes relative success within counterterrorism studies— and targeted-killing in particular— are naturally wrought with subjectivity which makes comparison a questionable exercise in the first place.³³ This case study is not exempt from this concern. The author of this study recognizes the challenges of analyzing counterterrorism efforts of any kind, and the difficulties associated with making proposals about what constitutes success or effectiveness. As such, this study will not attempt to make claims of causality with regards to the indicators which have been chosen for quantitative analysis, nor will any attempt be made to offer “policy recommendations,” which appear to be prevalent in many case studies

³² See for example Carvin, who discusses the difficulties of measuring success of targeting operations specifically and the lack of consensus among researchers as to what actually constitutes success or failure. Carvin, Stephanie. *The Trouble with Targeted Killing*. Security Studies 21.3 (2012)

³³ Ibid.

examining this particular phenomenon. Rather, the aim of this study is to utilize the quantitative findings derived from an original analytic model alongside qualitative factors which are relevant to the times periods and operations analyzed in an attempt to create a more contextualized approach, and offer my findings as such.

Another limitation to this study is the absence of a control group for both time periods examined which precludes the possibility of establishing a baseline of activity or non-activity when comparing cases of Israeli targeting operations before and during the Second Intifada. Because this study is limited to examining the Israeli experience as it pertains to the various waves of Palestinian violence, it was deemed that an outside control group would not add any significant utility when comparing my findings. However, this concern is nonetheless recognized.

Furthermore, while the Second Intifada serves as an ideal reference point for examining Israeli targeting operations, a limitation which must be taken into account is the comparison of two time periods of unequal length and scope. This invariably presented a challenge at the outset of this study based on the disproportionate number of operations conducted during the Second Intifada compared to the period from 1956-1999. This challenge was mitigated by selecting only those operations during the Second Intifada which targeted individuals considered to be *high value targets*, and thus considered “prominent” operations, which allowed for a more proportionate comparison.³⁴ The selection of “prominent” cases was aided by research previously conducted by scholars specializing in researching Israeli targeting operations during the Second Intifada, and will be discussed in detail in the *Method* section.³⁵

Finally, as noted by Carvin in her essay on the subject, case studies are never going to be perfect; there are critically important differences between the different examples of targeted killing which means that comparison is not as straightforward as some scholars assume.³⁶ This is especially relevant to recognize for this study because the cases examined during the time-period from 1956-1999 will not share homogenous characteristics with their counterparts during the Second Intifada. More specifically, the individual cases selected for examination have varying backgrounds and were conducted during periods of varying conflict. For example, the majority of

³⁴ See Pedahzur, who outlines cases of “prominence” which were conducted during the Second Intifada. Pedahzur, Ami. *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism*. Columbia University Press, 2009. pp. 119-120.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

operations conducted during the time-period from 1956-1999 were in response to acts of international and domestic terrorism committed against Israel, with Israel's response largely resembling that of a counterterrorism effort. However, the operations conducted during the Second Intifada were largely in response to acts of sustained and continued violence which had transformed from mere protests to an outright insurgency, with Israel's response resembling that of a counterinsurgency campaign.³⁷ While it is recognized that insurgencies may indeed utilize many of the tactics that are inherent in acts of terrorism, it is important to recognize that, although operations conducted during the two time periods analyzed were in response to various waves of Palestinian terror, the nature and contexts of the conflicts, and Israel's response for that matter, were fundamentally different. To this end, the ideologies, religious beliefs, and statehood ambitions between the various terrorist and insurgent organizations differ from one another which may, according to several scholars, affect how their respective organizations respond to the removal of a specific individual.³⁸ Recognizing this, the author of this study will attempt to mitigate this limitation by making a concerted effort to note the differences in context, nature, and circumstance within which the cases of targeting operations selected for examination took place.³⁹

1.6 Deviations from Original Research Proposal

As with any sizeable project, deviations from the original blueprint are to be expected and, in some cases, have the potential to add utility to the end product. Such was the case with this study. Deviations from the original research proposal were not dramatic and in fact stemmed from an evolved understanding of the topic as my knowledge increased with in-depth research. Nevertheless, these deviations deserve acknowledgement.

To begin, this study originally proposed analyzing cases of Israeli targeting operations both before and after the Second, as opposed to analyzing cases before and during this time period. My original research proposal envisioned analyzing targeting operations conducted prior to the Second Intifada, and from 2000-2012 respectively. However, this endeavor would have led to an immensely

³⁷ Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.117.

³⁸ See for examples studies conducted by Jordan (2009; 2014), Langden et al. (2004) and Johnston (2012).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

disproportionate data set between the two time periods as it was later discovered that upwards of 400 separate targeting operations have been conducted from 2000-2012, compared to approximately nineteen substantiated cases during the period from 1956-1999.⁴⁰ It was therefore deemed necessary to analyze a more proportionate data set, with the final decision aided by discovering a list of “prominent” targeting operations conducted during the Second Intifada which was compiled by Avi Pedahzur in his research regarding Israel’s policy of targeted killing.⁴¹ This provided a near even match of cases to analyze against those conducted during the period from 1956-1999 and was considered ideal for purposes of this study.⁴²

The second deviation worth acknowledging is structural in nature and concerns the organization of my analysis. My original research proposal envisioned answering a primary research question with the aide of three separate sub-research questions. Upon developing an innovative research approach which would measure direct outcomes of targeting operations, these sub-research questions were subsumed as “indicators” which would serve as a baseline for measuring success.

⁴⁰ See B’tselem statistics: www.btselem.org/statistics

⁴¹ See Pedahzur, who outlines cases of “prominence” which were conducted during the Second Intifada. Pedahzur, Ami. *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism*. Columbia University Press, 2009. pp. 119-120.

⁴² Ibid. pp. 119-120

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will be dedicated to establishing the theoretical foundations upon which this study is built. The reader will first be introduced to the concept of targeted killing as it relates to the wider study of *decapitation theory* within counterterrorism studies, and then presented with a brief introduction to the controversies, legal arguments, and moral dilemmas associated with its utilization, as well as the most prominent policy arguments for and against the practice. Additionally, an examination of some of the most prevalent research previously conducted on targeted killing as a policy tool will be presented.

The latter half of chapter will be dedicated to developing an understanding of the Israeli experience, and build upon the theoretical underpinnings established in the first half of the chapter, and present the reader with an examination of the changing nature of Israel's targeting policy. The chapter will conclude with an in-depth examination of the primary difficulties relating to measuring success and effectiveness of the practice.

2.2 Targeted Killing: Defining a Concept

Surprisingly, and despite the wealth of research dedicated to the study of selectively removing individuals by use of force who are deemed to be *high value targets*, a consensus within scholarly and policymaking circles regarding an accepted term for the practice has yet to be reached. Indeed, defining such a controversial concept which embraces what some consider extrajudicial measures— and lethal ones at that— as a means of countering security threats can be equally challenging as defining, for example, what terrorism is, and in which scenarios such a term is to be applied.⁴³ To illustrate this, some scholars have shown a preference for using the term *assassination* or *decapitation* to refer to policies that others refer to as *targeted killing*.⁴⁴ Others choose to use similar terms such as *targeted assassination*, *selective*

⁴³ Kretzmer, D. *Targeted Killing of Suspected Terrorists: Extra-Judicial Executions or Legitimate Means of Defense?* European Journal of International Law 16.2 (2005) p. 1. Kretzmer notes that “some refer to targeted killings of suspected terrorists as extra-judicial executions; others claim they are legitimate acts of war.”

⁴⁴ Carvin, Stephanie. *The Trouble with Targeted Killing*. Security Studies 21.3 (2012) p. 529.

execution, extrajudicial killing, or any number of variants combining related terms.⁴⁵

In the case of Israel, the practice is often translated from the Hebrew term for *targeted thwarting, targeted foiling, or interceptions*.⁴⁶ To further complicate matters, some scholars do not distinguish between removing individuals by means of lethal and non-lethal force. For example, Jordan uses the term *leadership decapitation* in her research, and does not differentiate between eliminating targeted individuals by means of lethal force, or capturing and detaining them.⁴⁷ This lack of consensus, Carvin notes, is one of the major problems researchers encounter when attempting to compare and contrast empirical findings within this field of study.⁴⁸

Legal experts and policymakers alike face a similar challenge when attempting to codify such an inherently controversial practice within the framework of international law. As noted in a 2010 United Nations General Assembly report, despite the frequency with which it is invoked, the term *targeted killing*, one of the most widely used terms within research and policymaking circles, is not a term defined under international law, nor does it fit neatly into any particular legal framework.⁴⁹ However, nor should it necessarily have to. Carvin argues that a dearth of evidence relating to the study of the practice, considerable differences in policies and contexts across states, and difficulties in how success is defined creates problems when attempting to define the practice, and makes generalizing about the concept across unrelated scenarios a questionable exercise.⁵⁰

Indeed, some of the inherent flaws relating to current research dedicated to the study of targeting and removing individuals by use of lethal force involves a tendency for researchers to make generalizations about the concept by employing a single term to analyze large data sets, many of which are unrelated and span vast periods of time— choosing instead to ignore the intricate nature of various geopolitical contexts, conflicts, and terrorist organization aims. For this reason, I will

⁴⁵ David, Steven. *Fatal Choices: Israel's Policy of Targeted Killing*. Mideast Security and Policy Studies No. 51, 2002.

⁴⁶ Stahl, Adam. *The Evolution of Israeli Targeted Operations: Consequences of the Thabet Thabet Operation*. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33.2. 2010. p. 112. According to Stahl, *Si'kul Meh'mu'kad* (literally “focused foiling” or “thwarting”) and often abbreviated to SIKUM.

⁴⁷ See Jenna Jordan’s *Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark: Why Terrorist Groups Survive Decapitation Strikes*. *International Security* 38.4 (2014) and *When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation*. *Security Studies* 18.4 (2009): 719-55.

⁴⁸ Carvin, op. cit., p. 531.

⁴⁹ Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. Addendum: Study on Targeted Killings, Human Rights Council, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/14/24/Add.6 (May 28, 2010) by Philip Alston.

⁵⁰ Carvin, op. cit., p. 529

argue that it is critical, and indeed necessary, to utilize a term which best describes the practice as it relates to a particular context, while paying particular attention to the unique nature of the conflict at hand and the stated aims of the operation.

For the purpose of this study, the term *targeted killing* will be employed while developing the theoretical framework and was chosen because it accurately reflects the practice of the state which forms the focal point of this study— Israel. When referring to specific cases, the term *targeting operation* is utilized and refers to a neutral phraseology for the various Israeli operations examined which may have been conducted for the purpose of, inter alia, pre-emption, prevention, or revenge and is meant to have the same meaning regardless of motivation.⁵¹

While terms tend to differ among various researchers, even among those engaged in researching the Israeli experience, an observation noted by David was influential in the adoption of the term *targeted killing* for this study. David argues that the term targeted-killing accurately refers to what the Israelis actually do, while minimizing implied approval or disapproval for their actions.⁵² In his study, David explicitly cautions against the conflation of terms used to describe a practice which is homogenous to a specific context, such as the Israeli practice of targeting individuals deemed to be *high value targets*.⁵³ One thing targeted-killing is not, David notes, is assassination.⁵⁴ This is due to assassination typically carrying a pejorative connotation, as assassination is primarily associated with the targeting and elimination of senior political leaders, with or without explicit government approval which, notes David, is outlawed by both international treaty and Israeli customary law.⁵⁵ Targeted killing on the other hand, is the targeting and removal of a specific individual or group of individuals, and undertaken with explicit governmental approval.⁵⁶ Kober adds that targeted killing is about striking terrorists who are on their way to attack, and sometimes aimed at the “decapitation” of terror organizations’ political or military leaders who account for the ideological or political guidance of terror.⁵⁷ However, it is important that the terms targeted-killing

⁵¹ Stahl, op. cit., p. 129

⁵² David, *Fatal Choices*, op. cit., p. 2

⁵³ Ibid., p. 2

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 2

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 14

⁵⁶ David, Steven R. *Israel's Policy of Targeted Killing*. *Ethics & International Affairs* 17.1 (2003) p. 1

⁵⁷ Kober, Avi. *Targeted Killing during the Second Intifada: The Quest for Effectiveness*. *Journal of Conflict Studies* 27.1 (2007) p. 1

and decapitation not be conflated, as both are distinct and may occur exclusive of one another. The concept of decapitation as noted in Kober's definition is important to understand because it sheds insight on the concept of *high value targets*, and why states choose to utilize targeted-killing as a counterterrorism policy tool. More importantly, it sheds insight on who is deemed a legitimate target and will form the basis of discussion for the following section.

2.3 Decapitation Theory

Targeted killing as a counterterrorism policy tool is imbedded within the broader concept of *decapitation theory*—the theory which posits that the removal of an enemy leader will result in a disruption of enemy activities and, as the rest of the organization falls into a state of disarray without the guidance of an effective command and control structure once held by the deposed leader, will ultimately lead to an organizational collapse. An understanding of decapitation theory is necessary for those who are involved in the study of targeted-killing because it provides vital insight as to who states deem as *high value*, and who is therefore considered a legitimate target for removal.

The basic premise of decapitation theory is rooted in organizational theory which quite simply holds that leaders matter within an organization. Decapitation theory posits that—like almost any organizational body—a strong, central figure usually stands at the helm of an enemy organization, providing key directional advice and strategic decision making guidance for its members. Furthermore, as its name alludes, decapitation theory holds that removing the head—represented by a strong, central figure of an organization, will render the rest of the organizational body incapable of functioning.

Decapitation theory and the strategy of targeting enemy leaders is not new.⁵⁸ In fact, notes Price, the idea that killing an enemy leader will lead to the dissolution of an organization dates back thousands of years.⁵⁹ Price cites the biblical example in the book of Apocrypha which tells the story of a widow named Judith who famously defeats an entire army by manipulating her way into the tent of Assyrian Army General Holofernes, who was at the time commanding the army which was besieging

⁵⁸ Price, Bryan. *Removing the Devil You Know: Unraveling the Puzzle Behind Decapitation Effectiveness and Terrorist Group Duration*. Thesis. Stanford University, 2009. Stanford: UMI Microform, 2009 p. 29.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 29

the city of Judah, and decapitating him— literally.⁶⁰ After losing their leader, the Assyrian army is said to have fled back to Damascus, with Judith thus saving the city of Judah.⁶¹ However, one need not look solely to biblical examples for prominent cases of leadership targeting. Examples of leadership targeting throughout the centuries abound, with various entities targeting monarchs, presidents, tyrants, and terrorist leaders alike for various political gains.⁶²

In more recent scholarship, Robert Pape— a renowned political scientist specializing in the study of airpower and suicide terrorism— has been a leading figurehead in the conceptualization of modern decapitation theory. In his work *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*, Pape illustrates decapitation theory as it relates to the U.S. approach of fighting conventional wars. Pape argues that leadership decapitation has been a cornerstone of U.S. air campaigns ever since American forces bombed German government buildings in World War II, and argues that leadership decapitation has been a central feature in every air campaign since.⁶³ According to Pape:

*“A nation’s leadership is like a body’s brain: destroy it and the body dies; isolate it and the body is paralyzed; confuse it and the body is uncontrollable. The logic of decapitation is part punishment and part denial. As a punishment strategy, it aims to overcome a key weakness in such strategies: the increased ability of government to repress dissent in war. As a denial strategy, it aims to extend the logic of operational paralysis to “strategic” or national decision-makers.”*⁶⁴

Another prominent theorist involved in the development of contemporary decapitation theory is renowned airpower strategist and retired U.S. Air Force Colonel John Warden. Like Pape, Warden uses a similar allegory to illustrate the advantages of striking at the leadership of an enemy organization. Warden argues that one’s enemies must be thought of as a “system” composed of numerous subsystems; and at the center of each system— whether it be a state, a business entity,

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 29

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 29

⁶² For prominent instances throughout history, see Porter, Lindsay. *Assassination: A History of Political Murder*. New York: Overlook, 2010.

⁶³ Pape, Robert Anthony. *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1996. pp. 79-81. See also Price, op. cit., p. 30.

⁶⁴ Ibid, Pape. p. 80.

or terrorist organization— there is a human being who gives direction and meaning to the rest of the system.⁶⁵ These individuals, notes Warden, are at the strategic center of the system, and must be the figurative, and sometimes literal, targets of strategic operations to defeat one’s enemy.⁶⁶ The essence of war, Warden concludes, is applying pressure against the enemy’s innermost “strategic ring”—its command structure.⁶⁷

Both Pape and Warden are largely credited with developing modern notions of decapitation theory; however, their work was primarily focused on the development of the concept within the sphere of conventional military conflicts, such as strategic airpower strategies during conventional military campaigns in North Korea, Vietnam, Libya, and the first Gulf War to name a few. However, global challenges posed by transnational terrorist organizations, such as Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda movement, which gained momentum in the late 1980s and early 1990s and continue to-date, would spur a new debate regarding the utility of targeting leaders, albeit in a significantly different context, and against an elusive enemy.

2.3.1 Decapitation Theory within Counterterrorism Studies

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the end of the Cold War with the U.S. celebrating a vicarious victory.⁶⁸ Many believed that a new world peace was at hand; however, this would unfortunately prove to be false hope.⁶⁹ With the Cold War over, a new threat was born and marked by the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and religious terrorism. Contrary to previous security threats in the twentieth century, the threats posed by terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda and its affiliates have proven to be perpetrated by an elusive enemy, which uses terror to strike fear into the civilian populations of what it deems the “far enemy”— the United States and her allies.⁷⁰

To counter such threats from an elusive and transnational enemy, policymakers were quick to adapt the theories of Pape and Warden, which were largely developed within the context of conventional conflicts, and apply them to the sphere of

⁶⁵ Warden, John A. III. *The Enemy as a System*. *Airpower Journal*, Spring (9) (1995)

⁶⁶ *Ibid*

⁶⁷ *Ibid*

⁶⁸ White, Jonathan. *Terrorism and Homeland Security*. Australia: Thomson Wadsworth, 2006. p. 276

⁶⁹ *Ibid*. p. 276

⁷⁰ Gerges, Fawaz. *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. p. 14.

counterterrorism policy. As policymakers began a concerted effort to target the leadership of al-Qaeda and its affiliates, academic scholarship regarding decapitation theory as it relates to counterterrorism studies was quick to develop too.

Decapitation theory within counterterrorism studies posits that— much like their counterparts in the corporate and political arenas— a strong, central figure stands at the center of every terrorist organization, providing key organizational direction, as well as strategic and ideological guidance to the rest of the organization. Audrey Cronin, who has a wealth of both academic and practical experience within the sphere of counterterrorism studies and policymaking, is perhaps one of the most preeminent theorists of contemporary decapitation theory and has examined the subject in detail. In her work *How al-Qaeda Ends*, Cronin notes that studies of the causes of terrorism frequently begin with an analysis of the role of the individual operatives or their leaders.⁷¹ Furthermore, in the same study Cronin lists seven broad explanations for, or critical elements in, the decline and ending of terrorist groups in the modern era and, perhaps not surprisingly, lists killing or capturing the leader of an organization as the first element on the list.⁷²

Although the bottom line throughout her academic works is that the relative efficacy of removing terrorist leaders is dependent on the nature of the group targeted, Cronin points out several key elements of decapitation theory as it applies to contemporary counterterrorism studies.⁷³ For Cronin, decapitation refers to the removal by arrest or assassination of the top leaders or operational leaders of a group.⁷⁴ However, there is an important distinction between the two methods, with Cronin noting an important dichotomy between capturing or killing. Capturing the leader, notes Cronin, reflects the view that he is a criminal and lawfully entitled to a trial and reflects the so-called “law enforcement paradigm” in counterterrorism;

⁷¹ Cronin, Audrey Kurth. *How Al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups*. International Security 31.1 (2006)

⁷² Ibid. p. 7. According to Cronin there are at least seven broad explanations for, or critical elements in, the decline and ending of terrorist groups in the modern era: (1) capture or killing of the leader, (2) failure to transition to the next generation, (3) achievement of the group’s aims, (4) transition to a legitimate political process, (5) undermining of popular support, (6) repression, and (7) transition from terrorism to other forms of violence.

⁷³ See Cronin’s *How Al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups* (2006) and *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (2009)

⁷⁴ Cronin, Audrey Kurth. *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009. p. 16-17.

killing him is treating him as a combatant, and fair game for attack, and reflects the so-called “war paradigm” in counterterrorism.⁷⁵

Cronin makes an important distinction here which is relevant for this study. While leadership decapitation may refer to various methods of removal among various scholars, the method which concerns this study is the removal by lethal force. Decapitation theory as it pertains to this study can therefore be surmised as reflecting the “war model” of counterterrorism as opposed to the “criminal justice model.”⁷⁶ An important distinction between the two as it applies to this study is that within the criminal justice model, the rules of engagement stipulate a minimal use of force when apprehending an individual; however, in the war model, the rules of engagement stipulate that maximum force be applied, which is designed to overpower the enemy.⁷⁷

Other notable scholars credited with the development of contemporary decapitation scholarship within counterterrorism studies note the high payoff potential for targeting leaders. Applying his theory not only to conventional warfare, but also to the study of combating terrorism, retired Air Force colonel and famed air-strategist John Warden argues that striking at the core of a terrorist entity deals a crushing blow to the organization’s center of gravity, reverberating throughout the rest of the organization and leaving it in a state of chaotic disarray.⁷⁸

Similarly, in his RAND study *Operations against Enemy Leaders*, Stephen Hosmer notes that operations against enemy leaders— including those against terrorist organizations— have long been considered to have a high payoff potential insofar as that they target a key enemy center of gravity and place at risk the individuals considered responsible for initiating and sustaining assaults.⁷⁹ Most notably, notes Hosmer, targeting leaders is thought to be a promising instrument for shortening wars, effecting other changes in enemy policy and behavior, and degrading enemy war-fighting capability.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Ibid. pp. 16-17.

⁷⁶ Crelinsten, Ronald D. *Counterterrorism*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2009. For detailed explanation of the War and Criminal Models of counterterrorism, refer to Chapter Two: Coercive Counterterrorism.

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ See Warden, op. cit. and Hosmer, Stephen. *Operations against Enemy Leaders*. RAND, 2001.

⁷⁹ Hosmer, op. cit., p. xi

⁸⁰ Ibid

2.3.2 Prominent Themes of Decapitation Theory

While not explicitly stated in any particular scholarly work, an examination of the most prominent scholarship pertaining to the study of decapitation theory as it relates to the study of counterterrorism yields three discernable themes which represent the overall aims of the practice. Decapitation theory aims first to disrupt, to deter, and ultimately to defeat terrorist organizations.

The first theme, which aims at the disruption of terrorist organization activities, is noted by several scholars involved in the study of decapitation theory.⁸¹ Lotrionte, for example, notes the disruption effect that targeting leaders has on terrorist organizations, stating that strategically removing a leader may impair followers' ability to operate and carry out command and control decisions.⁸² The effect that this has on organizations, notes Lotrionte, is that the loss of the leader causes significant confusion and disarray within the organization.⁸³ The disruption effect caused by targeting leaders of terrorist organizations is further noted by several other scholars such as Byman, who argues that terrorist leaders and their followers— fearing that they too may become targets of decapitation campaigns— are forced to divert valuable time and resources to evading detection— time that would have otherwise been spent on planning and carrying out attacks.⁸⁴

In addition to disrupting terrorist groups' organizational routines, the second theme which decapitation theory aims to achieve relates to the deterrence of present and future terrorist activities, as well as deterring the successors of previously targeted leaders from assuming positions once held by their deceased predecessor. Several scholars point towards the deterrent effect of targeting leaders as part of decapitation campaigns.⁸⁵ Hosmer, for example, points to the deterrent effect of targeting enemy leaders and argues that leadership attacks are seen to have significant deterrent and coercive value in that they threaten the things enemy leaders value most: personal power and safety.⁸⁶ Furthermore, notes Hosmer, attacking

⁸¹ Lotrionte, Catherine. *When to Target Leaders*. The Washington Quarterly 26.3 (2003) p. 81

⁸² Ibid. p. 80

⁸³ Ibid. p. 81

⁸⁴ See Byman, Daniel. *Do Targeted Killings Work?* Vol. 85 Council on Foreign Relations, 2006 and David, Steven R. *Israel's Policy of Targeted Killing*. Ethics & International Affairs 17.1 (2003)

⁸⁵ See Hosmer, op. cit. and Price, Bryan C. *Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism*. International Security 36.4 (2012)

⁸⁶ Hosmer, op. cit., p. xi

leaders sends a message to other would-be malefactors about the types of punishment they might expect should they assume power.⁸⁷

The third theme identified in current decapitation theory scholarship, and perhaps not surprisingly the overall aim of a campaign which utilizes decapitation as a strategy, is the belief that the removal of enemy leaders ultimately results in the defeat of the organization being targeted. Lotrionte, for example, notes that even if temporary, the cumulative result of the confusion and disruption as a result of targeting leaders may give enough time to complete a regime change.⁸⁸ Other scholars note that the targeting of leaders is thought to be a promising instrument for shortening wars, effecting other changes in enemy policy and behavior, degrading enemy war-fighting capability, and contributing to the organizational collapse of terrorist groups.⁸⁹

2.3.3 Why Leaders Matter

Thus far this study has presented two primary concepts: *targeted-killing*, which was described as the practice of targeting and eliminating a specific individual or group of individuals undertaken with explicit government approval; and *decapitation theory*, the broader of the two concepts, which holds that removing top leaders within terrorist organizations will result in the rest of the organization becoming incapable of continued activity. In order to cement an understanding of both concepts, and to understand why states choose to target leaders, a central question remains: Why do leaders matter? More specifically, why are leaders and members with key personality and skill traits so important to the organizations which they represent?

In the previous section, leaders were likened to the head of a body or the core of a system, and responsible for key decision making and the delegation of tasks throughout the rest of the organization; responsibilities which are believed to be vital for operational efficiency.⁹⁰ Without this guidance, an organization is believed to falter and fall into a state of disarray and confusion, and ultimately lead to the demise of the organization. However, decision-making and task-delegation capabilities represent only a fraction of the importance of leaders. Several scholars involved in

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. xi

⁸⁸ Lotrionte, op. cit., p. 81

⁸⁹ See Hosmer (2001) and Price (2012), op. cit.

⁹⁰ See Pape (1996) and Warden (1995), op. cit.

the study of decapitation theory emphasize less tangible, albeit arguably more significant traits, such as the power of charisma.

For some, those individuals who are endowed with particularly charismatic personalities are believed to serve an almost invaluable function in keeping an organization together.⁹¹ This line of reasoning draws on Weberian theories of charisma and charismatic authority.⁹² Charisma, according to Weber, is “a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men, and treated as endowed with supernatural powers.”⁹³ Furthermore, Weber saw leaders endowed with this “power” as having a certain “charismatic authority,” which applies not so much to certain character traits of the leader, but to the relationship between the leader and his followers.⁹⁴ This relationship described by Weber can be regarded as the cornerstone of decapitation theory. Once this relationship between leader and follower is severed, the personality traits and organizational skills of the leader that previously held the organization together are believed to be eliminated, and not easily replaceable— all to the detriment of the organization.⁹⁵ This can have dire consequences for an organization and its day-to-day operations. Freeman, for example, notes that without an organizationally important leader, crucial elements of organization such as recruitment, fundraising, logistics, training, and alliances with other groups all suffer.⁹⁶

Similar to charisma, another crucial role of an organization’s leader concerns the dissemination of ideological and strategic aims of an organization. For Gunaratna, leadership is crucial to any organization, with leaders playing a critical role when it comes to dissemination of ideology and the goals of the terrorist group.⁹⁷

⁹¹ See David (2003), op. cit. and Jordan, Jenna. *When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation*. Security Studies 18.4 (2009)

⁹² Charismatic authority was not the only authority type identified by Weber. In his Three Types of Legitimate Rule, Weber also identifies Legal Authority, which is based on a system of administratively and judicially applied rules; and Traditional Authority, which is based on a system which vests power in those who inherit it via linear descent. See Weber, Max, Talcott Parsons, and A M. Henderson. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. 1964

⁹³ Weber, Max, Talcott Parsons, and A M. Henderson. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. 1964

⁹⁴ Ibid, Weber.

⁹⁵ Brian, Michael. *Should Our Arsenal Against Terrorism Include Assassination?* Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, (1987), p. 4.

⁹⁶ Freeman, Michael. *A Theory of Terrorist Leadership (and its Consequences for Leadership Targeting)*. Terrorism and Political Violence 26.4 (2014) p. 671

⁹⁷ Gunaratna, Rohan, and Aviv Oreg. *Al Qaeda's Organizational Structure and its Evolution*. Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 33.12 (2010) pp. 1044-1045.

While targeting leaders is believed to be a promising method for effecting change within terrorist organization behavior, the practice has not come without considerable controversy, and will form the basis of discussion for the next section.

2.4 Controversies, Moral Issues and Legal Aspects

Ethical concerns, moral issues, and legal aspects relating to the practice of targeted killing and decapitation theory occupy a vast quantity of literature dedicated to the subjects. Regardless of whether the practice yields any tangible impact on countering terrorist or insurgent activity, which will be discussed in detail in the following sections, there is no shortage of debate regarding its controversy as a policy tool of government statecraft.

A comprehensive review of the ethics, moral issues, and legal aspects of targeted killing could fill and has filled volumes of scholarly literature. As the aim of this study is to conduct a comparative case study on Israeli targeting operations before and during the Second Intifada, a complete review of these issues remains, for the moment, out of the scope of this thesis. However, a brief introduction to the salient legal and ethical controversies as they relate to the practice will establish a firmer foundation for understanding its potential strengths and weaknesses within the study of counterterrorism.

To begin, the method that states choose to employ when targeting leaders as a policy tool for countering terrorist or insurgent violence significantly affects both the legal and moral debate. Mannes notes, for example, that few would argue against the arrest and trial of individuals wanted by the state.⁹⁸ A prime example of this as it relates to the Israeli experience was the capture of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann in Buenos Aires in 1961, which was carried out by a team of Israeli Mossad operatives who subsequently extradited Eichmann to Israel to stand trial for his past crimes against humanity. Although his extrajudicial rendition sent shockwaves of controversy throughout the international community, few argued against the measure being unjust. Eichmann, although ultimately sentenced to death by Israel for his role as a major organizer of the Holocaust, stood a fair trial which was subject to judicial review. However, the matter is complicated when targeting strategies involve the use of lethal force to target individuals, as opposed to their

⁹⁸ Mannes, Aaron. *Testing the Snake Head Strategy: Does Killing or Capturing its Leaders Reduce a Terrorist Group's Activity?* The Journal of International Policy Solutions. No. 9 (2008) p. 40

arrest and trial. When lethal means are utilized, opponents argue that an individual's legal rights are essentially denied without due legal process, and is further viewed as simply an extrajudicial execution.⁹⁹

Extrajudicial rendition, as was the case with Eichmann, is not always possible due to inherent security risks associated with a suspect's capture. Mannes notes that arrest is not always possible for tactical reasons—such as difficult terrain or a limited tactical presence on the ground.¹⁰⁰ This makes the rendition of suspected and known perpetrators of terrorism inherently more difficult, as it opens the rendering state to casualties of its own. For this reason, Israel and other states have often pursued a policy of killing terrorist leaders.¹⁰¹ When this method is utilized, it greatly compounds both the moral and legal debate.

On one side of the debate, opponents claim that the practice of targeted killing is little more than summary execution, with its extrajudicial nature making a mockery of international civil and humanitarian law.¹⁰² On the other side, proponents of the practice argue that it is a legitimate means for combating terrorist organizations whose stated aims are to inflict as many casualties as possible on the civilian populations of the state they are targeting.¹⁰³

The debate is not new. Historically, notes Lotrionte, killing foreign leaders as an instrument of foreign policy has largely been condemned and barred as a policy option.¹⁰⁴ Scholars such as Alberico Gentili, who is widely considered to be one of the founding fathers of public international law, condemned the practice of targeting heads of state as early as 1598, labeling it as “shameful” and “wicked,” arguing instead that the objectives of war should be achieved by “valorous means.”¹⁰⁵ Indeed, there appeared to be a tacit consensus for several centuries among heads of state that attacking one's counterpart for political gain was simply not a policy option. Eichensehr notes that international custom and later treaties prohibiting attacks on leaders arose from medieval kings' mutual desire to protect *themselves* during a time

⁹⁹ Kretzmer, op. cit.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 40

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 40

¹⁰² Jose, Betsy. *The Trouble with Targeted Killings: The Rise and Fall of an International Norm*. Foreign Affairs. Council on Foreign Relations, 12 Sept. 2014. Referencing comments made by Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh in a 2002 statement.

¹⁰³ Kretzmer, op. cit. p. 1. See also Part C: The Principle of Distinction under International Humanitarian Law.

¹⁰⁴ Lotrionte, op. cit. pp. 73, 82.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 82.

when wars of aggression were largely the prerogative of the state, and used as a legitimate means to settle interstate conflict.¹⁰⁶ Although wars of aggression have since become illegal under international law, many heads of state, notes Eichensehr, continue to benefit from the bans on “assassination” which were prohibited in the 1899 Hague and 1949 Geneva Conventions respectively, with the former outlawing “acts of treachery” on adversaries, and the latter banning of attacks that “rely on perfidy.”¹⁰⁷ The dilemma which arises in contemporary debates is whether the targeted killing of terrorist leaders and other individuals deemed to be *high value targets* constitutes assassination, or whether they fall under the definition of, inter alia, lawful or unlawful enemy combatants, as stipulated in the Third Geneva Convention.

Opponents of the practice also point to further legal dilemmas which result from a state’s decision to utilize targeted killing as a counterterrorism policy tool, citing international human rights law which considers the practice as an extrajudicial means of sentencing suspected terrorists in absentia, and bringing them to a sort of “rough justice,” albeit without trying them in a court of law.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, notes Kretzmer, “granting license to state authorities to kill suspected enemies of the state cannot appeal to anyone sensitive to human rights and suspicious of the uses and abuses of state power.”¹⁰⁹ This is especially true when, as Kretzmer points out, all international conventions dealing with civil and political rights protect the “inherent right to life” of all individuals.¹¹⁰

Proponents of the practice, in response to calls for settling conflicts with more “conventional” means of warfare as suggested by early scholars such as Gentili, note that there is nothing “valorous” about indiscriminate bombing campaigns, large troop numbers, heavy artillery, and other military means which cause mass amounts of destruction and leave thousands of civilian and troop casualties in its wake, which could have otherwise been avoided by targeting an individual or select number of individuals.¹¹¹ Furthermore, in response to legal concerns arising from the conduct

¹⁰⁶ Eichensehr, Kristen. *On the Offensive: Assassination Policy under International Law*. Harvard International Review 25.3 (2003) p. 36

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 36

¹⁰⁸ Byman, op. cit.

¹⁰⁹ Kretzmer, D. *Targeted Killing of Suspected Terrorists: Extra-Judicial Executions or Legitimate Means of Defense?* European Journal of International Law 16.2 (2005) p. 174

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p. 177

¹¹¹ Ralph Peters. *A Revolution in Military Ethics?* Parameters: The Journal of the Army War College 26, no. 2 (summer 1996) p. 104

of war and who constitutes a legitimate target, Kretzmer notes that one cannot simply dismiss out of hand the parallel drawn between the legitimate killing of enemy combatants during conventional armed conflicts and a state's decision to target active members of terrorist organizations that have, for all intents and purposes, declared war on those states.¹¹²

Despite the practice being equally detestable on both moral and ethical grounds, and despite the abundance of legal concerns, several scholars have described the practice of targeted killing as being the “least bad option” in the policy toolkit for states facing threats from terrorist and insurgent organizations.¹¹³ Whether this is a legitimate argument depends greatly on how success and effectiveness within a particular counterterrorism strategy is conceptualized, and will be discussed in detail in section 2.11. However, to better understand the discussion regarding the conceptualization of success and effectiveness, it is important to first understand the primary policy merits and arguments against the practice which will form the basis of discussion in the next two sections of this chapter.

2.5 Policy Merits for Targeting Leaders

As illustrated in the previous section, targeting leaders as a policy tool for countering terrorist and insurgent organizations is one which is shrouded in controversy and, as will be discussed in the following sections, a policy with questionable effectiveness. While the debate regarding its efficacy largely depends on how effectiveness is perceived, there are a number of scholars and policymakers who point towards the potential advantages resulting from targeting *high value targets* as a counterterrorism policy tool. This section will focus solely on the policy merits which proponents of the practice advance. While these merits are by no means exhaustive, they will present the reader with an overview of the most salient points which supporters argue result from the targeted of *high value targets*.

¹¹² Kretzmer (2005), op. cit., p. 174

¹¹³ David, op. cit., p. 123

2.5.1 Command and Control

Proponents of targeting leaders and *high value targets* point out that one of the primary advantages of the practice, which was also identified as one of the key aims of decapitation theory, is that it is a means to eliminate core command and control positions, which in turn is believed to lead to a weakening of the entire organization. As noted in the section, *Why Leaders Matter*, several scholars note that some leaders are endowed with especially charismatic traits and organizational skills which act as the glue with which an organization is held together. The argument these proponents advance is that when these decision makers are removed, a leadership vacuum is created, thus leading to the organization losing effectiveness, becoming prone to inter-organizational infighting, and eventually collapsing.¹¹⁴

However, even in the event that an organizational collapse does not immediately occur, several scholars note the tactical advantage of targeting leaders which some argue places an increased cognitive load, along with greater decision making responsibilities, to less competent personnel.¹¹⁵ This combination, notes Hafez and Hatfield, may have the potential to reduce the quality of future operations.¹¹⁶ This argument appears to be consistent with Johnston's study on targeting leaders, which found that insurgent organizations whose leaders were killed or captured tend to conduct fewer subsequent retaliatory attacks compared with insurgencies whose leaders escape targeting attempts, thus resulting in a lower death toll among civilians after controlling for violence before and after targeting occurred.¹¹⁷

In addition to weakening organizations by removing key personnel, several scholars point out that targeting operations have the advantage of being able to yield critical intelligence about terrorist group activity.¹¹⁸ A prime example of this was the 2011 U.S Seal Team Six operation which targeted and killed al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in his Abbottabad compound. Documents obtained during the operation

¹¹⁴ See David, Steven R. *Israel's Policy of Targeted Killing*. *Ethics International Affairs* 17.1 (2003) (Note 18) and Frankel, Matt. *The ABCs of HVT: Key Lessons from High Value Targeting Campaigns against Insurgents and Terrorists*. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 34.1 (2010; 2011) p. 18

¹¹⁵ Hafez, Mohammed, and Joseph Hatfield. *Do Targeted Assassinations Work? A Multivariate Analysis of Israel's Controversial Tactic during Al-Aqsa Uprising*. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29.4 (2006) p. 365. See also Hosmer, Stephen. *Operations against Enemy Leaders*. RAND, 2001.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* Hafez and Hatfield, p. 365

¹¹⁷ Johnston, Patrick B. *Does Decapitation Work? Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Targeting in Counterinsurgency Campaigns*. *International Security* 36.4 (2012)

¹¹⁸ Jordan, Jenna. *Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark: Why Terrorist Groups Survive Decapitation Strikes*. *International Security* 38.4 (2014) p. 10

revealed key insight into the inner-workings of the organization, and revealed an increased presence of the organization in regions not previously known to counterterrorism authorities.¹¹⁹

2.5.2 Special Skills and Knowledge

Proponents of the practice also argue that, similar to eliminating individuals with especially charismatic and organizational skills, targeting leaders and *high value targets* eliminates individuals with specialized skills and knowledge which are critical to the organization's operational success and efficiency. Several scholars note that removing dedicated specialists such as bomb makers, media experts, recruiters, finance liaison officers, forgers, and training experts has a meaningful impact on terrorist and insurgent operations, with skilled replacements not always readily available.¹²⁰ Several scholars illustrate this point in their respective studies by noting that, contrary to popular myth, skilled terrorists are limited and specialized skills such as bombmaking, recruiting, forging, and intelligence gathering skills are not acquired overnight; they may need months, if not years to gain enough expertise to be effective.¹²¹ When these individuals are removed, their organizations are disrupted, and while the group may still be able to attract replacements, their lack of expertise will not pose the same kind of threat as that of their skilled predecessor.¹²²

These arguments appear to be consistent with David's analysis of Israel's policy of targeted killing during the Second Intifada, in which David notes that some evidence exists that targeted killings have reduced the performance of terrorist operations due to increased incidents of poorly planned attacks which are subsequently foiled.¹²³ Examples given are suicide bombers appearing with wires sticking out of their bags, possibly indicating that there have been problems either with the organization of the operations, or with those available to carry them out.¹²⁴ Regarding such poorly planned attacks and referring to the process of bombmaking and carrying out suicide attacks, Israeli military officials suggest that its policy of

¹¹⁹ See Hoffman, Bruce. *Al Qaeda's Uncertain Future*. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 36.8 (2013). (Endnote 31) p. 639

¹²⁰ Frankel, op. cit., p. 18

¹²¹ Hafez and Hatfield, op. cit., p. 365

¹²² Byman, op. cit.

¹²³ David, op. cit., p. 120

¹²⁴ Eisenstadt, Michael. *Pre-Emptive Targeted Killings as a Counter-Terror Tool: An Assessment of Israel's Approach*. *Peacewatch*, No. 342. August 2001

targeted killing during the Second Intifada may have depleted the ranks of the most experienced Palestinian planners, causing organizations such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad to rush what is usually a protracted, painstaking process that in the past took weeks.¹²⁵

2.5.3 Disruption and Deterrence

In addition to eliminating key command and control positions, as well as those thought to possess specialized knowledge or skills, proponents of targeting killing as a policy tool argue that it disrupts ongoing terrorist and insurgent activity and deters others from carrying out future operations. The basic assumption here is that, fearing becoming targets themselves, terrorist and insurgent leaders will go on the defensive as they attempt to evade detection. The advantage here is that more time spent on evading detection is less time spent on planning and carrying out terrorist attacks. Furthermore, again fearful of becoming targets of targeting campaigns, terrorists and insurgent leaders may decide that the risk is simply too great, and either cease ongoing and future activity, or turn themselves in to the authorities seeking their removal.

Several scholars discuss the disruption effect which targeted killing campaigns may have on terrorist and insurgent activity. Hafez and Hatfield note that, rather than spending their money, time, and effort on recruiting people, training them, and transporting them to carry out operations, terrorists who are fearful of detection spend their valued resources on securing safe houses, alternating vehicles and communication methods to avoid detection, and restructuring cells which have previously been disrupted.¹²⁶ Referring to Palestinian terrorists attempting to evade Israeli detection, David notes numerous accounts of those on the Israeli “hit list” taking precautions against becoming targets, such as sleeping in a different location every night and not letting others know their whereabouts.¹²⁷ Several scholars note that these steps to evade detection have an added psychological impact on terrorist and insurgent leaders which may serve to deter ongoing and future attacks. Byman notes that, the stress of having to avoid family and friends at all costs, and frequently having to move from safe house to safe house, puts enormous demands on terrorists.¹²⁸ Over time, these demands can simply become too much, with terrorist

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Hafez and Hatfield, *op. cit.*, p. 365

¹²⁷ David (2003), *op. cit.*, p. 7

¹²⁸ Byman, *op. cit.*

and insurgent leaders deciding instead that the costs of waging operations against the state are simply too high. David notes the example of Israel which has a policy of informing the Palestinian Authority (PA) of those individuals which are being targeted. When this information was passed on to the targeted individuals, some voluntarily chose to place themselves in custody to avoid being slain, with the threat they posed to Israel consequently diminished.¹²⁹

2.5.4 Prevention of Greater Atrocities

Finally, one of the principle arguments proponents of targeted killing cite is that the practice is far more proportionate than conventional warfare and thus precludes greater atrocities—both from those stemming from terrorist activity and those which would result as a consequence from conventional military operations. As a result, lives on both sides are spared which would have otherwise suffered at the hands of a ruthless terrorist leader, or perished as troop casualties or collateral damage under indiscriminate military bombing campaigns.

Concerning conflict proportionality, several scholars note that unlike invasions or occupations, targeted killing does not employ large numbers of troops, bombers, artillery, and other means that cause far more destruction than they prevent; rather, a single strike offers a far more proportionate way to minimize civilian and military casualties compared to conventional warfare.¹³⁰ This, notes Lotrionte, prevents fewer innocent victims from becoming the collateral damage of an armed conflict; and adds, “Even with precision guided weapons, any type of armed conflict will inevitably cause the deaths of innocent victims.”¹³¹

In addition to sparing countless civilian lives, Lotrionte illustrates the dramatic differences in the number of deaths likely to result from conventional military means compared to a single strike against an enemy leader with the words of retired U.S Army Lt. Colonel Ralph Peters, who criticized opponents who condemned targeting enemy leaders such as Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War: “While it was acceptable to bomb those divisions of hapless conscripts, it was unthinkable to announce and

¹²⁹ David (2003), *op. cit.*, p. 7

¹³⁰ See Carvin (2012) and David (2003)

¹³¹ Lotrionte, *op. cit.*, p. 80

carry out a threat to kill Saddam Hussein, although he bore overwhelming guilt for the entire war and its atrocities.”¹³²

2.6 Policy Arguments against Targeting Leaders

While proponents of targeting killing as a counterterror and counterinsurgency policy tool point towards its benefits, an equal number of opponents denounce it as an ineffective and, according to some, counterproductive means of countering terrorism and insurgencies.¹³³ Even if successful in removing an enemy leader or *high value target*, states may face the issue of blowback— a term used to describe when a particular policy tool backfires with very negative, unintended consequences.¹³⁴ The aim of this section is to focus solely on the policy arguments which opponents of the practice advance. While these arguments are once again not meant to present an exhaustive overview, they will present the reader with the most salient points which opponents argue result from the targeting of leaders and *high value targets*.

2.6.1 Elimination of Useful Assets

As discussed in the previous section, targeting leaders and other *high value targets* has the potential to remove core positions of command and control, which proponents believe leads to a weakening of the organization, and eventually to an organizational collapse. While it may be true that key command and control positions are “successfully” removed, opponents of the practice point to the fact that doing so eliminates viable negotiating partners which could have been utilized to streamline peace talks, and key intelligence assets which could have otherwise been interrogated.¹³⁵

Several scholars note that one prominent disadvantage of removing terrorist leaders results in the removal of possible negotiating partners whose charisma and organizational skills are believed to have significant influence over the organization and its members.¹³⁶ Once these leaders are removed, the link between the terrorist

¹³² Lotrionte, op. cit., (note 12) Ralph Peters, “A Revolution in Military Ethics?” *Parameters: The Journal of the Army War College* 26, no. 2 (summer 1996)

¹³³ See Jordan, Jenna. *Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark: Why Terrorist Groups Survive Decapitation Strikes*. *International Security* 38.4 (2014) and *When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation*. *Security Studies* 18.4 (2009)

¹³⁴ Carvin, op. cit., p. 536

¹³⁵ See Mannes (2008) and Dear, Keith Patrick. *Beheading the Hydra? Does Killing Terrorist or Insurgent Leaders Work?* *Defence Studies* 13.3 (2013)

¹³⁶ See Carvin (2012), Mannes (2008), and Dear (2013)

organization and the state targeting them may be severed, which can be detrimental to ongoing or future peace talks. Furthermore, as noted by Carvin, targeted killing may succeed in removing a terrorist leader; however, there is no guarantee that their successor will be an improvement.¹³⁷ In fact, their replacements may be even worse.¹³⁸ Those that do step up to fill their predecessor's shoes may be more radical, ruthless and intolerant. Furthermore, they may not be as willing to enter into peace talks with the state and—eager to prove their mettle—may engage in more heavy handed operations against the state and its civilians. This line of reasoning appears to be consistent with Dear's argument against the practice, and refers to Mullah Mujahid— a former Taliban ambassador to the United Nations who claims that targeted killing in Afghanistan has effectively eliminated older and more “pragmatic” commanders, who have been replaced by younger “fanatical” types.¹³⁹ In this respect, notes Mujahid, “we are losing a lot of politically-minded Taliban. The new ones have a more religious mentality. They are only fighters.”¹⁴⁰

In addition to removing potential negotiating partners, several scholars note that targeted killing eliminates key intelligence assets which could have otherwise been interrogated and provided authorities with valuable intelligence which could have been used to target wider parts of the terrorist network.¹⁴¹ Critics argue that while targeting operations such as the one which killed Osama bin Laden may yield critical intelligence documents, this intelligence pales in comparison to that which could be obtained from capturing and interrogating individuals. Kaplan, for example, argues that arresting terrorists enables authorities to interrogate suspects which could lead to the discovery of links to more nodes in the terror network, and quips that it is difficult to interrogate the target of a successful missile strike.¹⁴²

Furthermore, as intelligence agencies usually rely on a wide network of informers with intimate knowledge of the terrorist or insurgent leaders being targeted, these informers risk being exposed and slain at the hands of their compatriots, thereby putting additional strains on already scarce intelligence resources. The idiom that dead men tell no tales here applies equally to those who have been subjects of targeted

¹³⁷ Carvin, op. cit., p. 537

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 537

¹³⁹ Dear, op. cit., p. 312

¹⁴⁰ Dear, op. cit. Note 145

¹⁴¹ See Carvin (2012) and David 2003)

¹⁴² Kaplan Edward, Alex Mintz, and Shaul Mishal. *What Happened to Suicide Bombings in Israel? Insights from a Terror Stock Model*. Studies in Conflict and Terrorism 28.3 (2005) p. 231

killing campaigns and, as Carvin notes, when one of the primary purposes of counterterrorism is to gather further intelligence on other activities, a live terrorist is far more useful than a dead one.¹⁴³

2.6.2 Fuels Recruitment and Radicalization

In addition to eliminating scarce intelligence assets and potential negotiating partners, a number of scholars cite that targeted killing campaigns may have the very serious and unintended consequence of radicalizing segments of the population which become outraged at the killing of an individual whose cause they supported. Cronin notes that killing a terrorist leader may backfire by creating increased publicity for the group's cause and make the targeted individual a martyr, thus attracting new members to the organization.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, contrary to claims that targeting leaders weakens terrorist organizations and degrades morale, Johnston notes that targeting leaders may in fact increase an organization's resolve, and aid with recruitment efforts.¹⁴⁵ Several other scholars echo the martyrdom effect, arguing that it can have wider strategic implications. For example, even if a leader is successfully removed, their death may help a group sell itself to its own community, thus rallying increased sympathy and support from local and international communities.¹⁴⁶ Bloom, for example, notes the overwhelming increase in support for suicide bombing among the Palestinian community following Israel's policy of targeting Palestinian militants during the Second Intifada.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, Dear notes that while targeting leaders may deter some, the greater number will seek revenge, which will have the unintended consequence of further destabilizing government and security structures.¹⁴⁸ To further illustrate his point, Dear offers U.S General Stanley McChrystal's counterinsurgency formula which holds that killing one insurgent creates many more, because "each one you killed has a brother, father, son and friends who may seek revenge."¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ Carvin, op. cit., p. 536

¹⁴⁴ Cronin, Audrey Kurth. *How Al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups*. International Security 31.1 (2006) p. 22

¹⁴⁵ Johnston, op. cit., p. 52

¹⁴⁶ See Jordan (2009) and Byman (2006)

¹⁴⁷ Bloom, Mia. *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*. New York, NY, USA: Columbia University Press, 2005 p.39

¹⁴⁸ Dear, op. cit., p. 324

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, Dear (note 115) Gen. Stanley McChrystal, *Address to the International Institute for Strategic Studies*. Special Address: Transcript. London: IISS, October 1. 2009.

2.6.3 Retaliatory Attacks

Closely linked to recruitment and radicalization, many researchers and policy makers contend that targeted killing provokes terrorist and insurgent organizations to retaliate against their aggressor, triggering an increase in attacks against security installations and civilian populations.¹⁵⁰ Jordan notes that, in the aftermath of leadership targeting operations, an organization may be motivated to retaliate, and will often cite the previously conducted targeting operation as the motive for their subsequent attacks.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, removing a leader may temporarily reduce a group's operational efficiency; however, according to Carvin, it may raise the stakes for members to "prove their mettle" by carrying out more dramatic attacks.¹⁵² In the case of Israel, notes David, there is no doubt that targeted killing, at least in some instances, increases the terrorist threat posed by retaliatory attacks.¹⁵³ David cites the targeting and subsequent killing of Yahya Ayyash, Raed al-Karmi, and Salah Shahada in the 1990s— all prominent members within Hamas, which resulted in dramatic escalations in attacks carried out by Hamas against Israelis, with revenge cited as motivation.¹⁵⁴

2.6.4 Civilian Casualties

While it has been argued that the targeting of individual terrorist leaders is a more discriminate and proportionate means of countering terrorist and insurgent activity compared to conventional military means, no tactic involving lethal force can prevent the unintended consequence of collateral damage. As previously noted by Lotrionte, even with precision guided weapons, any type of armed conflict will inevitably cause the deaths of innocent victims.¹⁵⁵ As a result, this unintended consequence has been cited as one of the primary policy arguments against the practice of targeted killing. Civilian casualties infuriate communities and are also believed to act as antecedents for the three previously discussed policy arguments: recruitment, radicalization and retaliation. When innocent bystanders are injured or killed as a result of a targeted killing operation, it is only natural that those close to

¹⁵⁰ See David (2003), Mannes (2008), and Johnston (2012)

¹⁵¹ Jordan (2014), *op. cit.*, p.35

¹⁵² Carvin, *op. cit.*, p.537

¹⁵³ David, *op. cit.*, p. 6

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6

¹⁵⁵ Lotrionte, *op. cit.*, p. 80

the deceased become infuriated with the state responsible and seek revenge. The consequences of such mistakes can be disastrous— both at home and abroad, as the communities of the deceased bystanders, as well as critics at home and from the international community begin questioning the efficacy of such a policy tool. As noted by Byman:

*“Even the most carefully planned strikes against enemy leaders, and even ones which accomplish their goals, can produce a great deal of collateral damage. The costs of such mistakes go beyond the loss of lives and can call into question the legitimacy of the entire counterterrorism campaign. If terrorism is condemned because it kills the innocent, how can one justify counterterrorism tactics that kill them too?”*¹⁵⁶

Criticism stemming from civilian casualties has become increasingly louder in the years following increased use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to target suspected terrorist and insurgent leaders. Jordan notes that drone strikes remain the primary method for targeting enemy leaders which can be seen in an increased reliance on their use in counterterror and counterinsurgent campaigns by the United States and Israel.¹⁵⁷ Several scholars note that their increased usage, especially in the tribal regions of Pakistan and Yemen, as well as their propensity to cause significant collateral damage, have infuriated the populations of targeted leaders which generally leads to increased sympathy for the groups in the region, thus undermining the broader strategies of the counterterror and counterinsurgency campaigns.¹⁵⁸

2.6.5 Unintended Consequences

Opponents of targeted killing as a policy tool most commonly cite the four previously discussed points as the primary policy arguments against the practice; however, there are a number of other arguments which do not necessarily fit into these categories, yet nonetheless deserve attention.

Several scholars note that, just as replacements of individual leaders may become more violent compared with their predecessors, so too can groups fragment as a result of losing the social cohesion of their charismatic leader, with their replacement factions becoming more violent than before.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, Dear notes

¹⁵⁶ Byman, op. cit.

¹⁵⁷ Jordan (2014), op. cit., p. 36

¹⁵⁸ See Jordan (2014), Carvin (2012) and Dear (2013)

¹⁵⁹ See Dear (2013) and Mannes (2008)

that targeting leaders can result in groups becoming displaced over wider geographical areas as they seek safe havens from constant targeting attempts, thus widening the zone of instability.¹⁶⁰ Additionally, as the groups become frustrated locally, they may become more regionally and internationally focused.¹⁶¹ This may be especially true with the increased utilization of UAVs to target enemy leaders. Frustrated with repeated aerial bombardment, members of targeted communities may become radicalized after losing loved ones and, in seeking safe-haven elsewhere, attempt to retaliate against their aggressor, thus enlarging the conflict zone.

Other scholars note that, in addition to concerns over collateral damage, there is no way to completely avoid mistakes and the killing of innocents presumed to be terrorists, and cite as an example countries which administer the death penalty and subsequently execute wrongly convicted criminals, only later to find out that they killed the wrong person.¹⁶² The most frequently cited example of this occurrence was the killing in Lillehammer, Norway of Moroccan waiter Ahmed Bouchiki by Mossad operatives who originally mistook him to be Ali Hassan Salameh— the head of the Black September terrorist organization responsible for the 1972 Munich Massacre.¹⁶³

Finally, Dear notes that repeated use of targeted killing may be subject to a “law of diminishing returns,” with its productivity reduced with repeated usage.¹⁶⁴ Dear’s theory posits that “those leaders unable to maintain a sufficiently clandestine profile will be killed leaving only the competent alive. The youthful leadership that emerges, and the older leadership that survives will know to move regularly, limit their communications, switch off their satellite phones and trust fewer people.”¹⁶⁵ Also worth noting is Dear’s response to proponents’ claims of reducing skilled terrorists with specialized expertise such as bombmaking, stating instead that the level of expertise these individuals require to be effective is so low that many can quickly learn the required skills. Dear then cites Ehud Keinan of the Israeli Institute of Technology who describes the manufacturing process of suicide vests as an “embarrassingly easy process.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁰ Dear, op. cit., p. 311

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 11

¹⁶² Stein, Yael. *By Any Name Illegal and Immoral*. Ethics and International Affairs 17. No. 1 (Spring 2003)

¹⁶³ Raviv, Dan, and Yossi Melman. *Every Spy a Prince: The Complete History of Israel's Intelligence Community*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990 p. 189

¹⁶⁴ Dear, op. cit., p. 298

¹⁶⁵ Dear, op. cit., p. 299

¹⁶⁶ Dear, op. cit., p. 301

2.7 Previous Studies on Targeting Leaders

Scholarly literature dedicated to the analysis of targeting terrorist leaders and *high value targets* as a counterterrorism policy tool abounds and has gained considerable traction in research and policymaking circles in recent years. This is especially true as countries such as the United States and Israel adopted the practice as policy fixtures for countering terrorist and insurgent threats since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Despite the abundance of literature dedicated to the topic, systematic research regarding the effectiveness of targeting leaders and *high value targets* remains, as noted by Cronin, in its infancy.¹⁶⁷ Reasons for this stem from the inherent difficulties related to determining what constitutes “success” or “effectiveness” within the realm of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, limited reliable data relating to past strikes, and the usually clandestine nature of operations which prompts states to limit information which is readily available to the public.

While research approaches vary among academics, several scholars have attempted to quantify the effectiveness of targeting leaders by examining various terrorist and insurgent organizations throughout history whose leaders have been targeted through lethal and non-lethal targeting campaigns. Conclusions have varied, sometimes considerably; however, a brief introduction to these previous studies will shed valuable insight on how scholars and policymakers have attempted to empirically examine this phenomenon, which will establish a departure point for this study.

Conducting an analysis on the effects that the killing or capturing of a leader has on social, political and religious terrorist and insurgent organizations, Lisa Langdon and her associates examined thirty-five targeting cases drawn from more than forty countries extending as far back as 1780. The focal point of this study concerned the evolution of political, social and religious organizations following the demise or incarceration of its leader, and whether the group was prone to become more radicalized or less resilient following the leader’s removal. Langdon’s study concluded that the killing of an organization’s leader does not lead to increased radicalization of the organization, nor a transformation of its ideology which, according to the authors, suggests that leadership removal does not make a group

¹⁶⁷ Cronin, Audrey. *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*. Princeton University Press. 2009. p. 27

more resilient, but may aide in its downfall when accompanied by broader attacks on the movement's membership.¹⁶⁸

Criticizing the restrictive coding data used in other scholars' studies on targeting leaders, Patrick Johnston's study on insurgencies analyzed a large number of cases in which governments attempted, both successfully and unsuccessfully, to remove top militant leaders. The study comprised 118 decapitation attempts from a sample of ninety counterinsurgency campaigns ranging from 1975-2003. Johnston's findings challenge previous claims that the removal of leaders is ineffective or counterproductive and concluded that, contrary to other scholars' claims, leadership targeting increases the chances of war termination and the probability of government victory, and reduces the intensity of militant violence and the frequency of attacks.¹⁶⁹

Analyzing a dataset of eighty-one observations and sixty different terrorist and insurgent organizations, Aaron Mannes' study examined the effects of removing top leaders on various organizations' level of terrorist activity. To examine terrorist activity, Mannes used two common measurements which were examined in both two and five year time periods following the death or arrest of a leader: fatalities in terror attacks and the number of terror incidents. While Mannes' study of leadership removal included killing, arresting and "death by other causes," and an admission that few statistically significant conclusions could be reached due to a limited amount of data, Mannes found that leadership targeting appears to have little effect on the reduction of terrorist activity.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, the most notable trend from Mannes' analysis concluded that leadership attacks on religious terrorist groups tended to result in more deadly counterattacks, which were evidenced by sharp increases in fatalities following retaliatory attacks.¹⁷¹

Claiming to use the most comprehensive dataset of its kind at the time of his study, Bryan Price utilized a dataset of 207 terrorist organizations which were active from 1970 to 2008 to analyze the effect that targeting leaders has on the survival rate of terrorist organizations. Unlike most studies analyzing the effects of targeting

¹⁶⁸ Lisa Langdon, Alexander J. Sarapu, and Matthew Wells. *Targeting the Leadership of Terrorist and Insurgent Movements: Historical Lessons for Contemporary Policy Makers*. Journal of Public and International Affairs, Vol. 15 (Spring 2004) p. 60

¹⁶⁹ Johnston, Patrick B. *Does Decapitation Work? Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Targeting in Counterinsurgency Campaigns*. International Security 36.4 (2012)

¹⁷⁰ Mannes, Aaron. *Testing the Snake Head Strategy: Does Killing or Capturing its Leaders Reduce a Terrorist Group's Activity?* The Journal of International Policy Solutions. No. 9 (2008)

¹⁷¹ Ibid Mannes.

leaders, which mostly focus on number, frequency, or lethality of attacks after a group experiences the removal of a leader, Price's study examined the effects on the duration of terrorist organizations following the removal of a leader. Price's study concluded that, contrary to a near scholarly consensus, terrorist groups which experience leadership removal have a significantly higher rate of decline than those which did not experience leadership removal. Furthermore, Price's study concluded that, contrary to Jordan's claims, group size does not affect an organization's duration after experiencing leadership removal, with no significant differences in the survival rates of groups of varying sizes. The bottom line of Price's study concluded that terrorist groups which experienced leadership removal have a significantly higher rate of organizational decline than non-decapitated groups.

Finally, Jenna Jordan has conducted what is widely held as the most ambitious research which analyzes the effects that targeting leaders has on terrorist and insurgent organizations. In two separate studies in 2009 and 2014, Jordan analyzed a dataset of 298 instances from 1945-2004 in which leaders from ninety-six and ninety-two various terrorist organizations respectively were arrested or killed. Both studies also examined 169 terrorist organizations to determine the rate of decline for groups that had experienced leadership targeting compared to those that had not. In both studies, which analyzed the same datasets, Jordan concluded that removing terrorist leaders does not increase the likelihood of organizational collapse. Rather, and somewhat counterintuitively to other scholarly claims, Jordan found that organizations which have not experienced the removal of leaders are more likely to cease activity compared with those that have.¹⁷² Additionally, and in contrast to Price's conclusions, Jordan's studies determined that older, larger, and religious-oriented groups are more likely to resist destabilization in the face of leadership attacks than the younger, smaller, ideologically aligned groups.¹⁷³ Most surprisingly, and counter to conventional consensus, Jordan claims that her findings suggest that targeting leaders of older, larger, and religious terrorist organizations is not only ineffective, but also counterproductive, as these organizations become "emboldened and stronger in the face of leadership attacks."¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Jordan, Jenna. *Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark: Why Terrorist Groups Survive Decapitation Strikes*. *International Security* 38.4 (2014)

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, Jordan.

¹⁷⁴ Jordan, Jenna. *When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation*. *Security Studies* 18.4 (2009)

2.8 Israel's Targeted Killing Policy: A History of Violence

Offering a tacit or expressed condemnation or endorsement of any aspect of Israel's counterterrorism policy is contrary to the aims of this study. However, opponents to Israel's policy often fail to take into consideration the unique security dilemma which characterizes the small, Mediterranean country. Bordered by four countries, and home to two disputed territories which either refuse to engage in normalized relations, refuse to recognize its existence, or quite simply seek its total destruction; Israel has found itself in a precarious security environment since it gained statehood in 1948. As a result, the state has had to adopt a number of innovative, albeit highly controversial measures to protect itself and ensure its continued existence. From the point of view of Israeli counterterrorism officials, the best response to terrorism is to go on the counter-offensive and eliminate the terrorist threat before it can be launched.¹⁷⁵ One of these measures, which has been a pillar of its counterterrorism policy since the state gained independence, is the practice of targeted killing.

The controversy and criticisms of Israel's targeted killing policy are similar to those present in the wider debate of the practice. On one hand, advocates defend Israel's policy as a necessary evil, arguing that it reduces the terrorist threat by eliminating key leadership positions and those with specialized skills or knowledge. Additionally, supporters argue that targeting terrorists has an added deterrent effect as it discourages would-be terrorist activists from filling the shoes of their deceased predecessors. Critics on the other hand argue that the policy is ineffective, and in some cases counterproductive, and argue that targeting terrorists serves as a catalyst to increased Palestinian-Israeli violence. Moreover, opponents argue that Israel's policy produces "blowback" by increasing support for various Palestinian terrorist causes which inspire retaliatory attacks. Similar criticisms can be heard from those contesting the moral and legal aspects of the practice, who regard it as an illegal infringement on the sovereignty of foreign political entities, while giving Israeli policymakers discretion to decide on the killing of certain individuals without due process.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ David, Steven. *Fatal Choices: Israel's Policy of Targeted Killing*. The Review of International Affairs. 2003 p. 6

¹⁷⁶ Luft, Gal. *The Logic of Israel's Targeted Killing*. Middle East Quarterly. Winter 2003 p. 1

Despite its controversial nature and contested effectiveness, targeted killing remains a policy fixture in Israel's toolkit for combating terrorism, and has been in place for quite some time. Although recordable instances of the practice date as far back as 1956, when the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) sent parcel bombs to Egyptian intelligence officials accused of recruiting and dispatching terrorists in Southern Israel, Israel has traditionally resorted to targeting individuals in response to waves of Palestinian terror, and focuses for the most part (though not exclusively) on eliminating Palestinian terrorists who plan the actual attacks.¹⁷⁷

The first wave of Palestinian terror, notes Luft, occurred in the 1970s with a series of airliner hijackings, numerous attacks on Israelis abroad (including the 1972 Munich Massacre), and a series of cross-border infiltrations by terrorists from Lebanon.¹⁷⁸ Since the majority of Palestinian terror groups were based in hostile Arab countries, and were subsequently afforded protection by their host governments, extradition or other forms of coordinated legal action against suspected terrorists were not options.¹⁷⁹ For obvious intelligence reasons, Israel has traditionally preferred to arrest suspected terrorists so that they may be interrogated and subsequently tried in a court of law. However, faced with the impossibility of extraditing accused terrorists, the risks involved in capturing them alive from within hostile Arab territories, and a growing number of attacks on its civilians, Israel was forced to go on the offensive. Denied peaceful options for bringing suspected terrorists to account, notes Byman, Israeli administrations have long used targeted killings as a last resort to achieve a sort of "rough justice."¹⁸⁰ The only way for Israel to retaliate against the terrorists, echoes Luft, has been to target the perpetrators and the masterminds.¹⁸¹

Furthermore, the Munich Massacre was viewed as a watershed event. What was supposed to be the "serene Olympics"—a chance for athletes and sports enthusiasts to come together in a show of international unity; and a chance for West Germany to shed the Nazi stigma of the 1936 Olympics in Berlin and the atrocities of World War II, resulted in tragedy and bloodshed. Furthermore, the Olympic Committee and

¹⁷⁷ Plaw, Avery. *Political Extremities: The Ethics and Legality of Targeted Killing*. Ashgate Publishing, Limited, 2008 pp. 39-40. See also Luft, op. cit., p. 1

¹⁷⁸ Luft, op. cit., pp. 1-2

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 1-2

¹⁸⁰ Byman, Daniel. *Do Targeted Killings Work?* Vol. 85. Council on Foreign Relations, 2006.

¹⁸¹ Luft, op. cit., pp. 1-2

West German police forces were heavily criticized for not halting the games during the crisis, and for inadequate attempts to rescue the nine remaining Israeli hostages. Outraged by the botched rescue attempt at Fürstenfeldbruck Airport, and angered at intensifying violence on Israeli citizens at home and abroad at the hands of Palestinian terrorists, Prime Minister Golda Meir and her top-secret “Committee X” took the momentous decision to retaliate, and take the war to the terrorists.¹⁸² What followed was an audacious operation— codenamed *Operation Wrath of God*, in which over a dozen of the Palestinian terrorists directly and indirectly involved in the planning and execution of the Munich Massacre were targeted, and subsequently killed within Europe and the Middle East.

The second wave of Palestinian terror attacks began in the early 1980s and is believed to have its origins in growing Palestinian discontent arising from Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which were both captured during the Six Day War of 1967.¹⁸³ Moreover, *Operation Peace for Galilee* (the Lebanon War), which was originally expected to achieve its objective of rooting terrorists bases out of Lebanon within three days, lasted more than three years.¹⁸⁴ This led to deep political divisions in Israel, increased hostilities between Arabs and Israelis, and the subsequent realization of Palestinians— now without the protection of the PLO whose forces had been evacuated to distant regions— that the only way to fight against the IDF was through guerilla warfare and acts of terrorism.¹⁸⁵ Tensions reached a zenith in December 1987 when Palestinians took to the streets to protest and fight back against the IDF, thus sparking what would later become known as the First Intifada, or first great Palestinian uprising, which would last until 1993.

To quell the growing number of terrorist attacks during this time, which were primarily aimed at Israeli citizens, Israel continued targeting those responsible for planning and dispatching attacks from various Palestinian organizations such as Hamas and the Fatah.

The third wave of Palestinian terror, and the reference point for this study, was the Second Intifada, which erupted in September 2000. The eruption of violence

¹⁸² Calahan, Alexander. *Countering Terrorism: The Israeli Response to the 1972 Munich Olympic Massacre and the Development of Independent Covert Action Teams*. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 1995.

¹⁸³ Cohen-Almagor, Raphael. *The Intifada: Causes, Consequences, and Future Trends*. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1991)

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

which would mark the beginning of the Second Intifada is believed by some to have its antecedents in the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords in 1993, which brought a formal conclusion to the First Intifada.¹⁸⁶ Some posit that Palestinian discontent grew considerably following its signing because the reality on the ground did not match the expectations created by the peace agreements, with many aspects of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip deepening the divide between Arabs and Israelis rather than abating them.¹⁸⁷ Additionally, on the heels of failed negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority at the Camp David Summit in July 2000, tensions reached a climax following a visit to the Temple Mount Mosque by former opposition leader Ariel Sharon with a contingent of heavily armed security guards— a move seen as intentionally provocative to its Arab worshippers. Palestinian rioters once again took to the streets who were met with heavily armed Israeli security forces. The violence that ensued would last until August 2005, with a steep rise in civilian casualties on both sides.

Once again, Israeli security forces continued its highly controversial policy of targeting suspected and known terrorist leaders and *high value targets* responsible for planning and dispatching attacks against its security forces and civilians. This would be Israel's most ambitious attempt to-date in terms of scale of effort, and evidenced by the high number of individuals targeted. Israel's policy regarding who it considered *high value* would also see dramatic changes and spark yet further controversy regarding its efficacy. Furthermore, the methods which it used to targeted individuals and the legal channels used to pursue them would undergo drastic change, and come to represent a new era in Israeli counterterrorism policy. These aspects form the focal point of this study and will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Pressman, Jeremy. *The Second Intifada: An Early Look at the Background and Causes of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. *Journal of Conflict Studies* 22, no. 2 (Fall, 2003) p. 1

2.9 The Changing Nature of Israel's Policy

Although utilized as a policy tool throughout its history, Israel's policy of targeted killing underwent dramatic transformations during the Second Intifada. Never before has Israel pursued such a wide-scale, overt policy of eliminating not only terrorist leaders, but also their successors and lower-ranking members of terrorist organizations. In addition to increased targeting, several important legal and technological transformations occurred. In this section, these transformations will be examined in detail and will present the reader with an understanding of why it is important to examine Israel's policy following these changes.

2.9.1 Shrugging of Secrecy

A series of dramatic changes were introduced to Israel's policy of targeted killing during the Second Intifada, with some more overtly visible than others. However, the most significant of these changes was Israel's decision to publically acknowledge the existence of a targeted-killing policy, which ended its longstanding policy of secrecy and deniability over successful and planned targeting operations. For the first time in Israeli history, the Israeli Government formulated an official public policy regarding targeted-killings which would be defensible in a court of law and— with one stroke— removed the practice from the shadowy world of black ops, and into a world of overt military operations.¹⁸⁸ This transformation can be regarded as the most significant because it effectively paved the way for the subsequent changes which would characterize the evolving nature of Israel's targeting policy during the Second Intifada.

Israeli targeted killings prior to the Second Intifada were unmistakably difficult mask. The choice of targets— who were known to pose critical threats to Israel or known to have been connected to previous attacks, the style of execution, and the unusually advanced technology which was usually not available to its Arab neighbors made plausible deniability an increasingly difficult task. However, despite the obvious origins of the attacks, Israel's policy prior to the Second Intifada was to consistently deny involvement in planned and successful targeting operations. For example, confronted with demands for an explanation over the deaths of three Palestinian militant leaders during the 1990s, in which Israel had an unmistakable

¹⁸⁸ Stahl, *op. cit.*, p. 116

hand in planning and carrying out, Israeli officials categorically refused to admit involvement, and stated instead that “the [Israeli Defense Force] wholeheartedly rejects this accusation. There is no policy and there never will be a policy or a reality of willful killing of suspects . . . the principle of the sanctity of life is a fundamental principle of the IDF.¹⁸⁹ This policy would, however, change following the eruption of the Second Intifada in which Israeli involvement could no longer be denied. In November 2000, the Israeli government confirmed the existence of a policy which justified targeted killings as self-defense under international humanitarian law due to the Palestinian Authority (PA) failing to prevent terrorism against Israel and prosecute those accused.¹⁹⁰ By January 2001, the IDF’s International Law Department began forming the missing judicial framework which would soon allow for the legal targeting of Palestinian terrorists, who would from then on be categorized as “enemy combatants” when engaging in direct hostilities against Israel who, according to international law, can be targeted.¹⁹¹ The significance of this decision was that once Israel went public with its new policy, it legally permitted targeting operations to be conducted with the use of conventional military equipment against Palestinian terrorists who were now considered legitimate enemy combatants.¹⁹²

This policy was subsequently codified into Israeli law in February 2002 when the judge advocate general of the IDF issued three conditions under which targeting operations can take place. First, before suspected terrorists are targeted, the PA must first ignore appeals for their arrest; second, Israel must conclude that the arrest of the individual is not possible and would risk the lives of Israeli security forces; and third, the killing must be done to prevent an imminent or future attack, and not take place for revenge or retribution.¹⁹³

This was a monumental step for Israel as it became the first state within the international community to codify such a controversial practice into law and pursue it on such a systematic and overt basis. Furthermore, Israel’s decision to pursue targeting operations in an overt manner and legalize the practice under Israeli law

¹⁸⁹ Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. Study on Targeted Killings, Human Rights Council, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/14/24/Add.6 (May 28, 2010) by Philip Alston p. 6

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 6

¹⁹¹ Stahl, *op. cit.*, p. 121

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 124

¹⁹³ David, *op. cit.* p. 14

would change who it considered a legitimate target, and the methods which were utilized to target them.

2.9.2 Beyond Beheading the Hydra

Israel's public announcement of an overt policy of targeting individuals deemed to pose security threats to the state was a monumental turning point in Israeli history. Subsequent legislation would codify the practice into Israeli law, thus making it a legal and readily accessible tool for Israeli policymakers. This would have resounding implications for Israel's counterterrorism policy, as the legalization of the practice effectively paved the way for the additional transformations which would characterize the changing nature of Israel's targeting policy during the Second Intifada.

One of these transformations which followed Israel's shrugging of secrecy concerned *who* Israel considered to be a *high value target*. As detailed in Chapter Two, the theoretical underpinnings of contemporary targeted killing scholarship rest on the notion of *decapitation*— the theory which posits that removing the head of an organization will render the rest of the organizational body incapacitated, and is believed by some to be the surest way to encourage the disintegration of the rest of the organization.¹⁹⁴ What became apparent during the Second Intifada following Israel's public announcement of an overt policy, and its subsequent legal decision to codify the practice into Israeli law, is that its focus would extend far beyond the sole targeting of top leadership, or those second in command for that matter. Rather, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Israeli policy during the Second Intifada was the targeting of third and fourth tier individuals who may not have necessarily held a position of leadership or a specialized skill, as well as those who stepped up to fill the shoes of their deceased predecessors.

Kober, for example, notes that one important characteristic which distinguished Israel's policy during the Second Intifada compared to prior times was the targeting

¹⁹⁴ Several leading academics involved in decapitation studies are careful to illustrate what exactly constitutes a leader. In Johnston's study, for example, the leader was defined as the most powerful figure or figures in an organization. Jordan's study focuses on similar criteria, and restricted her analysis to figures who were identified as the 'top leader' and members of the 'upper echelons' of an organization. Price's study was even more restrictive and based its findings solely on the results of removing either the 'primary leader' or 'co-leader' of an organization, and excluded members from the 'high-ranking' and upper echelons of an organization. See Patrick (2012), Jordan (2009; 2014) and Price (2012) op. cit.

of relatively low-ranking operatives.¹⁹⁵ Hosmer made similar observations and noted that Israeli targeting operations have been targeted at both terrorist leaders and the so called “rank and file” individuals.¹⁹⁶ Carvin offers similar sentiment in her work and states that the Israeli policy “differs quite strongly from other activities described as targeted killing or decapitation in that it not only attacks the top leadership, but also the upper-middle managers of various terrorist organizations; these are the mid-range bombmakers and planners of terrorist organizations as opposed to the top leadership.”¹⁹⁷

Israel’s policy of targeting mid- to low-ranking operatives, which became apparent during the Second Intifada, thus appears to extend beyond mere decapitation in its traditional sense; rather, a more accurate description would be that of the Hydra, because for every head severed two more appear which must be eliminated. This concept would give rise to yet another important transformation which would become apparent during the Second Intifada, as the number of targeting operations dramatically increased.

2.9.3 Scale of Operations

Israeli efforts to target not only leaders, but also the “rank and file” members of Palestinian terrorist organizations during the Second Intifada resulted in a sharp increase in the number of targeting operations carried out by Israeli security forces. What was new, notes David, was the scale of the effort—never have so many militants been killed in such a short span of time.¹⁹⁸

At no other time in its history has Israel targeted and removed as many suspected and known members of terrorist organizations as it did during the Second Intifada. While the exact number of targeting instances taking place prior to the Second Intifada may never truly be known due to its previous, pre-Second Intifada policy of secrecy and deniability over successful and planned operations; the number of known and recordable instances taking place up until 1999 testifies to its unprecedented utilization during the Second Intifada. From the available data, a total of nineteen targeting operations were identified which were conducted from 1956 to 1999. While the actual number of operations during this time period is likely higher,

¹⁹⁵ Kober, op. cit., p. 2

¹⁹⁶ Hosmer, Stephen. *Operations against Enemy Leaders*. RAND 2001 p. 21

¹⁹⁷ Carvin, Stephanie. *The Trouble with Targeted Killing*. Security Studies 21.3 (2012) p. 544

¹⁹⁸ David, op. cit., p. 5

it pales in comparison with the 203 cases recorded from November 2000 to August 2005.¹⁹⁹ Never before, notes Kober, have targeting operations been implemented in such a systematic, continuous, large-scale, and overt manner elsewhere.²⁰⁰

A likely reason for the dramatic increase in targeting operations during the Second Intifada, notes Stahl, is that the IDF had a freer hand to carry out these targeting operations in light of the newfound legality of the practice.²⁰¹

This transformation was one of the defining characteristics which would distinguish Israeli targeting operations during the Second Intifada from those in previous times; however, much like a ripple effect, this transformation would have resounding implications, and would give rise to yet another critical transformation—the methods utilized to target these scores of individuals.

2.9.4 Targeting Methods

In addition to introducing a policy of targeting lower-ranking members of terrorist organizations in addition to senior leadership, and increases in the overall scale of operations, Israel adopted several new targeting methods during the Second Intifada which were either not present in previous times, or very seldom utilized. When Israel became the first country in the world to publically announce an overt targeting policy, notes Stahl, they did it loudly.²⁰² Shortly following the eruption of violence which would mark the beginning of the Second Intifada, AH-64 Apache helicopters armed with Hellfire missiles, F-16s armed with heavy-load bombs, and even public announcements of sniper units sent into the disputed territories replaced the shadowy and furtive methods utilized in previous targeting operations.²⁰³ One of the distinguishing characteristics which set targeting operations in the Second Intifada apart from those in the past, notes David, was the open and military nature of the attacks— particularly the use of helicopter gunships.²⁰⁴ These new methods, notes David, fit much more the conventional modes of warfare than the shadowy, deceitful operations carried out prior to the Second Intifada.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹ Kober, *op. cit.*, p. 2

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2

²⁰¹ Stahl, *op. cit.*, p. 128

²⁰² *Ibid.* p. 124

²⁰³ *Ibid.* p. 124

²⁰⁴ David, *op. cit.*, p. 16

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16

Another means for targeting individuals during the Second Intifada which was not previously utilized was the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) capable of firing laser-guided missiles from great distances, thus affording Israel the capability of targeting individuals while reducing security risks to its own service personnel.

The changing nature of methods employed by Israel is important to examine because it illustrates a sharp contrast to those which were utilized prior to the Second Intifada. Prior to the Second Intifada, it appears that the methods utilized by Israel to target individuals resembled those which the terrorists utilized to attack Israel, and consisted namely of booby-trapped explosives— often rigged to take the shape of every day household items such as landline and cellular telephones, or small-caliber arms fired at close range. For example, data obtained from the targeting operations examined for this study which occurred prior to the Second Intifada indicated that the most common method of eliminating targets was through the use of these two methods. In fact, of the nineteen cases examined during this time period, only two instances utilized methods other than small-caliber arms or explosive devices.

This shows a sharp contrast with the methods utilized during the operations examined during the Second Intifada in which only four operations utilized a means other than aerial assault. Table 2.1 illustrates these figures according to time period and method of targeting.

Table 2.1

Targeting Method	1956-1999	Second Intifada (2000-2005)
Explosive Device	9	2
Aerial Assault	1	15
Small Arms	8	2
Other	1	0

While these technological advances allowed Israel to reduce injuries and casualties to its own personnel, they have drawn sharp criticism for their propensity to cause increased civilian deaths and destruction of property. One study by a human rights group, for example, found that between 2002 and 2008 at least 387 Palestinians were killed as a result of targeted killing operations, of which 234 were the targets and the remainder were collateral casualties.²⁰⁶ This would call into

²⁰⁶ Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. Study on Targeted Killings, Human Rights Council, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/14/24/Add.6 (May 28, 2010) by Philip Alston p. 6

question the efficacy of Israel's policy, and will be discussed in the following chapter.

2.9.5 Previous Studies of the Israeli Experience

The Israeli experience serves as a preeminent example for examining targeted killing as a policy tool for countering terrorist and insurgent activity. With one of the most robust and developed policies of targeting leaders and *high value targets*, it comes as no surprise that the Israeli experience has garnered significant scholarly attention from scholars and policymakers interested in examining the practice. Kober refers to Israel's policy of targeted killing during the Second Intifada as an ideal laboratory for examining the practice, as it has never been implemented in such a systematic, continuous, large-scale, and overt manner elsewhere.²⁰⁷

Similar to other scholarly works examining the practice of targeted-killing or decapitation theory as a counterterrorism policy tool, qualitative works examining Israeli's policy of targeting leaders abound; however, empirical studies attempting to quantify the "effectiveness" or "success" of its policy remain limited. There are, however, several scholars who have attempted to quantify the effectiveness of Israel's policy, with most studies focusing on its efforts during the Second Intifada. While opinion remains mixed regarding its efficacy, several studies have made important contributions to the examination of the Israeli experience and merit discussion in brief.

One such study was conducted by Edward Kaplan and his associates. Motivated by a modeling approach developed by Keohane and Zekhauser, who proposed that terrorist activity could be viewed as a product of the "stock" of terror, Kaplan and his colleagues analyzed data relating to the rate of suicide bombing incidents against attempts made by Israel to kill or capture Palestinian terrorist leaders and high value targets for the three year period from 2001-2003.²⁰⁸ The authors claim that their statistical analysis suggests that Israel's policy of targeted killing is counterproductive, fuels recruitment, and increases, rather than decreases the rate of suicide bombings.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, Kaplan and his associates propose that preventive

²⁰⁷ Kober, Avi. *Targeted Killing during the Second Intifada: The Quest for Effectiveness*. Journal of Conflict Studies 27.1 (2007)

²⁰⁸ Keohane, Nathaniel O., and Richard J. Zeckhauser. *The Ecology of Terror Defense*. Journal of Risk and Uncertainty 26.2/3 (2003)

²⁰⁹ Kaplan Edward, Alex Mintz, and Shaul Mishal. *What Happened to Suicide Bombings in Israel? Insights from a Terror Stock Model*. Studies in Conflict and Terrorism 28.3 (2005)

arrests, rather than killing terrorist leaders and *high value targets*, reduced the cumulative number of suicide bombings during the time period analyzed.

Another study, conducted by Avi Kober, analyzed 159 instances of targeted killing attempts carried out by Israeli forces on terrorist leaders and other *high value targets* belonging to Hamas, Fatah, Islamic Jihad and other militant Palestinian organizations during the Second Intifada. Kober's work is innovative as the focal point of his study was to determine if the targeting of low-level military commanders during the Second Intifada was equally effective as targeting senior military and political leaders who were responsible for the planning of terror operations, and the recruitment, training, arming, and dispatching of lower-level terrorist operatives.²¹⁰ Kober's study concluded that the targeting of low-level operatives as well as senior military leaders proved to be ineffective in disrupting terror organizations' operations, as new terrorists replaced those who were eliminated, and provoked further retaliation. Furthermore, while solely observational, Kober notes that targeting low-level and senior military leaders appeared to elevate specific individuals to martyrdom, thus strengthening the groups' morale and resolve. However, Kober notes that the targeting of individuals such as Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, and Abu Shanab and Aziz Rantisi, who were spiritual and political leaders of Hamas respectively, seemed to be "rather effective," as these instances appeared to play a major role in the organization's readiness to suspend hostilities against Israel which according to Kober, essentially meant the end of the Second Intifada.²¹¹

Finally, in what is considered to be the most ambitious study to-date aiming to quantify the effectiveness of Israel's policy of targeted killing during the Second Intifada, Hafez and Hatfield assessed the impact of targeting leaders on rates of Palestinian violence from the beginning of the Palestinian uprising in 2000 to its end in 2005. Using a multivariate approach to evaluate the significance of Israel's policy of targeted killing, Hafez and Hatfield concluded that targeting terrorist leaders did not have a significant impact on the rates of Palestinian attacks. Somewhat surprisingly, Hafez and Hatfield's findings indicate that Israel's policy of targeted killing did not decrease rates of Palestinian violence, nor did they increase them—both in the short and long run when time lags associated with possible reactive retaliations were taken into account. The bottom line of Hafez and Hatfield's study concluded

²¹⁰ See Kober (2007)

²¹¹ See Kober (2007)

that while Israel's policy may be useful as a political tool to signal a state's determination to punish terrorists and placate an angry public, there is little evidence that they actually impact the course of an insurgency.²¹²

2.10 Measuring Success and Effectiveness

Much like determining a precise definition for a concept as elusive as terrorism, or attempting to determine the concrete moral, ethical, and legal parameters of such a controversial practice as targeted killing; researchers face an equally, if not more daunting task when attempting to define what constitutes "success" or "effectiveness" within a particular counterterrorism strategy. So illusory are the concepts of success and effectiveness within counterterrorism policy that researchers and academics often find themselves at a loss when attempting to measure it at both the qualitative and quantitative levels. Referring to the practice of targeted killing, Carvin notes that if there is no consensus on definition and data, it is also clear that there is no consensus as to what would actually constitute success.²¹³

An introduction to the difficulties associated with measuring success and effectiveness is necessary in order to draw attention to potential limitations to this study as well as previous research dealing with targeting leaders. Moreover, the aim of this section is to illustrate that no unit of measurement can serve as a "silver bullet" when attempting to quantify or qualify effectiveness or success within counterterrorism studies.

In her examination on the subject, Carvin adequately summarizes the primary pitfalls of current case studies dealing with targeting leaders and notes that generalizations regarding effectiveness are premature.²¹⁴ This is due primarily to problems associated with agreeing on a suitable definition, a lack of empirical evidence, considerable differences in policies and contexts that make comparison difficult, and no consensus as to what constitutes success.²¹⁵

Another common pitfall in much of the research dealing with targeting leaders is an overreliance on quantitative statistics. Perl notes that governments seeking to demonstrate success in anti-terrorist measures typically tend to over-rely on

²¹² Hafez, Mohammed, and Joseph Hatfield. *Do Targeted Assassinations Work? A Multivariate Analysis of Israel's Controversial Tactic during Al-Aqsa Uprising*. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29.4 (2006)

²¹³ Carvin, op. cit., p. 548

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 543

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 543

quantitative indicators, particularly those which may correlate with progress but not accurately measure it.²¹⁶ For example, an approach which looks at continuous metrics such as lower numbers of casualties or terrorist attacks— as is common in many of the empirical studies dealing with targeting leaders— may indicate success; however, this may also indicate that an organization is simply biding its time and redirecting its resources and energy towards vastly more devastating projects.²¹⁷ This decrease in activity induces a natural tendency to assume that counterterror efforts are working; however, sole reliance on these types of measurements may, notes Perl, underestimate the varied nature of terrorist actions.²¹⁸

An additional pitfall in current leadership targeting scholarship is the tendency to draw conclusions based on broad and widely varying datasets which attempt to include as many terrorist and insurgent organizations as possible, which may be unrelated and have fundamentally different ideological motivations. Furthermore, in addition to examining a plethora of fundamentally different and unrelated organizations, several studies attempt to draw generalizations over vast periods of time, some of which span several centuries. For example, Jordan's 2009 and 2014 studies concluded that targeting leaders is an ineffective counterterrorism policy; however, Jordan also drew her conclusions from a dataset of ninety-six different organizations with varying ideological, religious and separatist values. Langdon and her associates, on the other hand, drew a number of their conclusions based on case studies from more than forty countries, some of which dated as far back as 1750.

While these and similar studies may yield critical insight, they also neglect the changing nature of terrorist and insurgent threats over time. Making broad generalizations based on such wide-ranging datasets thus carries the risk of applauding or forsaking a policy tool based on threats which are simply not relevant today. Few would argue that the anti-colonial uprisings led by Tupac Amaru in 1780 are comparable with the transnational threats of today posed by organizations such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), to name a few. Instead, and as noted by Carvin, it is vital to acknowledge different time periods, circumstances, and contexts when describing a particular set of activities such as targeted killing.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Perl, Raphael. *Combating Terrorism: The Challenge of Measuring Effectiveness*. Rep. no. 1. Congressional Research Service, 12 Mar. 2007 p. 7

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7

²¹⁹ Carvin, op. cit., p. 546

Finally, previous studies which have attempted to quantify the effectiveness of targeted killing policies, as noted by several scholars, may be too restrictive in their analysis and code incidents of targeted killing as failures if they did not lead to the immediate demise of the organization following the departure of their leader.²²⁰ Patrick Johnston cites Jordan's coding criteria as being "too restrictive" due to Jordan coding a success only if the targeted organization remained inactive for two years following removal of the leader. Similarly, Price's study examined effectiveness using both a two and four year time lag following the removal of a leader. Such restrictive criteria, notes Johnston, sets the bar unrealistically high for leadership targeting to be considered successful, which may be appropriate for evaluating the proximate strategic impact, but is inappropriate for assessing the longer-term political, military and economic effects of the practice.²²¹

It should, however, be noted that the aforementioned studies were not conducted in vain, nor should future studies [this one included] be too heavily critiqued for their attempts to conceive of innovative methods for measuring progress stemming from a counterterrorism policy so understudied such as targeted killing. Considering the difficulties of defining what constitutes effectiveness and success, it is impossible to assign a universal set of metrics for analyzing, either qualitatively or quantitatively, a particular policy, especially one which has only recently gained considerable scholarly attention such as leadership targeting. Carvin notes that a valuable approach for evaluating targeted killing should get beyond mere numbers and look to second and third-order effects, as opposed to merely counting the numbers of strikes, insurgents killed and retaliatory attacks, which may provide only part of the story.²²²

It was with these factors in mind that the research method of this study was conceived and will form the basis of discussion of the next chapter.

²²⁰ See Johnston (2012) and Carvin (2012)

²²¹ Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 49

²²² Carvin, *op. cit.*, pp. 549-550

3 Method

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will be dedicated to describing the method which was chosen for this study. First, the analytic approach will be presented in detail. Here, I will seek to justify my chosen method for measuring success within the cases which were selected for analysis, provide the reader with my reasoning regarding the utility of my chosen method, and cite my sources of inspiration. Second, the criteria which governed the selection of cases will be presented along with an explanation of how the data was collected and analyzed. Continuing on, I will present the cases which were selected for analysis within the two time-periods analyzed. Finally, I will describe my analysis method and conclude with a note regarding several potential data limitations to my data collection and method, and the salient implications these limitations may have had on my results.

3.2 Analytic Approach

As noted in the previous chapter, no silver bullet for measuring success or effectiveness within counterterrorism studies exists. The clandestine nature of terrorist organizations and their activities, a lack of empirical evidence, and a multitude of variables which can influence the outcomes of a particular counterterrorism strategy make evaluating success and effectiveness, at best, problematic. This problem is compounded when examining a subject as illusory as targeted killing, which has only gained considerable scholarly attention since the beginning of the twenty-first century when countries such as Israel and the United States began systematically utilizing the practice as part of wider counterterrorism strategies.²²³ However, despite the risks associated with inevitable shortcomings, attempts must nevertheless be made.

The concept of success, notes Carvin, is necessarily subjective; with various individuals (who invariably have various agendas) interpreting the concept in different ways.²²⁴ Furthermore, notes Carvin, developing flawless or incontestable criteria for evaluating success is impossible.²²⁵ Rather, the primary objective of

²²³ Masters, Jonathan. *Targeted Killings*. Council on Foreign Relations, 23 May 2013.

²²⁴ Carvin, Stephanie. *The Trouble with Targeted Killing*. Security Studies 21.3 (2012) p. 549

²²⁵ Ibid. p. 551

researchers is to make a substantiated claim that will simply stand up to academic scrutiny.²²⁶

While this study does indeed share several similar traits with previously conducted scholarly studies that were outlined in chapter two, it differs from previous research in that its research approach strove to evaluate success based solely on targeting-operation outcomes which can be directly identified and attributed to a particular operation. Quite simply, the primary goal of my chosen research approach was to refrain from including factors which could be considered “possibly related” to a given targeting operation, and thus considered counterfactual to the historic record. This approach was selected after identifying several recurring analytic tendencies present in the majority of studies which attempt to evaluate the efficacy of targeted killing as a counterterrorism policy tool, which may potentially undermine their results and render their conclusions premature.

One common element present in contemporary studies attempting to measure the efficacy of targeted killing is the tendency to make a general assessment of the success or effectiveness of a policy or campaign based on post-operational events which may or may not have been directly related to a particular targeting operation. A prime example of this is the trend of examining the number of terrorist attacks committed within a pre-defined timeframe following a targeting operation, and may even include the number of victims claimed by the attack(s).²²⁷ Researchers and policymakers alike, notes Perl, tend to define success by the absence of attacks—when the shooting or bombing stops, many are quick to conclude that a certain policy, such as targeted killing, was a success.²²⁸ Another example of this is the trend of examining the organizational lifespan of terrorist organizations following the removal of its leader, such as Jenna Jordan’s study which examined whether an organization remained designated as a *Foreign Terrorist Organization* as defined by the United States Department of State two years after the decapitation of an organization’s leader.²²⁹

²²⁶ Ibid. p. 551

²²⁷ See Mannes, Aaron. *Testing the Snake Head Strategy: Does Killing or Capturing its Leaders Reduce a Terrorist Group’s Activity?* The Journal of International Policy Solutions. No. 9 (2008) and Kober, Avi. *Targeted Killing during the Second Intifada: The Quest for Effectiveness.* Journal of Conflict Studies 27.1 (2007)

²²⁸ Perl, Raphael. *Combating Terrorism: The Challenge of Measuring Effectiveness.* No. 1. Congressional Research Service, 12 Mar. 2007 p. 10

²²⁹ See Jordan, Jenna. *When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation.* Security Studies 18.4 (2009)

While there is indeed academic merit in examining these metrics, one common disadvantage of doing so makes it difficult, if not impossible, to avoid engaging in counterfactual history. An approach which looks at continuous metrics such as lower numbers of attacks and casualties may point towards a successful counterterrorism strategy, while at the same time terrorist organizations may simply be in a “waiting period,” or redirecting resources towards vastly more devastating projects.²³⁰ Furthermore, metrics on number of attacks within a pre-defined timeframe and victim body-counts are heavily dependent on a certain level of chance, not necessarily causation. For example, was the square that a suicide bomber chose to target crowded or empty on the day of attack? Was he or she able to avoid detection at a security checkpoint? Did the explosive device or firearm function at full capacity, or was there a malfunction? The possibilities are endless.

Essentially, notes Carvin, it is challenging, if not impossible, to say what would or would not have happened had a targeting operation not been carried out, and equally impossible to prove that a situation would have been better or worse if a particular targeting operation had or had not been conducted.²³¹ This is especially true in periods of sustained conflict, such as during the various waves of Palestinian terror discussed in Chapter Two of this study. Indeed it is likely that one of the many plane hijackings during the first wave of Palestinian terror during the 1970s, or one of the many suicide bombers during the First and Second Intifadas may have been carried out in retaliation to a particular targeting operation conducted by Israel; however, these attacks may have simply been part of a wider, and concerted strategy by various Palestinian movements during periods of sustained conflict.

The method of this study, although admittedly simplistic on the surface, attempted to embrace the recommendations of scholars such as Carvin and Perl, who first of all eschew the notion of sole reliance on quantitative indicators, but more importantly caution against basing analysis and drawing inferences on factors which may be considered counterfactual to the historic record. Instead, I have chosen to embrace what Carvin refers to as a “contextualized approach,” which called for the utilization of a plurality of qualitative metrics particular to a given situation which

²³⁰ Ibid. p. 10

²³¹ Carvin, *op. cit.* 552

were analyzed alongside concrete numbers.²³² Moreover, quantitative analysis focused solely on a set of “indicators” which could be directly linked to a given targeting operation, thus eliminating the possibility of basing my findings on events which may be construed as counterfactual to the historic record.

The quantitative indicators this study utilized to measure success within the two time periods analyzed were:

Indicator 1: *Elimination of the intended target of an operation.*

Indicator 2: *Adverse political consequences resulting from an operation.*

Indicator 3: *Civilian and non-target casualties resulting from an operation.*

Indicator 4: *Directly-linked retaliatory attacks resulting from an operation.*

These indicators and my arguments for their utility will be explained in detail in the following subsections.

3.2.1 Intended Target Eliminated

The first of the four indicators which was utilized in my model for analyzing success of Israeli targeting operations concerns the successful elimination of the individual targeted. This indicator quite simply deals with whether, during the course of a targeting operation, the intended target of the operation was successfully eliminated, or not.

While seemingly over-simplistic on the surface, this indicator represents the primary aim of any targeting operation. Despite the moral, ethical, and legal ramifications which accompany such a practice, once a state has deliberated that the most appropriate course of action for their counterterrorism efforts is to conduct a targeting operation, the foremost aim of that operation is, in fact, the elimination of that individual. If this is accomplished, the targeting operation can, from the state’s perspective, be tallied a victory. This reasoning of course does not factor in the potential repercussions, or “blowback” which may follow in the wake of the targeting operation; rather, it represents the most rudimentary aim of the targeting operation– the elimination a specified individual or group of individuals.

²³² See Carvin (2012) and Perl (2007), op. cit. Carvin notes the potential utility of utilizing a plurality of metrics in a more “contextualized approach” when analyzing the effectiveness of targeted killing operations while Perl recommends that studies involved with analyzing the effectiveness of counterterrorism policies should also take into consideration unintended consequences incurred by the State whose policy in being examined.

While researching various targeting operations conducted by various states throughout the course of history, multiple instances where states attempted, yet subsequently failed to eliminate their intended target become apparent.²³³ These instances occurred for any number of reasons and were the result of, for example, inadequate planning, mere chance that the target happened to survive and, in some exceptional cases, by succeeding in eliminating the wrong target, who was mistakenly identified as the state's intended target.²³⁴ These cases pose grave concerns for the targeting state and can pose a number of adverse consequences. Knowing that they are in the crosshairs of the targeting state, unsuccessful targeting operations can serve to further radicalize individuals, motivate them to pursue a concerted effort of violence against the aggressor-state, and may even serve as a means to increase their base of support within their communities. Furthermore, individuals fearing future attacks may be driven underground or take increased precautions to avoid detection, thus falling out of the grasp of the targeting state and, as several instances have shown, may have even graver consequences. The killing of Moroccan waiter Ahmed Bouchiki in 1973, for example, who had no links to terrorism but was wrongfully identified by a Mossad operations team to be the infamous Ali Hassan Salameh, caused extreme political backlash and embarrassment to Israel, and garnered stark criticism both at home and abroad.²³⁵

It was with these considerations in mind that it became apparent that the inclusion of *elimination of the intended target* as an indicator was not only necessary, but paramount to the overall analysis of measuring success

²³³ See for example the Church Committee's 1975 findings which identify eight separate attempts by the U.S to eliminate Cuban president Fidel Castro. *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders: An Interim Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities*, United States Senate : Together with Additional, Supplemental, and Separate Views. New York: Norton, 1976.

²³⁴ One of the most well-known instances of this occurring is the tragic incident which resulted in the death of Ahmed Bouchiki which would come to be known as the Lillehammer Affair. Detailed in Avery Plaw's *Political Extremities: The Ethics and Legality of Targeted Killing*. Ashgate Publishing, Limited (2008).

²³⁵ Plaw, Avery. *Political Extremities: The Ethics and Legality of Targeted Killing*. Ashgate Publishing, Limited (2008) p. 51-52

3.2.2 Adverse Political Consequences

The second of the four indicators which was utilized in my model for analyzing success concerns overtly visible adverse political consequences resulting from a targeting operation. This indicator dealt with whether any “adverse” political consequences arose following a targeting operation which could be directly linked to that particular operation.

My motivation for utilizing this indicator developed from a combination of recommendations set forth in various academic studies conducted by Carvin and Perl. Carvin notes in her study that a more comprehensive approach to examining the efficacy of targeting operations should include an examination of the unintended consequences resulting from an operation.”²³⁶ Perl offers similar advice in his study and notes that “a key issue [in measuring success] is how one measures the impact of unintended consequences, side effects and by-products,” and also notes that negative political consequences arising from counterterrorism efforts may weaken or even break the political will of a state.²³⁷ An argument can therefore be made that the presence of unintended consequences, such as adverse political backlash arising from a particular counterterrorism effort, may indicate a reduction in operational success or efficiency.²³⁸

The inclusion of this indicator did not come without consideration given to whether or not it would compromise the integrity of my analytic approach based on my policy of excluding factors which might be construed as counterfactual to the historic record. This was due to two potential flaws associated with its inclusion. First, concluding what exactly constitutes adverse can be equally challenging and illusory as determining what constitutes success or effectiveness, and opens avenues of potentially biased views. Second, once a definition of adverse is determined, establishing causation to a particular event during periods of sustained conflict— such as during the Second Intifada when both Israel and various Palestinian militant groups were engaged in near perpetual armed conflict— presents a plethora of difficulties.

²³⁶ Carvin, *op. cit.* p. 551

²³⁷ Perl, *op. cit.* p. 5

²³⁸ For the purpose of this study, adverse political consequences were considered to include one or any combination of the following: international condemnation from two or more countries (not including the Israeli public or the Occupied Territories); the breaking of a formal or informal ceasefire.

These concerns, however, were levied after concluding that adverse political consequences as an indicator would add significant utility to the model if the element of partiality could be removed. Therefore, an operation was considered to result in adverse political consequences only if noted by two different sources which, independent of each other, concluded that an adverse political reaction occurred as a result of a targeting operation.

3.2.3 Civilian and Non-Target Casualties

The third indicator utilized in my model for analyzing success dealt once again with unintended consequences arising from targeting operations— that of civilian casualties. This indicator dealt with whether any civilian or “non-target” casualties occurred during the course, or as a direct result of a particular targeting operation. In addition to civilian casualties, “non-target” casualties have also been included in this indicator. Non-target casualties are meant to represent individuals who, under International Humanitarian Law, may technically be considered *enemy combatants*, but were not the original targets of a particular targeting operation.²³⁹

My motivation for the inclusion of this indicator stemmed once again from recommendations offered in the studies conducted by Perl and Carvin respectively, who both note that a more comprehensive approach to examining success within the study of targeted killing, and counterterrorism in general, should also take into consideration unintended consequences which arise as a result of a particular policy.²⁴⁰

The inclusion of this indicator was seen as paramount when analyzing the success or failure of Israeli targeting operations. If there is utility in examining unintended consequences resulting from particular counterterrorism efforts, as Carvin and Perl both contend, then the examination of civilian and non-target casualties should occupy a central role in studies dedicated to the Israeli experience. This is due to two primary reasons. The first reason concerns the principles of proportionality and discrimination set forth in the limits of acceptable wartime

²³⁹ According to the ICRC— in its generic sense, an “enemy combatant” is a person who, either lawfully or unlawfully, engages in hostilities for the opposing side in an international armed conflict. The term is currently used - by those who view the fight against terrorism as including a transnational armed conflict against certain terrorist groups - to denote persons believed to belong to, or believed to be associated with terrorist groups. ICRC. *The Relevance of IHL in the Context of Terrorism. The Relevance of IHL in the Context of Terrorism*. International Committee of the Red Cross, 01 Jan. 2011.

²⁴⁰ Carvin (2012) and Perl (2007) op. cit.

conduct, or *jus in bello*, as defined in just war theory. Although just war conduct becomes heavily debatable when considering the unconventional nature of terrorism, and the unconventional nature of efforts necessary to counter terror, the principles of proportionality hold that the amount of force which is morally appropriate must not exceed that which is absolutely necessary for defeating an enemy combatant.²⁴¹ Furthermore, concerning the principles of discrimination, some just war theorists have added the further stipulation that the foreseeable threat posed to civilian lives must be reduced as far as possible, with every possible effort taken to avoid civilian casualties.²⁴²

The second reason stems from Israel's official military doctrine concerning its *Principles of Precautions in Attack*, which explicitly states that "the means of attack should be planned in such a way as to prevent, or at least minimize casualties among the civilian population."²⁴³ This mentality also, albeit unofficially, extends to Israel's counterterrorism doctrine and its policy of targeting operations which, notes Stahl, is carried out with extreme prejudice and precision.²⁴⁴ Furthermore, Stahl notes: "Though not all operations result in a 'one-hit kill' the intention for precision (e.g. a specific, non-random target) is a clear and crucial element of [targeting operations]."²⁴⁵ This is further evidenced by others such as "Avner Kaufman," the purported team leader of one of the Mossad operational teams tasked with targeting those believed responsible for planning and executing the 1972 Munich Massacre, whose detailed account is retold through George Jonas' seminal work, *Vengeance: The True Story of an Israeli Counter-Terrorist Team*. Avner repeatedly recounts the necessity that his superiors imparted on him during their mission concerning zero

²⁴¹ Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 2nd Edition. Basic Books. 1977: pp. 156 and 197.

²⁴² Concerning discrimination, see Walzer. p. 156. James Johnson notes the dilemma faced between targeting acceptable combatants and notes that in some cases, forces must override the accepted immunity of noncombatants in order to protect the very values that ultimately guarantee the safety of such persons. In these instances, notes Maiese, non-combatants are then regrettably made the subjects of attack, thus posing a difficult question of how to balance military objectives and civilian casualties. See James Turner Johnson, *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War: A Moral and Historical Inquiry*. 1981. p. 223 and Michelle Maiese. *Beyond Intractability*. Ed. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado. June 2003. <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/jus-in-bello>. See also *Report on the Practice of Israel*, 1997, Chapter 1.5 *Conduct in the Battlefield in Accordance with the Law of War*, Israel Defense Forces, 1986. p. 4-5.

²⁴³ Rules of Warfare on the Battlefield. Military Advocate General's Corps Command. IDF School of Military Law. Second Edition. 2006. pp. 27-28.

²⁴⁴ Stahl, Adam. *The Evolution of Israeli Targeted Operations: Consequences of the Thabet Thabet Operation*. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33.2. 2010 p. 113

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 113

tolerance for civilian, and non-target casualties occurring as a result of their mission.²⁴⁶

3.2.4 Directly Linked Retaliatory Attacks

The final indicator utilized in my model for analyzing success concerned *directly linked retaliatory attacks* carried out by terrorist organizations in response to a previously conducted Israeli targeting operation. This indicator dealt with whether any retaliatory attacks occurred which were attributed as direct responses to a previously attempted or completed Israeli targeting operation.

My motivation for the inclusion of this indicator stemmed once again from the proposed importance of analyzing the unintended consequences arising from counterterrorism efforts which were outlined in the previous two sections.²⁴⁷ Moreover, as the overarching aim of Israel's policy of targeted killing is to deter terrorist organizations from future violent activity, the analysis of retaliatory attacks becomes vital in measuring the success or effectiveness of a particular operation.

Examination of this indicator is a common approach in many studies attempting to analyze the efficacy of targeted killing as a counterterrorism policy tool. A common approach in several studies is the analysis of the number, frequency and resulting civilian casualties following a targeting operation.²⁴⁸ However, as discussed in section 3.2, a major disadvantage with this approach is the potential to include instances of terrorist violence which may be unrelated to the targeting operation, as pinpointing those acts which are in response to targeting operations, and those which are isolated acts of violence or concerted efforts in periods of sustained conflict— as was the case during the various waves of Palestinian terror outlined in Chapter two— is a difficult, if not wholly impossible task.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ Jonas refers to the necessity of proportionality and Mossad's absolute zero tolerance policy for civilian casualties several times in his work. See foreword to the 2005 edition p. xix, and pp. 70, 85, 88, 95 and 104 in Jonas, George. *Vengeance: The True Story of an Israeli Counter-Terrorist Team*. 1984. "Avner", as with all other Mossad operatives in the book, is a pseudonym used to protect the identity of Jonas' real source.

²⁴⁷ Carvin (2012) and Perl (2007) op. cit.

²⁴⁸ See for example Mannes, Aaron. *Testing the Snake Head Strategy: Does Killing or Capturing its Leaders Reduce a Terrorist Group's Activity?* The Journal of International Policy Solutions. No. 9 (2008) and Kaplan Edward, Alex Mintz, and Shaul Mishal. *What Happened to Suicide Bombings in Israel? Insights from a Terror Stock Model*. Studies in Conflict and Terrorism 28.3 (2005)

²⁴⁹ This is especially true during periods of sustained conflict in which case it is difficult, if not impossible, to differentiate between legitimate retaliatory attacks and acts of violence which are part of an overall terrorist or insurgent campaign.

Therefore, the inclusion of *directly linked retaliatory attacks* did not come without careful consideration. This was due to one potential weakness associated with its inclusion— the possibility of basing my findings on factors which, quite possibly, may be unrelated to the alleged cause and thus considered counterfactual to the historic record. As described in the *Analytic Approach* section, the underlying aim of my method of analysis was to evaluate success based solely on outcomes which could be directly identified and attributed to a particular operation, and to refrain from including factors which could be construed as “possibly related.”

Examining retaliatory attacks would therefore appear to breach the underlying aim of my method based on my reasoning outlined above. However, this concern was mitigated by adopting an approach of including only those retaliatory attacks which were explicitly attributed to a particular targeting operation by the terrorist organization which was responsible for the attack. For example, following the 1972 operation which killed PLO representative Wael Zwaiter in Rome, approximately 150 parcel bombs were sent to various Israeli targets around the world.²⁵⁰ While these parcel bombs could have been a retaliatory response by the PLO or one of its many factions for the slaying of Zwaiter, I was not able to find any evidence from the sources available to me that they were sent in direct retaliation for his death, nor was I able to find evidence of any one group claiming responsibility.²⁵¹ The sending of these parcel bombs was therefore not coded as a retaliatory attack. Conversely, two days after the 1973 operation which eliminated PFLO representative Mahmoud Boudia in Paris, Col. Yosef Alon, the assistant air attaché at the Israeli embassy in Washington D.C., was shot and killed outside of his home in Maryland.²⁵² The next day a Voice of Palestine radio broadcast out of Cairo claimed that Col. Alon had been killed in retaliation for Boudia’s assassination in Paris with the host stating: “His [Alon] is the first execution operation carried out against a Zionist official in the U.S.”²⁵³ Due to an organization claiming responsibility for Alon’s death as

²⁵⁰ Pedahzur, Ami. *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010 pp. 40-42

²⁵¹ Considering that the majority of parcel bombs were postmarked on September 16, 1972 and continued to be sent throughout the end of that year does not suggest that they were in direct retaliation for Zwaiter’s death, which occurred on October 16, 1972. Rather, it is more plausible that the sending of these parcel bombs was part of a wider, and sustained campaign against Israeli targets perpetrated by Black September. See BBC News. 1972: Parcel bomb attack on Israeli embassy. On this day 1950-2005. 19 September. www.news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday

²⁵² Bird, Kai. *The Good Spy: The Life and Death of Robert Ames*. 2014.

²⁵³ As noted by Bird, the murder of Yalon remains unsolved, but was reportedly the work of a Force 17 assassination team, the commando and special operations unit of the PLO which was formed by Ali Hassan

retaliation for an Israeli targeting operation, this case was coded as a retaliatory attack.

3.3 Selection Criteria and Data Sources

The criteria which governed the selection of data for this study was straightforward from the outset of this study. First, only those targeting operations with known Israeli involvement were to be analyzed. This would preclude cases, occurring primarily prior to the Second Intifada with “alleged” or “suspected” Israeli involvement, yet were never proven or confirmed by a reputable source.²⁵⁴ Second, to ensure a more proportionate data set for the two time-periods analyzed, only those cases which targeted individuals who were considered *high value targets*, were to be analyzed.²⁵⁵ This was necessary due to the exceptionally high number of targeting operations conducted during the Second Intifada compared to the period from 1956-1999, which targeted not only leaders, but also mid- and lower-ranking terrorist operatives, and is believed to have resulted in upwards of 203 separate targeting operations.²⁵⁶

While the selection criteria was straightforward, determining the cases of Israeli targeting operations which formed the basis of analysis for this study did not come without significant challenges. To begin, no definitive list exists which outlines Israel’s historic record of targeting operations by date, target, method, and so on. While there are indeed sources which purport to detail Israel’s historic targeting

Salameh, and led by an operative named Abu Faris. Their intended target was Ambassador Yitzhak Rabin; however, due to Rabin’s security detail being so tight, the assassins instead targeted Col. Yalon. While the exact faction which killed Yalon remains unknown, the fact that it was reported on a Palestinian radio broadcast as retaliation for Boudia’s death presents little doubt of Palestinian involvement.

²⁵⁴ Multiple cases of suspected and alleged Israeli targeting operations are present in history. A prime example of this is the alleged targeted, by way of parcel bombs, of German scientists. The alleged campaign took place during the 1960s and code named Operation Damocles, which supposedly sought to target German scientists formerly employed in Nazi Germany who were developing a rocket program under Egyptian hardliner Gamal Abdel Nasser. This, and other alleged cases were not included in this study due to a lack of conclusive evidence pertaining to Israeli involvement.

²⁵⁵ The selection of cases was aided by previous academic works compiled by Anthony Cordesman and Jennifer Moravitz who outline prominent targeting operations prior to the Second Intifada in their work *The Israeli-Palestinian War: Escalating to Nowhere*. Westport, Conn: Praeger Security International, 2005. pp. 130-132; and Ami Pedahzur, who outlines prominent targeting operations during the Second Intifada in his work *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010. pp. 119-120.

²⁵⁶ Kober for example notes two important characteristics which distinguish targeting operations carried out during the Second Intifada with previous ones. First, Israel successfully targeted more than 203 terrorists— an unprecedented number relative to previous periods. Second, unlike prior targeting operations, Israel’s targets were relatively low rank operatives. See Kober, Avi. *Targeted Killing during the Second Intifada: The Quest for Effectiveness*. Journal of Conflict Studies 27.1 (2007)

operations, these lists often differ (in some cases substantially) from one another and, in several instances, contain widely contradictory information.²⁵⁷ Another obstacle included determining which cases qualified as targeting *high value targets*. This was a non-issue for cases occurring prior to the year 2000 due to the infrequent nature that Israel utilized targeting operations as a counterterrorism policy tool, and the fact that only individuals deemed to be *high value targets* were targeted during this time; however, the number of operations increased manifold following the outbreak of the Second Intifada. This made it increasingly difficult to determine who, among the hundreds of individuals targeted, was to be considered *high value*. To compound matters, the clandestine nature of Israeli targeting operations prior to its “coming out policy” during the Second Intifada ensured that a substantial amount of information regarding these pre-Intifada cases remains shrouded in official secrecy. Furthermore, despite adopting an overt targeting policy during the Second Intifada with significantly enhanced transparency, the very nature of targeting operations requires that the agencies conducting them limit certain information from the public. I was therefore faced with a dearth of information concerning certain cases, an abundance of information for others, and widely varying accounts for all.

Sifting through these troves of information and compiling a reasoned list of cases entailed a substantial amount of detective work. To overcome these obstacles and determine which cases merited analysis, I relied on several widely accepted sources who have previously conducted research on Israeli targeting operations. For cases occurring prior to the Second Intifada, my primary points of reference were works conducted by Daniel Byman, Mark Ensalaco, Anna Goppel, George Jonas, Ami Pedahzur, and Avery Plaw.

For cases occurring during the Second Intifada, my primary points of reference were once again Byman, Ensalaco, Goppel, Pedahzur, and Plaw; as well as works conducted by Anthony Cordesman and Jennifer Moravitz, and David Lea. In cases where discrepancies between sources were present, I relied on the most commonly held account maintained by two or more of the sources.

²⁵⁷ Instances of varying information among sources abound and is not surprising considering that most authors attempting to document historic targeting operations themselves relied on a single source of information whose own account was, in certain instances, incapable of verification.

3.4 Selected Cases

Following a comprehensive review of the sources listed in the previous section who are familiar with the Israeli experience prior to the Second Intifada, a total of nineteen cases were selected for analysis. These cases, which occurred between 1956 and 1999, were selected on the basis of having known Israeli involvement, and for being considered by Israel to be *high value targets*. Table 3.1 provides a list of selected cases during this time period and includes the name; date and place of targeting; their primary organizational affiliation and position; the method by which these individuals were targeted; and the targeting agency.

Table 3.1

Target	Date	Place	Affiliation	Method	Targeting Organization
Mustafa Hafaz	July 13, 1956	Gaza Strip	Egyptian Intelligence	Explosive Device	IDF
Salah Mustafa	July 14, 1956	Amman, Jordan	Egyptian Military	Explosive Device	IDF
Ghassan Kanafani	July 8, 1972	Beirut, Lebanon	PFLP	Explosive Device	Mossad
Abdel Wael Zwaiter	October 16, 1972	Rome, Italy	PLO	Small Arms	Mossad
Mahmoud Hamshari	December 8, 1972	Paris, France	PLO	Explosive Device	Mossad
Hussein al- Bashir	January 24, 1973	Nicosia, Cyprus	Fatah	Explosive Device	Mossad
Basil Al-Kubaissi	April 6, 1973	Paris, France	PFLP	Small Arms	Mossad
Kemal Adwan	April 9, 1973	Beirut, Lebanon	Black September, Fatah	Small Arms	IDF/Mossad
Muhammad Youssef Najer	April 9, 1973	Beirut, Lebanon	Black September	Small Arms	IDF/Mossad
Kamal Nasser	April 9, 1973	Beirut, Lebanon	PLO	Small Arms	IDF/Mossad
Zaiaad Muchasi	April 11, 1973	Athens, Greece	Black September	Explosive Device	Mossad
Mohammed Boudia	June 28, 1973	Paris, France	PFLO	Explosive Device	Mossad
Ahmed Bouchiki (mistaken for Ali Hassan Salameh)	July 21, 1973	Lillehammer, Norway	None	Small Arms	Mossad
Ali Hassan Salameh	January 22, 1979	Beirut, Lebanon	Black September	Explosive Device	Mossad
Khalil El-Wazir (Abu Jihad)	April 16, 1988	Tunis, Tunisia	Fatah, PLO	Small Arms	IDF
Abbas al-Musawi	February 16, 1992	Lebanon, Beirut	Hezbollah	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF
Fathi Shaqaqi	October 26, 1995	Sleima, Malta	Islamic Jihad	Small Arms	Mossad
Yahya Ayyash	January 6, 1996	Gaza Strip	Hamas	Explosive Device	Shin Bet
Khaled Mashaal	September 25, 1997	Amman, Jordan	Hamas	Other	Mossad

A similar review of the sources familiar with the Israeli experience during the Second Intifada yielded again a selection of nineteen cases. These cases, which occurred between 2000 and 2005, were again selected on the basis of known Israeli involvement, and for being considered a high-ranking member of their respective organization or known to possess an extremely specialized skill not readily transferable to other members of the organization.²⁵⁸ Table 3.2 provides a list of the selected cases during this time periods and includes once again the name; date and place of targeting; their primary organizational affiliation and position; the method by which these individuals were targeted; and the targeting agency.

Table 3.2

Target	Date	Place	Affiliation	Method	Targeting Organization
Hussein Mohammed Abayat	November 9, 2000	West Bank	Fatah	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF
Thabet Ahmad Thabet	December 31, 2000	West Bank	Fatah	Small Arms	IDF
Iyad Mahmoud Hardan	April 5, 2001	West Bank	PIJ	Explosive Device	IDF
Omar Sadeh	July 17, 2001	West Bank	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF
Jamal Mansour	July 31, 2001	West Bank	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF
Jamal Salim Damuni	July 31, 2001	West Bank	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF
Adnan Al-Ghoul	August 22, 2001	Gaza	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF
Abu Ali Mustafa	August 27, 2001	West Bank	PFLP	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF
Mahmoud Abu Hanud	November 23, 2001	West Bank	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF
Raed Muhammad Karmi	January 14, 2002	West Bank	Fatah	Explosive Device	IDF
Salah Mustafa Shehadeh	July 22, 2002	Gaza	Hamas	Fighter Jet	IDF
Ibrahim Maqadmeh	March 8, 2003	Gaza	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF
Abdalla Abd Qawasmeh	June 21, 2003	West Bank	Hamas	Small Arms	IDF
Ismail Abu Shanab	August 21, 2003	Gaza	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF
Sheikh Ahmed Yassin	March 22, 2004	Gaza	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF
Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi	April 17, 2004	Gaza	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF
Wael Talib Nassar	May 30, 2004	Gaza	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF
Bashir Khalil Dabash	October 5, 2004	Gaza	PIJ	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF
Adnan Al-Ghoul	October 21, 2004	Gaza	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF

²⁵⁸ Cases of expertise and non-transferable skills include the targeting of Yahya Ayyash and Adnan al-Ghoul. While both men are believed to have been local leaders of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, their true contributions to Hamas came in the form of extreme expertise in the development and manufacture of explosives. In his capacity as a chief developer and bombmaker, Ayyash was known as *The Engineer* while al-Ghoul was admired as the “father of the Qassam rocket.”

3.5 Analytic Method

Having identified the cases to be investigated, I then collected information pertaining to the four indicators which were outlined earlier in this chapter for each individual case. This was carried out by utilizing a variety of data sources including those used to compile the selected case-list, and a number of quarterly academic journals such as *International Security*, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, and a variety of other written works relating to the Israeli experience. In addition to these sources, data were culled from several English language news archives by utilizing keyword searches in various academic databases.²⁵⁹ Furthermore, for cases occurring during the Second Intifada, statistics from B'tselem– the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories were utilized.²⁶⁰

In order to make sure that my final conclusions were accurate when coding results, I cross-validated each coding with at least one additional independent source before tagging it as a success or failure. This ensured that no inferences were made based solely on the findings of one source. Once satisfied that my findings for each case and its respective indicator were accurate, I used the following numerical values of -1- and -0- to code success or failure respectively for the first two indicators– *intended target eliminated*, and *adverse political consequences*. For the remaining two indicators, *civilian and non-target casualties*, and *directly linked retaliatory attacks*, the actual numbers of these incidents were recorded. These values were then inserted into Excel in order to produce the relevant statistics for each time period analyzed. The results were then formulated into bar-charts which illustrated the differences between the two time-periods analyzed. Once this was complete, the quantitative results were analyzed alongside various qualitative factors relevant to the stated aims of the operations. This enabled me to formulate my inferences based on a contextualized approach, and ensured that a plurality of qualitative metrics were utilized alongside concrete numbers.²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ Academic data bases such as ProQuest, EBSCOhost and JSTOR were used to locate various scholarly and news articles published primarily before the Second Intifada. Online news archives of the Los Angeles Times, New York Times, Associated Press, BBC, Washington Post, Ha'aretz and Jerusalem Post were utilized to locate more recent news articles.

²⁶⁰ See www.btselem.org/statistics/fatalities/before-cast-lead/by-date-of-event

²⁶¹ In her study, Carvin notes that there is merit in broader, contextualized approaches that use a plurality of metrics particular to a given situation alongside concrete numbers and the stated aims of a given campaign. See Carvin, op. cit.

3.6 Data Limitations

Particular attention was paid to ensuring that the data recorded in this study was accurate by adopting a policy of utilizing numerous sources close to both the Israeli and Palestinian causes, and cross-referencing their accounts. The ideal practice when conducting investigative research is to have two sources independently verify each other, and is a practice which I made every attempt to adhere to.²⁶² This, however, was not always possible, especially when examining historic events which were clandestine in nature for which no definitive official record exists— as was the case with several of the targeting operations occurring prior to the Second Intifada when Israel’s policy was one of neither confirmation nor denial. I was therefore limited in some instances to relying on second-hand accounts reported by sources which in turn relied on the accounts’ of a single individual claiming first-hand knowledge of a particular event.²⁶³ This became less of an issue with operations occurring in more recent times as media reporting standards improved and state records became more transparent; however, this limitation is nonetheless recognized.

Another central challenge encountered while collecting data for this study was that discrepancies were often present in the accounts of various sources. These discrepancies were sometimes minor, and included varying accounts as to the specific date of an operation; however, they were sometimes major and included widely varying accounts of, for example, the number of civilian casualties resulting from a particular operation. This was especially true when comparing sources which were close to either the Palestinian or Israeli causes, and subsequently biased by association. For example, sources close to the Palestinian cause were often more apt to report higher civilian casualties, while those close to the Israeli cause were prone to label some, and in some cases, all non-target casualties as legitimate targets of an operation under the pretext of acting as an “aid” or “body guard” to the targeted individual.²⁶⁴ In these instances, I relied on the most widely held account amongst

²⁶² Jonas, op. cit. xxii

²⁶³ This primarily concerns the research conducted by George Jonas in his book *Vengeance: The True Story of an Israeli Counter-Terrorist Team*.

²⁶⁴ This appeared to be more prevalent during the Second Intifada following what some refer to as “the institutionalization of targeted killing.” See Stahl, op. cit. p. 114

sources independent of each other, or the one which offered the most details about the operation.²⁶⁵

Similarly, it also became apparent that the number of sources close to the Israeli experience, either through association or their propensity to rely on Israeli state accounts of operations, far outnumbered those close to the Palestinian cause. While every effort was made to diversify my sources, this was not always feasible due to a lack of those close to the Palestinian experience, or challenges relating to establishing their credentials.

²⁶⁵ If, for example, two sources independent from each other reported three civilian casualties while one source reported five, I relied on the most widely held account and recorded three casualties.

4 Data Results and Discussion

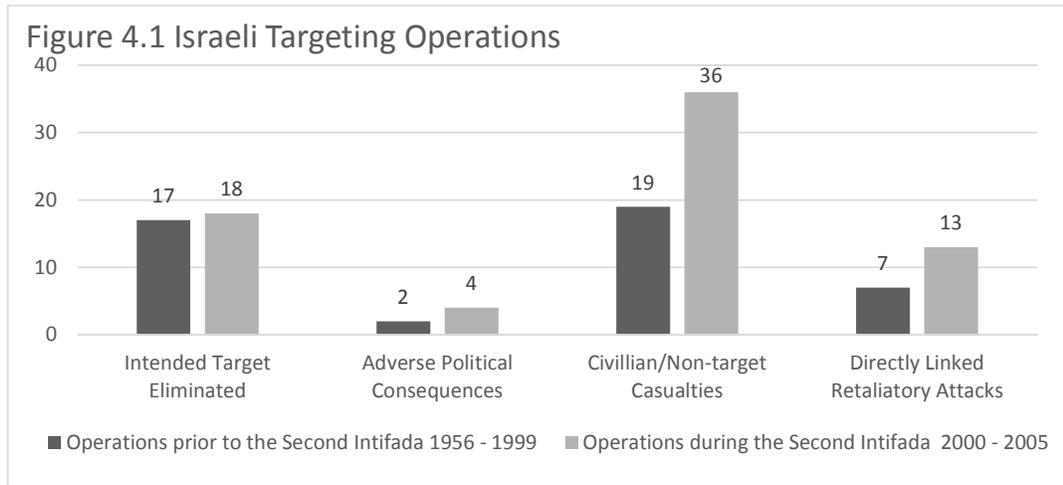
4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to analyze and assess select cases of Israeli targeting operations occurring both before and during the Second Intifada. The primary objective was to determine if the changes made to Israel's targeting policy during the Second Intifada resulted in more or less successful targeting operations compared to those which were conducted prior to this time period. This chapter will be dedicated to presenting the empirical findings of an original case study conducted for the purpose of this research and discussing the results.

This chapter will be structured as follows. To begin, the aggregate quantitative results of the analytic model will be presented which are illustrated in Figure 4.1. Following this, each subsequent subsection will present the individual quantitative results of the four indicators which were discussed in the *Analytic Approach* section. Upon presenting each indicator's quantitative results, the remainder of each section will be dedicated to discussing my findings in detail for each of the time periods analyzed. Furthermore, explanations regarding my rationale for coding certain events the way I did will be provided and applies primarily to cases which are not readily apparent, as well as those of questionable certainty. Full datasets for both periods may be found in Appendix 1 and 2.

Following a presentation of the results and a detailed discussion, a preliminary argument will be presented which seeks to justify whether the changes made to Israel's targeting policy during the Second Intifada resulted in more or less successful operations compared with its previous, pre-Second Intifada policy.

4.2 Aggregate Results



4.3 Intended Target Eliminated

The results of this indicator did not yield any statistically significant differences between the two time-periods analyzed. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, Israeli targeting operations during the time period from 1956-1999 experienced a slightly lower success rate in terms of eliminating the intended targets of an operation compared to those which were conducted during the Second Intifada. This corresponds to a success rate of 89% and 95% respectively. A full breakdown of each case during this time-period along with its associated casualties may be found in Appendix 1.

1956-1999

Of the nineteen cases examined during the period from 1956-1999, Israeli targeting operations succeed in eliminating seventeen of the intended targets. Two failed attempts were recorded and consisted of the killing of Ahmed Bouchiki in Lillehammer, Norway— a Moroccan waiter with no known ties to terrorism who was misidentified as Ali Hassan Salameh; and the failed targeting attempt of Khaled Mashaal in Amman, Jordan— an operation in which two Mossad officers successfully targeted and poisoned their intended target, but were subsequently caught by Jordanian authorities and freed only when Israel agreed to provide Mashaal with the antidote.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ For detailed descriptions of these two incidents, refer to Avery Plaw's *Political Extremities: The Ethics and Legality of Targeted Killing*. Ashgate Publishing, Limited (2008). pp. 51-52; 58-59.

Second Intifada

Of the nineteen targeting operations which occurred during the Second Intifada, Israel appeared to have a slightly higher success rate in terms of precision and succeeded in eliminating eighteen of its intended targets. One failed operation was recorded and consisted of an attempt to eliminate Adnan al-Ghul in November 2001—an operation which mistakenly targeted al-Ghul’s eldest son—Bilal—who was driving his father’s car at the time of the attack and believed to be the intended target of the operation.²⁶⁷

Summary

While these results do not provide any statistically significant differences between the two time-periods analyzed, absolute precision is a crucial element when considering the extremely controversial nature of targeting operations and has been a cornerstone of Israel’s policy since it first utilized the practice in a systematic, semi-institutionalized manner during the *Operation Wrath of God* mission.²⁶⁸ Stahl notes that a crucial element of the Israeli experience is that targeting operations are carried out with extreme prejudice and precision, and though not all operations result in a “one-hit kill,” the intention for precision (e.g., a specific, non-random target) is a clear and crucial element of the practice.²⁶⁹ This commitment is visible multiple times in George Jonas’ account of *Operation Wrath of God*, and aptly summarized in the words of the team’s case officer—Ephraim—while briefing the team of Mossad operatives tasked with eliminating those responsible for the Munich Massacre:

*“Yours is the cleanest operation there is: one person, one homicidal criminal, and no one else. If you’re not one hundred per cent sure it’s him— you let him go. That’s all there is to it. You identify him as if he were your own brother. You let him identify himself. If you’re not absolutely certain, you do nothing. You let him go.”*²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ NBC News. *Israeli Airstrike Kills Hamas Senior Leader*. NBCNEWS.com. 21 Nov. 2004.

B’tselem statistics report that Bilal was not participating in hostilities at the time of the attack. B’tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. Statistics. *Fatalities before Operation “Cast Lead.”*

²⁶⁸ Stahl, Adam. *The Evolution of Israeli Targeted Operations: Consequences of the Thabet Thabet Operation*. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33.2. 2010. pp. 112-113

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 114

²⁷⁰ Jonas, George. *Vengeance: The True Story of an Israeli Counter-terrorist Team*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984. p. 88. See also pages 70, 85, 95 and 104.

While the loss of any life is deplorable despite the seemingly justifiable argument that targeting-operations contribute to a reduction in terrorist violence, the elimination of the wrong person—and an innocent one at that—constitutes a grave operational failure.²⁷¹ This makes it increasingly difficult to conclude whether Israel enjoyed a higher rate of precision following changes made to its policy during the Second Intifada due to one case of the wrong individual being targeted during each of the time-periods analyzed. Both of these cases constitute grave intelligence failures. However, the failure to eliminate Khaled Mashaal in 1997 renders Israel's success rate during the period from 1956-1999 slightly lower than that during the Second Intifada.

This increase in precision may have been a result of improved intelligence and more sophisticated weapon systems employed during the Second Intifada. Furthermore, Israel's adoption of more reliable means of targeting in the form of heavy artillery during the Second Intifada—primarily fired from helicopter gunships—compared to its preference for using light arms and localized explosives (and in the case of Mashaal a poison) in the prior period may also have contributed to this increase in precision.

4.4 Adverse Political Consequences

As illustrated in Figure 4.1, Israeli targeting operations during the time period from 1956-1999 resulted in fewer adverse political consequences compared to those resulting from targeting operations conducted during the Second Intifada. Two instances of adverse political consequences were identified as resulting from operations conducted during the period from 1956-1999 compared with four instances resulting from operations conducted during the Second Intifada.

1956-1999

Of the nineteen targeting operations conducted during the period from 1956-1999, a total of two cases were deemed to result in adverse political consequences based on the criteria outlined in the *Analytic Approach* section. The first case was the 1973 killing of Ahmed Bouchiki- the Moroccan waiter mistakenly identified as Ali Hassan Salameh. The failed operation and botched getaway resulted in the arrest, trial and subsequent imprisonment of several Mossad operatives involved in the

²⁷¹ Ibid., p. 219

operation. Furthermore, the identities of several other Mossad operatives based in Europe were “burned” along with detailed information about *Operation Wrath of God* and former Mossad operations in Europe being revealed to authorities, and international outrage from not only Norway, but also Canada, whose forged passports were used by the operatives to enter Norway.²⁷² Several historians would later describe the incident, which would come to be known as the *Lillehammer Affair*, as “the most damaging exposure ever of their country’s [Israel’s] clandestine activities.”²⁷³

The second case was the 1997 failed attempt to eliminate Khaled Mashaal— the chief of Hamas’ political bureau in Amman, Jordan. In this case, Mossad operatives— posing once again as Canadian tourists— managed to inject Mashaal with a toxic substance; however, while attempting to escape they were apprehended by Jordanian authorities.²⁷⁴ The incident was considered a political disaster for Israel not only because it undermined its reputation and that of the Mossad, who at the time continued to deny any involvement in the targeting of terrorists, but also subjected Israel to enormous international criticism.²⁷⁵ Furthermore, the incident infuriated Jordan whose sovereignty had been breached; the U.S, which was subsequently forced to intervene to broker an agreement between King Hussein and then Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; and Canada, whose forged passports were once again used to carry out what it viewed as yet another assassination attempt in a foreign country.²⁷⁶ Additionally, in order to alleviate tensions between Amman and

²⁷² By killing the wrong man *and* being captured, the team in Norway committed at one stroke two of the worst sins intelligence operatives could possibly commit. Apparently, two Mossad operatives were captured by Norwegian authorities as they tried to return the rented car that they used for their getaway at the airport. Most surprisingly perhaps, is that one of the detained operatives happened to be extremely claustrophobic and, in exchange for a larger cell, divulged detailed information about their operation including the identities of his colleagues— which led to their subsequent arrest; and former Mossad operations in Europe, which revealed a web of Mossad operatives and safe houses throughout Europe. Furthermore, in addition to the wave of international backlash that followed, the botched operation in Norway put a de facto end to Operation Wrath of God after an enraged Golda Meir pulled the plug on the teams’ mission. See Jonas, op. cit. p. 219 and Pedahzur, Ami. *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism*. Columbia University Press, 2009 p. 45

²⁷³ Black, Ian, and Morris, Benny. *Israel's Secret Wars: A History of Israel's Intelligence Services*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991. p. 276

²⁷⁴ Plaw, op. cit., p. 58

²⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 59

²⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 59, see also Kessel, Jerrold. *Netanyahu in Spotlight as Assassination Plot Unravels*. *CNN World News*. CNN.com, 5 Oct. 1997. Web archive. Canada would be so angered that it would recall its ambassador to Ottawa for consultations in protest over the use of its passports in the event.

Tel Aviv, King Hussein demanded the release of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin- the founder and spiritual leader of Hamas, who was at the time serving a life sentence in Israel.²⁷⁷

Second Intifada

Of the nineteen targeting operations conducted during the Second Intifada, a total of four cases were deemed to result in adverse political consequences based on the criteria outlined in the *Analytic Approach* section.

The first case was the targeting and killing of Dr. Thabet Ahmed Thabet– a Palestinian dentist and Fatah-Tanzim leader who was targeted and killed in November 2000.²⁷⁸ Not known to have any personal involvement in terrorist activities, and described as closely connected with many people in the Israeli peace movement, Thabet’s killing garnered intense condemnation from the international community and sent shockwaves throughout the Israeli political system.²⁷⁹ Seen as a peace activist by many, and having passed through Ben Gurion Airport without incident just two weeks prior to his targeting, the killing of Thabet was seen as a watershed event in Israeli targeting operation history. Suddenly, notes Stahl, Israel was being charged with war crimes and the charges were headed straight up the political ladder, reaching the highest echelons of the military and Israeli Government.²⁸⁰ The Thabet case was coded as resulting in adverse political consequences for two reasons. The first is that it garnered extreme international condemnation from human rights groups from several countries which questioned why Thabet, with no known ties to terrorism, was “assassinated.”²⁸¹ The second is that this operation is seen as the catalyst which forced Israeli policy makers to admit, and subsequently codify into Israeli law an overt policy of targeted killing, thus setting a deadly precedent for the remainder of the conflict and for future counterterror operations.²⁸²

²⁷⁷ Schmemmann, Serge. *Israel Frees Ailing Hamas Founder to Jordan at Hussein's Request*. The New York Times, 30 Sept. 1997.

²⁷⁸ Byman, Daniel. *A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*. Oxford University Press, 2011 p. 314

²⁷⁹ Plaw, op. cit., p. 67

²⁸⁰ Stahl, op. cit., p. 120

²⁸¹ See Plaw, op. cit., p. 67 and Stahl, op. cit., 119

²⁸² Stahl, op. cit., p. 120

The second case was the targeting of Raed Karmi in January 2002, whose killing was described by several Israeli and Palestinian officials as shattering a fragile ceasefire which was previously brokered between Israel and Hamas.²⁸³

The third case was the targeting of Salah Shehedah in July 2002. This instance was coded as resulting in adverse political consequences for its failure to adhere to the principles of proportionality when targeting combatants, which is outlined in Israel's *Conduct in the Battlefield*.²⁸⁴ This operation drew especially harsh criticism from the international community and received widespread condemnation from several countries for Israel's indiscriminate use of force based on a decision to utilize an F-16 to drop a one-ton bomb on Shehadah's apartment building which was located in a heavily populated neighborhood in Gaza City.²⁸⁵ The attack cost the lives of sixteen civilians, injured seventy more, and leveled six other houses in the area.²⁸⁶ In addition to the enormous loss of civilian life, the operation ended a purported ceasefire between Hamas and Israel.²⁸⁷

The final case which was considered to result in adverse political consequences was the March 2004 targeting of Hamas co-founder and spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin – a wheelchair bound quadriplegic who was exiting a mosque at the time of his targeting.²⁸⁸ Yassin's targeting produced a major international reaction including condemnation from then UK Prime Minister Tony Blair.²⁸⁹ Furthermore, notes Plaw, Yassin's targeting prompted United Nations Secretary Kofi Annan to strongly condemn Yassin's "assassination," who called on Israel to "immediately end its practice of extrajudicial killing."²⁹⁰ Furthermore, the UN Commission on Human Rights passed a resolution condemning the killing of Sheikh Yassin.²⁹¹

²⁸³ Byman, op. cit., p. 136. See also Breaking News. *Gunmen Kill Israeli Soldier in Revenge Attack*. BreakingNews.ie. 15 Jan. 2002, and Franklin, Stephen, and Michael Martinez. *Arab Militant, Israeli Soldier Die in Violence*. Chicago Tribune, 15 Jan. 2002.

²⁸⁴ *Report on the Practice of Israel*, 1997, Chapter 1.5 *Conduct in the Battlefield in Accordance with the Law of War*, Israel Defense Forces, 1986. p 4-5.

²⁸⁵ Luft, Gal. *The Logic of Israel's Targeted Killing* Winter. Middle East Quarterly. Winter. 2003 See also Plaw, op. cit., p. 154 and Byman, Daniel. *Do Targeted Killings Work?* Vol. 85. Council on Foreign Relations, 2006.

²⁸⁶ Plaw, op. cit., p.73

²⁸⁷ Levy, Gideon. *The Cease-fire will go up in Flames*. Opinion. Haaretz.com. Haaretz. 3 Dec. 2006.

²⁸⁸ Plaw, op. cit., p.76. See also Al Jazeera Archives. *The Life and Death of Shaikh Yasin*. Al Jazeera, 24 Mar. 2004.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.* Plaw, p. 76. See also BBC News. *Blair Condemns Hamas Chief Death*. BBC News.com. 22 Mar. 2004.

²⁹⁰ Plaw, op. cit., p. 77.

²⁹¹ The resolution passed by a vote of 31 to 2 with 18 abstentions. (UNPR 2004). The UN Security Council failed to pass a similar motion because the US vetoed it. *Ibid.* Plaw., p. 77

Summary

Weighing the absolute impact of one adverse political consequence against another with the objective of determining which one caused the most damage is an exceedingly difficult task and; for the moment, out of the scope of this research. However, the results derived from this indicator demonstrate that Israeli targeting operations conducted during the Second Intifada were less successful in terms of quelling adverse political consequences when compared with the time-period from 1956-1999. This may be due to several reasons. The first reason likely stems from Israel's decision to adopt an overt policy of targeted killing following the outbreak of the Second Intifada. This decision essentially ended its previous policy of plausible deniability which it enjoyed during the period from 1956-1999. Whereas prior to the Second Intifada Israel could simply deny involvement in conducted operations, its decision to adopt an overt targeting policy essentially put the country in the spotlight of media coverage and human rights groups' oversight following operations deemed controversial.²⁹²

The second reason likely stems from Israel's policy of adopting more pervasive, and overt military means to target individuals during the Second Intifada as opposed to the more covert means previously employed. Several scholars note that one of the primary differences between targeting operations occurring during the Second Intifada (and continuing to date) is the overt military nature of attacks, evidenced primarily by increased utilization of helicopter gunships, fighter jets, and unmanned aerial vehicles as opposed to more covert means previously employed such as small arms and booby-trapped, yet highly controlled, explosive devices.²⁹³

The final reason likely stems from a combination of the previously mentioned factors coupled with the systematic, and as some may argue, wholesale usage of targeting operations during the Second Intifada.²⁹⁴ This study examined only nineteen cases of targeting operations during the Second Intifada; however, this

²⁹² This of course does not apply to cases of undeniable involvement such as the 1973 killing of Bouchiki and the 1997 failed operation against Khaled Mashaal.

²⁹³ David for example notes, "What distinguishes many of the killings in the second intifada from those in the past is their open and military nature. Although it has sometimes involved greater collateral damage, the use of helicopter gunships or F-16s to kill suspected terrorists has fit the conventional modes of warfare more than the shadowy, deceitful world that characterizes assassinations." David, Steven R. *Israel's Policy of Targeted Killing*. Ethics & International Affairs 17.1. 2003. This development is interesting considering Israel's previous preference for utilizing small arms— specifically .22 caliber silenced Beretta pistols, or in the case of many Operation Wrath of God targets, booby-trapped explosive devices disguised in every-day items such as telephones, television sets, and even in the mattresses of beds.

²⁹⁴ Kober, op. cit. Note 21.

figure comprises only operations deemed “prominent” which targeted the leaders of terrorist organizations and other *high value targets*, and is not representative of the actual number of operations conducted during the Second Intifada. Rather, the figure of nineteen cases pales in comparison to the actual number of targeting operations conducted during this time.

4.5 Civilian and Non-Target Casualties

The results derived from analyzing *Civilian and Non-Target Casualties* yielded the most statistically significant differences between the two time-periods analyzed. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, a total of nineteen civilian and non-target casualties resulted from Israeli targeting operations conducted during the period from 1956-1999. During the Second Intifada, this number rose to thirty-six civilian and non-target casualties— a figure which corresponds to a 72% increase compared with that occurring during the prior period.

1956-1999

Of the nineteen targeting operations examined during the period from 1956-1999, a total of nineteen civilian and non-target casualties were identified as having occurred as a direct result of these operations. A full breakdown of each case during this time-period along with its associated casualties may be found in Appendix 1. The majority of cases in which civilian casualties occurred does not warrant in-depth explanation and were largely the result of tragic instances of these individuals being in the wrong place at the wrong time. However, several instances were recorded in which non-civilian, yet non-target casualties were recorded. Similarly, there were several instances in which select casualties were excluded from the casualty count based on what is considered to be exceptional circumstances. These cases containing unique circumstances warrant special mention and will be discussed in the order of their operation.

The first case warranting special mention is the April 1973 operation which targeted Kemal Adwan, Mahmoud Najjer, and Kamal Nasser in Beirut, Lebanon which would come to be known as *Operation Spring of Youth*— a joint operation conducted by an elite IDF Sayeret commando unit (including future Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak) and several members of the Mossad *Operation Wrath of God*

team.²⁹⁵ Exact details of this operation vary between sources; however, several accounts report that during the course of the operation, three armed Palestinian guards were killed prior to entering the building which housed the primary targets.²⁹⁶ These individuals were included in *non-target* casualties due to the fact that they were not targets of the operation, were eliminated under what may be considered as perfidious means, and did not participate in hostilities at the time of their deaths.²⁹⁷ In addition to these casualties, Kemal Adwan's wife was killed while attempting to shield her husband from the reign of bullets being fired, as well as an unsuspecting elderly Italian woman who was caught in the crossfire while peeking out of her apartment door.²⁹⁸ These two casualties were included in the number of civilian casualties. Reports also indicate that a number of non-target casualties occurred in a resulting gun battle which broke out between Israeli forces and local Fedayeen guerillas who responded to the commotion in the compound housing the original targets. Exact numbers of Fedayeen casualties vary greatly between sources and range from fourteen to over one-hundred, with one Israeli commando reportedly killed.²⁹⁹ These, however, have not been included based on truly varying accounts between sources and the fact that these individuals were considered to be armed-combatants engaging in hostilities at the time of their deaths.

The third case warranting special mention is the April 1973 operation which targeted Zaid Muchassi in his Athens' hotel. After successfully targeting Muchassi, the Mossad team is reported to have shot and killed Muchassi's KGB contact while attempting to flee the scene.³⁰⁰ The KGB agent was reported to have been reaching for a pistol as the team attempted to escape; however, no definitive reports indicate that he actually had a weapon drawn at the time of his death, with the team leader of the operation admitting that he could have been mistaken about the man's intention

²⁹⁵ For detailed accounts of the operation see Jonas, op. cit., pp. 182-197 and Reeve, Simon. *One Day in September: The Full Story of the 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre and the Israeli Revenge Operation "Wrath of God"*. New York: Arcade, 2000. pp. 175-195

²⁹⁶ Jonas, op. cit., p. 185

²⁹⁷ Considered "perfidious" because the commando unit, including future Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Barak, dressed as women and tourists so as not to raise suspicion among the guards prior to infiltrating the compound which housed the primary targets.

²⁹⁸ Plaw, op. cit., pp.50-51; Jonas, op. cit., p.185

²⁹⁹ Ibid, Jonas. p. 185. See also Dobson, Christopher, and Ronald Payne. *The Carlos Complex: A Study in Terror*. New York: Putnam, 1977. p. 212.

³⁰⁰ Jonas, op. cit., p. 185. See also Ensalaco, Mark. *Middle Eastern Terrorism: From Black September to September 11*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008 p. 55

to draw a weapon.³⁰¹ This instance was therefore recorded as a non-target casualty based on dubious reports pertaining to his status as an armed combatant.

The final case warranting special mention during this time period was the January 1979 targeting and successful elimination of Ali Hassan Salameh– the infamous chief of operations for Black September and alleged mastermind behind the Munich Massacre.³⁰² During this operation, sources report that the car-bomb blast that targeted Salameh’s convoy in a residential neighborhood in Beirut killed Salameh along with four of his bodyguards and three innocent bystanders.³⁰³ The inclusion of Salameh’s bodyguards as non-target casualties was based on the fact that these individuals did not participate in hostilities at the time of attack.

Second Intifada

Of the nineteen operations examined during the Second Intifada, a combined total of thirty-six civilian and non-target casualties were identified as occurring as a direct result of Israeli targeting operations. A full breakdown of each case during this time period along with its associated casualties may be found in Appendix 2. As with the previous time-period analyzed, the majority of cases in which civilian casualties occurred does not warrant in-depth explanation and were largely the result of operations conducted in densely populated residential areas with the unfortunate consequence of civilians being caught in the crossfire. However, several instances which were recorded deserve clarification as to why my numbers may differ from other accounts, primarily those recorded by B’tselem– the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights.³⁰⁴ While viewed as a reliable source, B’tselem has garnered criticism in recent years for the organization’s alleged tendency to favor IDF accounts over Palestinian and other news sources, and has therefore been utilized as only one source among many.³⁰⁵

³⁰¹ Jonas, op. cit., p. 193.

³⁰² Shalev, Noam. "The Hunt for Black September." *BBC News*. BBC, 24 Jan. 2006

³⁰³ See *4 PLO Guards, 3 Civilians Die in Blast Reputed Organizer of Munich Massacre Killed*. Toronto, Ont.: Jan 23, 1979, and Byman, Daniel. *The Rise of the PLO and the Birth of International Terrorism (1956–1970s)*. In *A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*. Oxford University Press, 2011. p. 53.

³⁰⁴ B’tselem– a non-governmental organization (NGO) which, according to its website, endeavors to: document and educate the Israeli public and policymakers about human rights violations in the Occupied Territories, combat the phenomenon of denial prevalent among the Israeli public, and help create a human rights culture in Israel. http://www.btselem.org/about_btselem

³⁰⁵ The primary issue at hand is that B’tselem statistics have a tendency of recording casualties– often aids or body guards of the primary target– as also being the intended targets of targeting operations based on information received from the IDF. Considering reports of the intimate nature between the two entities, this

The first case which warrants special mention is the July 2001 operation which targeted Jamal Mansour and Jamal Damuni. B'tselem statistics indicate that, in addition to two civilian casualties, four other individuals who were killed in the strike were also targets of this operation.³⁰⁶ While one individual— Fahim Dawabseh— was confirmed to have been wanted by Israel and connected to terrorism, no information could be found linking the other three. Furthermore, several press reports state that these three individuals had no ties to terrorism and were in fact office workers and journalists interviewing the men being targeted.³⁰⁷ These three men have therefore been recorded under civilian and non-target casualties.

The second case is the November 2001 operation targeting Mahmoud Hanud. During the course of this operation, two other individuals were killed for which Israel later claimed were also original targets of the operation.³⁰⁸ Claims that these two men had ties to terrorism could not be substantiated through other sources and have therefore been recorded as non-target casualties.

The third case is the March 2003 targeting of Ibrahim Maqadmeh. During the course of this operation, three other individuals were killed in the strike for which Israel claimed were also targets of the operation. Two of these individuals were confirmed by other sources to have terrorist ties to Hamas and therefore substantiate Israel's claim; however, the third individual could not be associated with any links to terrorism and therefore recorded as a non-target casualty.

The fourth case is the March 2004 targeting of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, which resulted in eight additional individuals being killed in the strike. Israel claims that three of these targets were in fact intended targets of the operation; however, other

may simply constitute an IDF attempt of “damage control” by stating that an aid or a bodyguard killed during the course of an operation was in-fact on the IDF's original list of targeted individuals.

Despite its status as an NGO, allegations have been made that the relationship between B'tselem and the IDF has become intimately close in recent years. A 2013 Jerusalem Post article stated that the relationship between the two is “closer than ever” and can be evidenced through an evolution of language used to report Israeli incidents of human rights abuse which appears to be much more sympathetic to the Israeli cause compared to that of the Palestinians. See Bob, Yonah. "Analysis: B'Tselem, IDF Positions Closer than Ever." *Jerusalem Post*. 5 Sept. 2013. B'tselem statistics have therefore been used solely as one source of information throughout this study, and are not considered definitive in any respect.

³⁰⁶ Muhammad Bishawi, Fahim Dawabseh, Omar Mansur and Othman Qatani. See B'tselem statistics: *Palestinians killed during the course of a targeted killing in the Occupied Territories, before Operation "Cast Lead"*

³⁰⁷ Haberman, Clyde. *Israeli Raid Kills 8 at Hamas Office; 2 are Young Boys*. The New York Times, 31 July 2001

³⁰⁸ See B'tselem Statistics before Operation Cast Lead. www.btselem.org/statistics/fatalities/before-cast-lead/by-date-of-event

sources could connect only two of these individuals with terrorist activity. The remaining six were recorded as civilian and non-target casualties.

The final case was the April 2004 targeting of Abdel Rantissi. Two of Rantissi's aids were killed in the attack for which Israel later claimed were also targets of the operation. No other sources identified these individuals as having ties to terrorism and have therefore been recorded as non-target casualties.

Summary

Determining one's culpability within the sphere of terrorist activities when sources oppose each other— as was the case in operations resulting in non-civilian, yet non-target casualties, is with little doubt a challenging endeavor. However, despite the several cases of conflicting reports, the results derived from this indicator demonstrate that Israeli targeting operations conducted during the Second Intifada were less successful in preventing both civilian and non-target casualties as opposed to the time period from 1956-1999. This can be evidenced by the sheer number of combined civilian and non-target casualties which occurred as a result of targeting operations during the Second Intifada— which represents an increase of nearly 47% when comparing figures from 1956-1999.

This sharp increase in civilian and non-target casualties during the Second Intifada may be attributed to a number of single or combined factors. One plausible explanation which several scholars point towards is the upsurge of operations during the Second Intifada which were primarily conducted in the densely populated urban and residential areas of Gaza and the West Bank.³⁰⁹ Prime examples of this include the 2002 targeting of Salah Shehadeh— an operation which utilized F-16 fighter jets to drop a one-ton bomb on Shehadeh's apartment complex which resulted in fourteen civilian casualties; and the 2004 targeting of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin— an operation which utilized helicopter gunships to fire missiles at the wheelchair-bound leader as he and other mosque-goers exited a busy mosque in Gaza City.³¹⁰ This may indeed be one reason for an increase in civilian and non-target casualties; however, operations during the period from 1956-1999 were also conducted in the densely

³⁰⁹ David, op. cit., p. 123

³¹⁰ Byman, Daniel. *Do Targeted Killings Work?* Vol. 85. Council on Foreign Relations, 2006. See also Ellingwood, Ken and Fayed Shammalah. *Hamas Leader Slain; Founder of Hamas Dies in Israeli Strike: Sheik Ahmed Yassin is hit by Missiles outside a Gaza Mosque*. Los Angeles Times. March 22 2004.

populated residential districts of Paris, Rome, Athens and Beirut (to name a few) and resulted in fewer, and in most cases, no civilian casualties.³¹¹

A more plausible explanation, and one supported by several academics involved in researching the Israeli experience, may be attributed to the shift in methods utilized to carry out operations.³¹² During the period from 1956-1999, the preferred weapon of choice appears to have been small caliber arms used at close range and highly controlled booby-trapped explosives— often rigged to take the shape of everyday devices such as landline and cellular telephones which were detonated only when the target was known to be alone.³¹³ In fact, from the nineteen cases surveyed during 1956-1999, only two operations involved other means of targeting. The first was the 1992 targeting of Abas al-Musawi, which was the first recorded instance of utilizing helicopter gunships; and the second was the 1997 targeting attempt of Khaled Mashaal, in which Mossad operatives attempted to use a poison to eliminate their target.³¹⁴ However, during the Second Intifada there has been a clear shift away from the previous covert methods utilized to target individuals towards one which resembles more overt conventional military means of warfare and is evidenced through the increased utilization of missiles fired from helicopter gunships and heavy bombing from warplanes. To put this in perspective, from the nineteen cases surveyed during the Second Intifada, only four operations involved other means of targeting individuals than helicopter gunships or fighter jets.³¹⁵ This, coupled with the last point of targeting individuals in densely populated urban environments, leaves little question as to why the civilian and non-target casualty rate during the Second Intifada was higher than that during the period from 1956-1999.

Finally, a further plausible explanation for the upsurge in civilian and non-target casualties during the Second Intifada may also simply represent a shift in overall Israeli counterterrorism policy following what several academics describe as an “institutionalization” of targeting operations.³¹⁶ This argument gains traction when

³¹¹ See for example the operations targeting Abdel Zwaiter, Mahmoud Hamshari, Hussein Bashir, Basil Kubaissi and Mahmoud Boudia who were targeted in residential districts in Rome, Paris and Nicosia with no reported civilian casualties.

³¹² See David, *op. cit.*, p. 117

³¹³ This “preference” has not been explicitly expressed by Israel; however, the statistics from this time-period appear representative of Israel’s partiality to certain methods over others.

³¹⁴ It is interesting to note, however, that these new forms of targeting did not exactly result in the success that Israel hoped. The former case resulted in the deaths of al-Musawi’s wife and son, while the latter ended in utter failure and embarrassment for Israel.

³¹⁵ See David, *op. cit.*, p. 113

³¹⁶ Stahl, *op. cit.*, p. 114

considering the historic record of Israeli targeting operations. Prior to the Second Intifada, targeting operations were considered the exception rather than the norm, and judging from the record, only utilized in exceptional circumstances— with *Operation Wrath of God* serving as a case in point. However, during the Second Intifada the frequency of targeting operations increased dramatically, and was applied on a routine, and what some refer to as, wholesale basis.³¹⁷ Furthermore, the announcement of an overt policy of targeted killing and the subsequent coding of the practice into Israeli law essentially meant that Israel could no longer be charged with war crimes for operations which were conducted under the auspice of saving Israeli lives.³¹⁸ What this implies in terms of the Israeli experience is that, although operations must make every possible attempt to minimize collateral damage when targeting individuals, civilian casualties become, to a certain extent, an unfortunate, yet accepted byproduct of legitimate combat operations.

4.6 Directly Linked Retaliatory Attacks

The results derived from analyzing *Directly Linked Retaliatory Attacks* once again yielded statistically significant differences when comparing the two time periods. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, a total of seven retaliatory attacks were identified as being direct responses to Israeli targeting operations during the period from 1956-1999. This figure rose to fourteen during the Second Intifada, which corresponds to a 50% increase in retaliatory attacks compared to the previous period analyzed.

1956-1999

Of the nineteen targeting operations conducted during the period from 1956-1999, a total of seven retaliatory attacks were identified as being directly linked to these operations. A full breakdown of each case during this time-period along with its associated retaliatory attacks may be found in Appendix 1. It must be noted, however, that during this time period, and especially during the first wave of Palestinian terrorism during the 1970s, a number of terrorist attacks against various Israeli targets were carried out which were supposedly (and in some cases proven), to be perpetrated by the Black September terrorist organization and numerous other

³¹⁷ According to Raviv Drucker and Ofer Shelah (as cited in Kober, 2007)

³¹⁸ Stahl, op. cit., p. 120

Palestinian factions which have not been included in my figures.³¹⁹ While it is plausible, and indeed very likely, that some of these retaliatory attacks which are not included in my figures were in response to the various targeting operations conducted by Israel, especially during the *Operation Wrath of God* mission, the coding criteria for my model precluded the inclusion of those attacks which were not explicitly attributed as retaliation for previously conducted Israeli targeting operations. Thus, in accordance with my objective to exclude figures which could be construed as counterfactual to the historic record, only those retaliatory attacks which were explicitly linked to Israeli targeting operations have been included in my figures.

During the first wave of Palestinian terror and the years during which *Operation Wrath of God* took place, a total of three Palestinian retaliatory attacks were identified as being attributed to Israeli targeting operations. The first retaliatory attack during this time period was the 1973 killing of El Al employee (and suspected Mossad agent) – Vittorio Olivares, in Rome, Italy. Olivares’ assassin– Zaharia Abou Saleh, would later tell investigators that he killed Olivares on orders from Black September for the slaying of Wael Zwaiter six months earlier, “because he [Olivares] had a role of major importance in the assassination of Zwaiter.”³²⁰

The second retaliatory attack occurring during this time period was the July 1973 killing of Col. Yosef Alon, the assistant air attaché at the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C., who was shot outside of his home in Maryland just two days after the operation which killed Mohammed Boudia in Paris.³²¹ Alon’s death remains unsolved; however, the day after the incident a Voice of Palestine radio broadcast out of Cairo claimed that Alon had been “executed” in reprisal for the killing of Mohammed Boudia, and went on to state that: “his is the first execution operation carried out against a Zionist official in the U.S. for the assassination of Boudia.”³²²

³¹⁹ This is due to none of the organizations claiming responsibility for these incidents as direct retaliation for the targeting and subsequent elimination of the individuals targeted during this time period.

³²⁰Rome, UPI. "Arab Suspect in Rome Killing Claims Revenge." *The Hour* [Fairfield, Connecticut] 30 Apr. 1973. p. 8. This information contradicts that of other sources. Pedahzur, Reeve and Plaw, for example, maintain that the shooting of Olivares was in retaliation for the targeting operation which killed Dr. Basil al-Kubaissi earlier in the month; however, these claims are highly speculative and are based, in my opinion, on the timing of events. No information was able to be retrieved connecting Olivares’ death to the targeting of Kubaissi; rather, several news sources quote the suspect as stating that it was in retaliation for Zwaiter’s death six months before.

³²¹ Bird, Kai. *The Good Spy: The Life and Death of Robert Ames*. Crown Publishers. 2014.

³²² Ibid, Bird. See also Charlton, Linda. *Diplomat's Murder: The Reply Is Sure to Follow*. Lakeland Ledger. 8 July 1973.

The third and final directly linked retaliatory attack identified during the years which *Operation Wrath of God* took place was the August 1973 Athens Airport shooting carried out by two Palestinian terrorists on orders from Ali Hassan Salameh to avenge the deaths of Kemal Adwan, Yossuf Najjer, and Kamal Nasser, who were killed just several months before during *Operation Spring of Youth* in Beirut, Lebanon.³²³

During the 1990's, a total of four directly linked retaliatory attacks were identified as having definitive connections to Israeli targeting operations conducted during this time. The first was the March, 1992 bombing of the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina which left twenty-nine civilians dead and scores injured.³²⁴ Shortly after the blast, Islamic Jihad in Beirut took responsibility for the attack and stated that it was in response to the Israeli targeting operation which killed Abas al-Musawi in the previous month.³²⁵ The second round of retaliatory attacks which could be conclusively linked to an Israeli targeting operation were a series of three separate suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Ashkelon in February and March 1996 which targeted two busy bus lines and a hitchhiking post for soldiers.³²⁶ A total of forty-four people were killed and scores more injured in what the military wing of Hamas called revenge for the killing of Yahya Ayyash earlier in January of that year.³²⁷

Second Intifada

Of the nineteen targeting operation examined during the Second Intifada, a total of fourteen retaliatory attacks were identified as being directly linked to these operations. As with the operations conducted during the period from 1956-1999, a full breakdown of each case along with its associated retaliatory attacks may be found in Appendix 2. Similar to the time-period from 1956-1999, it is indeed very likely that a number of Palestinian attacks which occurred during the Second Intifada which were not reported in my figures were in fact retaliatory attacks prompted by previously conducted Israeli targeting operations, yet not specifically claimed by any

³²³ Reeve, op. cit., pp. 199-200.

³²⁴ Long, William. *Islamic Jihad Says It Bombed Embassy; Toll 21*. Los Angeles Times, 19 Mar. 1992.

³²⁵ Ibid, Long. See also Pedahzur, op. cit., p. 86.

³²⁶ Chalk, Peter. *Encyclopedia of Terrorism*. Vol. 1. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013. pp. 372-73. See also Schmemmann, Serge. *Israeli Rage Rises as Bomb Kills 19, Imperiling Peace*. The New York Times, 03 Mar. 1996.

³²⁷ Ibid, Chalk. Ibid, Schmemmann.

one terrorist organization. While this may be the case, the fact that at least fourteen reported cases of retaliatory attacks which were explicitly linked to Israeli targeting operations represents an increase of 100% compared to figures for the same indicator during the period from 1956-1999.

During 2001, a total of seven retaliatory attacks were identified as being directly attributed to the Israeli targeting operations analyzed. The first occurred shortly after the targeting of Dr. Thabet Thabet in December, 2000, in which nine Israelis were shot and killed in January 2001 in Tulkarem.³²⁸ Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade commander Raed Karmi, who would later become an Israeli target himself, claimed responsibility for the attacks to avenge the death of Dr. Thabet three weeks earlier.³²⁹ The second retaliatory attack was carried out by a suicide bomber in August who targeted a busy pizzeria in downtown Jerusalem which resulted in the deaths of fifteen civilians. Shortly after, Hamas claimed the attack was to avenge Israel's "assassination" of two senior Hamas leaders, Jamal Mansour and Jamal Demoni, in Nablus the week before.³³⁰ The third round of attacks came shortly thereafter in the same month and were comprised of three separate incidents in response to the targeting of Abu Ali Mustafa. The first of which, claimed by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), came only hours after the attack on Mustafa, in which Palestinian gunmen shot and killed a Jewish settler in the Nablus region on the West Bank.³³¹ The shooting was followed by the assassination of the first high-ranking Israeli politician to be killed during the conflict— Minister of Tourism Rehavem Zeevi, who was shot and killed in a Jerusalem hotel on October 17th.³³² That same day, the third attack followed on Kibbutz Nakhla Oz near the Gaza Strip in which a suicide bomber detonated a bomb vest killing only himself and wounding two Israeli soldiers.³³³ The military wing of the PFLP declared in a press release that the assassination of Zeevi and the attack on the Kibbutz were responses to the

³²⁸ Dellios, Hugh. *Arafat, Peres Set Talks: Announcement Comes amid More Mideast Violence*. 7 Sept. 2001. www.chicagotribune.com

³²⁹ Ibid. See also Wilkinson, Tracy. *Trading Killings. In Mideast, Ambush of Israeli Soldier Follows Killing of Palestinian Militia Leader*. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette 15 Jan. 2002. p. 2.

³³⁰ Whitaker, Brian. *Who Carried out Suicide Bombing? Hamas Member Was Driven to Attack by Mixture of Despair and Determination, Says Family*. The Guardian. 10 Aug. 2001.

³³¹ Philips, Alan. *PLO Founder Killed by Israeli Missile Attack*. Telegraph.co.uk. 28 Aug. 2001.

Brym, Robert and Bader Araj. *Palestinian Suicide Bombing Revisited: A Critique of the Outbidding Thesis*. Political Science Quarterly. Vol. 123, No. 3 (2008) pp. 485-500

³³² Ibid. Brym and Araj, p. 492

³³³ Ibid. Brym and Araj, p. 493

“assassination” of Mustafa, with PFLP activists using loudspeakers to broadcast the same message in the Gaza Strip.³³⁴

The final round of attacks came in December of that year in which Hamas carried out two separate suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Haifa which left twenty-five Israelis dead and scores injured.³³⁵ Hamas’ spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, who would later become an Israeli target himself, defended the bombings as just retaliation for the targeting and killing of Hamas military leader Mahmoud Abu Hanud.³³⁶

During 2002, a total of four retaliatory attacks were identified as being directly linked to Israeli targeting operations. The first round of attacks came shortly after the operation which eliminated Fatah leader Raed Karmi, and involved two separate incidents. The first incident came only hours after the booby-trapped explosive device which killed Karmi exploded when Palestinian gunmen opened fire on Israeli soldiers near Karmi’s hometown of Tulkarem. The incident left one soldier dead and another seriously wounded.³³⁷ A member of the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade later reported that the group carried out the shooting in retaliation for Karmi’s death.³³⁸ The second incident came shortly after when a Palestinian gunman attacked a reception hall in the Israeli town of Hadera which left six people dead and thirty injured. The Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades once again claimed responsibility for the attack and stated that it was revenge for the killing of Fatah member Raed Karmi earlier in the week.³³⁹ The second round of attacks, marked by two separate incidents, came in July and August of that year and were in response to the targeting of Salah Shehadeh— an operation which succeeded in eliminating Shehadeh, but also resulted in the deaths of fourteen civilians.³⁴⁰ The string of retaliatory attacks came in the form of an explosive device detonated in the cafeteria of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem followed by a suicide-bombing on a commuter bus in Northern Galilee.³⁴¹ Hamas claimed responsibility for both incidents, calling it

³³⁴ Ibid. Brym and Araj, p. 493

³³⁵ Lea, David, and Annamarie Rowe. *A Survey of Arab-Israeli Relations 1947-2001*. London: Europa, 2002: p. 254

³³⁶ Ibid. p. 254

³³⁷ Breaking News. *Gunmen Kill Israeli Soldier in Revenge Attack*. BreakingNews.ie. 15 Jan. 2002. See also BBC News. *Seven Killed in Attack in Israel*. BBCNews.com 18 Jan. 2002 and Franklin, Stephen and Michael Martinez. *Arab Militant, Israeli Soldier Die in Violence*. Chicago Tribune, 15 Jan. 2002.

³³⁸ Ibid, Stephen and Martinez

³³⁹ Reeves, Phil. *Bat Mitzvah Massacre in Israel Leaves Seven Dead*. The Independent. 18 Jan. 2002.

³⁴⁰ Byman, op. cit.

³⁴¹ Ibid

“further riposte to the killing of our leader—Sheik Shehadeh,” in a statement to the Beirut television station of the Lebanese Hezbollah.³⁴²

Finally, during 2004, a total of two retaliatory attacks were identified as being directly related to the Israeli targeting operations which were examined during the Second Intifada. Both came in the form of twin suicide bombings in August 2004 aboard commuter buses in the Israeli city of Beersheba in which sixteen people died and more than 100 were wounded.³⁴³ Hamas claimed responsibility for the attacks, calling it retaliation for the “assassinations” of its two leaders, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Dr. Abdel Rantisi, in Gaza several months prior to the attacks.³⁴⁴

Summary

As with the other three indicators examined, the sharp increase in directly linked Palestinian retaliatory attacks during the Second Intifada may be a result of a number of single or combined factors. One salient point which should be pointed out before examining other possible determinants, which also serves as a plausible explanation for the sharp increase, is that the nature of the conflict during the Second Intifada was fundamentally different than that during the period from 1956-1999. Although the first two waves of Palestinian terror occurring during the period from 1956-1999 included horrendous acts of violence, and were carried out as concerted efforts of a wider strategic campaign, these incidents were largely considered acts of terrorism, and occurred primarily outside of Israel’s borders.³⁴⁵ The third wave of Palestinian violence, which marked the beginning of the Second Intifada was, however, fundamentally different than the previous two waves, as Israeli forces found themselves involved in a full-blown insurgency, compared to frequent— yet isolated—

³⁴² Kifner, John. *Bus Bombed in Galilee; Ambushes Add to New Burst of Violence*. The New York Times. 5 Aug. 2002.

³⁴³ Erlanger, Steven. *Twin Blasts Kill 16 in Israel; Hamas Claims Responsibility*. The New York Times. 1 Sept. 2004.

³⁴⁴ Ibid

³⁴⁵ The primary differences can be illustrated in the varying ideologies and objectives of the Palestinian organizations which operated during these two time periods which may have, to some extent, affected the nature (and even the outcomes) of the conflicts. During the period from 1956-1999, the majority of organizations waging terrorist campaigns against Israel— such as the PLO, Fatah, and its various offshoots— were secular-nationalist organizations, drawing largely from Marxist ideology, and concerned first and foremost with the liberation of Palestine and the creation of an independent Palestinian state. During the Second Intifada, however, the organizations waging terrorist and insurgent campaigns against Israel— such as Hamas and its various armed factions— were non-secular, Islamic resistance movements, drawing for the most part from Islamic fundamentalist ideologies, and concerned with the destruction of Israel and the creation of a Palestinian Islamic state. See Hamas Covenant 1988— The Avalon Project.

acts of terrorism.³⁴⁶ Moreover, notes Stahl, external support for Palestinian Islamists increased steadily during the five year period of belligerence, which meant that the Israeli security apparatus was faced with non-state terrorist organizations that were using conventional military equipment and heavy external financial state-support.³⁴⁷ These factors combined present a plausible argument that various Palestinian factions, who were engaged in an insurgent campaign during the Second Intifada, were better equipped to mount retaliatory attacks which were conducted solely within Israel's and the disputed territories' borders.

Another plausible reason for the increase in directly-linked retaliatory attacks during the Second Intifada may be the result of the rise of Palestinian suicide attacks which, according to Bloom, gained increasing support among the Palestinian population since November 2000.³⁴⁸ This is evidenced in the sheer numbers of suicide-bombing attacks conducted by various Palestinian factions during the Second Intifada compared with previous time-periods. Brym and Araj identified twenty suicide-bombings which occurred during the period from 1993-1997, which represents the first known cases of the phenomenon in Israel; a startling contrast to the 158 attacks conducted during the Second Intifada.³⁴⁹

Finally, although certainly not exhaustive, another possible explanation for the rise in directly linked retaliatory attacks during the Second Intifada may be a result of combined grievances stemming from other Israeli targeting operations conducted during the same period which were not examined in this study. Targeting operations during the period from 1956-1999 were conducted relatively infrequently and were previously described as the exception, and not the norm. However, as noted by Kober, during the Second Intifada Israeli targeting operations were carried out in a systematic, continuous, and some may argue wholesale manner, with more than 203 individuals targeted— an unprecedented number relative to previous periods.³⁵⁰ The increase in retaliatory attacks may therefore be a result of an aggregation of grievances due to the unprecedented number of individuals targeted during the Second Intifada.

³⁴⁶ Stahl, op. cit., p. 117

³⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 117

³⁴⁸ Bloom, Mia. *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*. Columbia University Press, 2005 p. 39

³⁴⁹ Brym, Robert J., and Bader Araj. "Suicide Bombing as Strategy and Interaction: The Case of the Second Intifada." *Social Forces* 84.4 (2006): p. 1970

³⁵⁰ Kober, Avi. *Targeted Killing during the Second Intifada: The Quest for Effectiveness*. *Journal of Conflict Studies* 27.1 (2007)

5 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The Second Intifada was a radical turning point in Israeli history. The conflict was the largest and most violent Palestinian uprising in Israeli history and would lead to unprecedented casualties sustained by Israeli and Palestinian forces alike.³⁵¹ New to the conflict was not only the scale of violence but also a heavily armed and organized Palestinian resistance compared to that which characterized previous waves of Palestinian terror. To counter the rise in Palestinian militant violence, Israel would employ a policy tool which it had utilized in previous conflicts, albeit on a drastically different scale, and one which would be marred in controversy and have lasting implications for its future counterterrorism policy.

The purpose of this study was to analyze and assess Israeli targeting operations occurring both before and during the Second Intifada. The Second Intifada was identified as an ideal reference point for examining Israel's historic and present record of targeting operations due to a number of drastic transformations which were introduced to its targeted-killing policy shortly after the outbreak of the conflict in September 2000, which incidentally continue to-date. While Israel has utilized the practice of targeted killing in response to previous security threats, such as the famed *Operation Wrath of God* mission which was carried out in response to the 1972 Munich Massacre, never before has Israel conducted targeting operations in such a systematic, continuous and large scale manner as during the Second Intifada.³⁵² In addition to the scale of operations during the Second Intifada, also new were the methods by which Israel targeted individuals, which resembled more conventional military means as opposed to the shadowy and clandestine methods previously employed. The use of missiles fired from helicopter gunships, heavy ordnance dropped from F-16s, and even advanced announcements of sniper units sent into the occupied territories replaced the small caliber arms and booby-trapped– yet highly controlled– explosive devices previously utilized. Most strikingly perhaps, was the overt nature of targeting that Israel adopted following the outbreak of the Second

³⁵¹ David, Steven. *Fatal Choices: Israel's Policy of Targeted Killing*. The Review of International Affairs. 2003.

³⁵² Kober, Avi. *Targeted Killing during the Second Intifada: The Quest for Effectiveness*. Journal of Conflict Studies 27.1 (2007)

Intifada. Shortly after the eruption of violence, Israel would make history as the first country in the world to announce that the lethal targeting of suspected and known perpetrators of terrorism would become legitimate targets of the State.³⁵³ This announcement was made following a legal decision by top Israeli officials which codified the controversial practice into Israeli law, thus solidifying the practice as a key and readily accessible component of its counterterrorism policy. In light of these changes, a key question presented itself which has not been addressed in previous academic studies: Have Israeli targeting operations been more or less successful following the introduction of these changes? This question shaped the primary objective of this study— to determine if the changes made to Israel’s policy of targeted-killing during the Second Intifada and continue to-date have resulted in more or less successful operations compared to those which were conducted prior to this time period.

Examination of this subject is crucial for a number of reasons; however, two salient points stand above others. First, the coding of this practice into Israeli law signaled a new approach to countering security threats to the state, with targeting operations set to continue for the foreseeable and distant future. As the policy is retained and subsequently utilized, it is vital for policymakers to understand its comparative efficacy. If the present policy is pragmatically justified there is considerable equity in its continued utilization; however, if flawed, then perhaps it is equitable to revert to historic practices. Second, as other states such as the United States adopt similar policies to combat terrorist threats of their own, they will likely draw on the experiences of Israel— which has a vast history of combating terrorist and insurgent threats with this method. Knowing what works, and what does not for that matter, for varying types of conflicts against varying ideological threats may therefore prevent other states from emulating faulty practice.

To answer the research question of this study, a comparative case study was conducted which examined thirty-eight separate cases of Israeli targeting operations occurring both before and during the Second Intifada. Nineteen cases were selected for each time-period and analyzed against a four-pronged model consisting of four separate “indicators” for measuring success. These indicators were meant to measure directly-linked outcomes, both intended and unintended, of conducted targeting

³⁵³ Stahl, Adam. *The Evolution of Israeli Targeted Operations: Consequences of the Thabet Thabet Operation*. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33.2 (2010) p. 124

operations and consisted of: *Elimination of the intended target*; *Adverse political consequences*; *civilian and non-target casualties*; and finally, *directly-linked retaliatory attacks*.

After analyzing each separate case against these four indicators, aggregate statistics were compiled for each of the two time-periods. In an attempt to create a more contextualized approach for this study and prevent sole reliance on one form of data analysis, a number of qualitative factors relevant to specific operations and time-periods were analyzed alongside the quantitative results of the study.

When measuring success against the four indicators chosen for this study, the aggregate results of this research indicated that Israeli targeting operations conducted during the Second Intifada were less successful than those which were conducted during the time-period from 1956-1999. In all but one indicator– *intended targeted eliminated*– Israeli targeting operations during the period from 1956-1999 appeared to be more successful due to the fact that they resulted in fewer adverse political consequences, fewer civilian and non-target casualties, and fewer directly linked retaliatory attacks compared to the time period during the Second Intifada. A number of single and combined factors are likely to have contributed to these results; however, this study identified several salient factors for each indicator which deserves specific attention.

During the Second Intifada, Israeli targeting operations were slightly more precise than those conducted during the period from 1956-1999 and resulted in eighteen of the nineteen targets being successfully eliminated. While not statistically significant, this improvement in precision was likely a result of improved intelligence on the ground combined with the technological methods by which individuals were targeted. The aspect of improved intelligence is not particularly surprising considering that all nineteen of the targeting operations conducted during the Second Intifada were conducted within the disputed territories of Gaza and the West Bank, compared with only two operations conducted within these territories during the period from 1956-1999. Considering that Israel operates a wide network of Arab informers and intelligence assets within these tightknit territories who often live and work alongside individuals deemed to be *high value targets* by Israel, it is likely that Israel was able to obtain more reliable, real-time intelligence during the Second Intifada as opposed to relying on intelligence obtained from “third parties” –as was common practice during missions such as *Operation Wrath of God*– in

distant European and Middle Eastern countries which the operatives may not have been entirely familiar with.³⁵⁴ Improved precision when considering the aspect of technological methods utilized during the Second Intifada is not particularly surprising either. From the operations examined which were conducted during the Second Intifada, it was found that seventy-nine percent of these operations were conducted utilizing methods of aerial assault, which meant that either Hellfire missiles fired from helicopter gunships or heavy ordnance dropped from F-16 fighter jets was utilized. Considering that a Hellfire missile or a one-ton bomb is more likely to ensure complete destruction of its target compared to small-arm pistol fire and booby-trapped explosive devices, which were the preferred weapons of choice during the period from 1956-1999 (which on a number of occasions are reported to have malfunctioned), it is likely that the methods employed during the Second Intifada contributed, albeit slightly, to an increase in precision.³⁵⁵

Contrary to the first indicator, Israeli targeting operations during the Second Intifada were less successful in terms of preventing adverse political consequences resulting from conducted operations. Four incidents of adverse political consequences were identified as occurring as a direct result of Israeli targeting operations during the Second Intifada compared with two incidents during the period from 1956-1999. While a number of single and combined factors were again likely to have contributed to this increase, two salient points explain this rise. First, following the first months of violence which marked the beginning of the Second Intifada, Israel's policy of targeted killing transformed from what was previously a covert policy which was never publically acknowledged to one which was now openly recognized and asserted as legal under Israeli law. This precluded the possibility of plausible deniability which Israel enjoyed during the period from 1956-1999 and effectively paved the way for increased scrutiny from the international community and human rights organizations which oppose the policy. The second

³⁵⁴ These "third party" intelligence providers include the purported French family-run organization known as "Le Group," a non-political and ideologically promiscuous organization reported to have been born out of the French Resistance during World War II which is believed to have traded intelligence and surveillance services for commercial gain.

³⁵⁵ See for example the operations targeting Mahmoud Hamshari and Zaid Muchassi. While both operations succeeded in eliminating their intended targets, various complications were noted. In the case of Hamshari, the explosive device placed in his telephone was reportedly too weak to ensure a timely demise, with Hamshari dying several weeks later in a Paris hospital. In the case of Muchassi, the explosive device placed in his hotel room reportedly did not detonate via its intended radio signal, ultimately forcing the team of operatives to improvise and manually detonate it. For detailed accounts see Jonas, *op. cit.* pp. 144-157 and 187-197 respectively.

point again relates to the methods by which Israel targeted individuals during the Second Intifada. Although slightly more precise in terms of eliminating intended targets, Hellfire missiles fired from helicopter gunships and heavy ordnance dropped from F-16s naturally led to increases in collateral damage in the form of civilian casualties and destruction of property compared to the small-caliber arms and controlled explosive devices which were previously utilized. These new methods, described by some as indiscriminate means of targeting, inevitably led to sharp outcries from the international community as the civilian death toll rose during the Second Intifada.

Similar to the second indicator, Israeli targeting operations during the Second Intifada were less successful in preventing civilian and non-target casualties. A combined total of thirty-six civilian and non-target casualties were associated with targeting operations conducted during the Second Intifada compared to nineteen for the period from 1956-1999. It should, however, be noted that these thirty-six casualties were associated only with the nineteen Israeli targeting operations examined in this study, with the actual number of civilian and non-target casualties significantly higher when considering that Israel conducted around 203 separate targeting operations during this period which successfully eliminated 554 suspected terrorist activists.³⁵⁶ While numbers vary among sources, Baroud notes that an additional 253 bystanders were killed during these operations.³⁵⁷

Two salient points were identified as contributing to such significant increases in civilian and non-target casualties during the Second Intifada. The first concerns the legalization of targeted killing under Israeli law which brought with it a transfer of power to the Israeli Defense Forces. Prior to the Second Intifada, the majority of targeting operations examined were conducted either solely by the Mossad (58%) or joint Mossad/IDF units (16%), with the remaining carried out by the Israeli Defense Forces, and in one instance, Shin Bet— Israel's domestic intelligence agency. However, during the Second Intifada all nineteen targeting operations examined were conducted by various branches of the IDF. As targeted killing became a readily accessible policy tool now legal under Israeli law with responsibility transferred

³⁵⁶ Byman, Daniel. *Do Targeted Killings Work?* Vol. 85. Council on Foreign Relations, 2006. See also Baroud, Ramzy. *The Second Palestinian Intifada: A Chronicle of a People's Struggle*. Ann Arbor, MI; London: Pluto Press, 2006 p. 166

³⁵⁷ Ibid. Baroud, p. 166

largely to the IDF, the IDF had a freer hand to carry out these operations.³⁵⁸ Thus, notes Stahl, the number of targeting operations increased dramatically, as did Palestinian civilian deaths.³⁵⁹ The second point stems once again from Israel's increased utilization of Apache attack helicopters, and in some cases F-16 fighter jets during the Second Intifada compared to the covert and devious methods previously utilized. Although any type of armed conflict will inevitably cause the deaths of innocent victims, Hellfire missiles and one-ton bombs deployed in densely populated residential areas such as Gaza and the West Bank are likely to ensure that these numbers increase exponentially.

Finally, following the same pattern as the previous two indicators, Israeli targeting operations during the Second Intifada proved less successful in terms of preventing directly linked retaliatory attacks. A combined total of thirteen retaliatory attacks were attributed to the examined Israeli targeting operations conducted during the Second Intifada compared to seven reported for the period from 1956-1999. Two primary factors were identified as plausible determinants for this increase. The first concerns the nature of conflict which characterized the Second Intifada. Contrary to the period from 1956-1999, which was largely characterized as a concerted terrorist campaign, the Second Intifada was regarded as a full-scale insurgency which entailed vastly different scales of sustained violence.³⁶⁰ This, coupled with the fact that the various Palestinian factions during the Second Intifada were conducting counter-attacks on their "turf" as opposed to mounting expensive and risky operations in foreign countries was also identified as to why more retaliatory attacks were conducted. Finally, the militant organizations of the Second Intifada enjoyed a significant amount of outside support in the form of funding, training, and equipment compared to previous conflicts which gave them better access to resources for mounting retaliatory strikes.

³⁵⁸ Stahl, *op. cit.* p. 128

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 128

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 117

5.2 Final Conclusions

Shortly after the eruption of violence which marked the beginning of the Second Intifada, a series of dramatic transformations were introduced to Israel's policy of targeting individuals suspected and known to pose security threats to the state. These transformations prompted the primary research question of this study: *Have Israeli targeting operations been more or less successful following the changes made to its targeted policy during the Second Intifada?*

The results of this study concluded that, although slightly more precise in terms of eliminating intended targets, Israeli targeting operations during the Second Intifada resulted in increased adverse political consequences; a sharp increase in civilian and non-target casualties; and an increase in directly linked retaliatory attacks. Based on these findings, this study will advance the argument that Israeli targeting operations during the Second Intifada were less successful than those which were conducted during the period from 1956-1999. Furthermore, this study will advance the argument that the changes introduced to its targeting policy during the Second Intifada have contributed to this decrease in success. As such, this analysis presents a sobering question: Should Israel scrap its current targeting policy and revert to that which it utilized in past, pre-Second Intifada operations? This question perhaps provides the premise for a separate study; however, the short answer is that it is complicated to say. The nature of the security threats which prompted these targeting operations in the first place and the contexts which they developed within are intrinsically different from one another. This makes generalizing across contexts a particularly questionable exercise.³⁶¹ However, several interconnected and recurring themes appear to contribute to this decrease in success for operations conducted during the Second Intifada which appear consistent with several other scholars' assessments.

The first theme concerns the scale of operations which were conducted by Israel during the Second Intifada. Never before have so many operations been conducted in such a large-scale, systematic and continuous manner as during the Second Intifada.³⁶² The effects of repeated use of the practice, notes Dear, are profoundly counterproductive and are subject to a law of diminishing returns in which each

³⁶¹ Carvin for example cautions against generalizing across historical examples, and notes that even if they take place in the same geographical area, generalizing becomes a questionable exercise.

³⁶² Kober, *op. cit.*

subsequent operation has less effect than the last.³⁶³ Furthermore, repeated utilization forces [insurgent] groups to undergo rapid evolutions to survive, which leads to groups becoming more radical, less inclined to negotiate, and more violent.³⁶⁴

The second theme concerns the open nature with which individuals were targeted during the Second Intifada. While few oppose the increased transparency which followed the announcement of an overt targeting policy, Melman makes an interesting psychological observation and maintains that “the mystery that surrounded previous assassinations cast fear into the hearts of the enemy by their very rarity, and sophistication. That mystery dissipates the moment the act becomes a usual one.”³⁶⁵

The final theme concerns the methods by which individuals were targeted during the Second Intifada which resembled more conventional military means compared to the covert, and surreptitious manners previously employed.³⁶⁶ While this study will remain true to its commitment to refrain from making claims of causality, there appears to be an almost indisputable link between increased civilian and non-target casualties and the use of Apache helicopters and F-16 fighter jets during the Second Intifada, and is indeed likely to have served as a catalyst for increased radicalization and retaliatory attacks.

As Israel continues to grapple with the unique security threats posed by various countries, territories, and organizations which challenge its very existence, a prudent speculation would hold that Israel’s policy of targeted-killing will continue unabated as long as these threats remain present. The crucial question now is how Israel will choose to conduct future operations to counter these threats, as its decision will likely determine the overall success of these operations. The methods it utilizes to counter these threats will largely depend on the nature and context of the conflict at hand; however, as this study as shown, there may be considerable equity in looking to past successes to counter future threats.

³⁶³ Dear, Keith Patrick. *Beheading the Hydra? Does Killing Terrorist or Insurgent Leaders Work?* Defence Studies, 13.3 (2013): p. 298

³⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 311

³⁶⁵ Melman, Yossi. *Targeted Killings - a Retro Fashion Very Much in Vogue*. Haaretz.com. Haaretz, 24 Mar. 2004.

³⁶⁶ Stahl, op. cit. p. 127

5.3 Contributions and Proposed Further Research

The main contribution of this research came in the form of proposing an innovative method of analysis for measuring success within counterterrorism efforts which utilized “indicators” to quantify directly-linked outcomes resulting from an event, which were then evaluated against qualitative factors relevant to the context and nature of that event. This research approach attempted to embody what Carvin referred to as a “contextualized approach” in her 2012 study.³⁶⁷ Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge, this research constituted the first attempt to conduct a comparative case study which sought to determine if Israeli targeting operations conducted during the Second Intifada were more successful than those conducted prior to this time period.

While these may indeed be viewed as minor contributions to the study of targeted killing as a counterterrorism policy tool, much work remains. As acknowledged in the *Limitations* section, it was predicted that this study would raise more questions than it answered and, true to my word, this proved to be the case. This is a double edged sword in that it leaves several pressing questions momentarily unanswered, yet paves the way for future research. While many questions arose during this study which are deserving of academic scholarship, several salient topics were identified as especially pragmatic endeavors for future research.

In general, despite the abundance of research dedicated to examining targeted-killings as a counterterrorism policy tool and the broader study of decapitation theory, there appears to a lack of contextualized research focusing on specific areas of conflict during a specific time period. Research which aims to examine numerous, unrelated conflicts; various security threats, and multiple ideological drivers across expansive time-periods are valuable for gaining broad insight as to the relative efficacy of the practice, yet falls short of delivering meaningful and context-oriented deductions. With this in mind, it is essential that future scholarship dedicated to the study of targeted-killing place an increased focus on measuring the relative efficacy of the practice within individual conflicts, with the goal of determining if the practice has a more or less positive effect on deterring terrorist and/or insurgent activity within movements with various ideological and statehood ambitions.

³⁶⁷ Carvin, Stephanie. *The Trouble with Targeted Killing*. Security Studies 21.3 (2012)

Furthermore, considering the transformations which characterized the changing nature of Israel's targeted killing policy during the Second Intifada and the results of this study, future scholarship dedicated to the Israeli experience would benefit by examining if success rates increase or decrease depending on the level of operational independence enjoyed by the targeting organization. This is especially interesting considering that the vast majority of operations conducted prior to the Second Intifada—primarily during the *Operation Wrath of God* mission—were conducted almost entirely by the Mossad and with preposterous amounts of operational independence vested in the covert action teams tasked with carrying out the operation. However, this changed dramatically following Israel's announcement of an overt policy of targeting during the Second Intifada which saw the responsibility transferred to the IDF, which ensured that future operations would enjoy the oversight of Israel's largest bureaucracy.

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Appendices

Appendix 1– Israeli Targeting Operations 1956-1999

Target	Date	Location	Affiliation	Method	Targeting Organization	Intended Target Eliminated	Adverse Political Consequences	Civilian/Non-target Casualties	Retaliatory Attacks
Mustafa Ha'az	July 13, 1956	Gaza Strip	Egyptian Intelligence	Explosive Device	IDF	1	0	0	0
Salah Mustafa	July 14, 1956	Amman, Jordan	Egyptian Intelligence	Explosive Device	IDF	1	0	0	0
Ghassan Kanafani	July 8, 1972	Beirut, Lebanon	PFLP	Explosive Device	Mossad	1	0	1	0
Abdel Wael Zwaiter	October 16, 1972	Rome, Italy	PLO	Small Arms	Mossad	1	0	0	1
Mahmoud Hamshani	December 8, 1972	Paris, France	PLO	Explosive Device	Mossad	1	0	0	0
Hussain al-Bashir	January 24, 1973	Nicosia, Cyprus	Faah	Explosive Device	Mossad	1	0	0	0
Basil Al-Kubaisi	April 6, 1973	Paris, France	PFLP	Small Arms	Mossad	1	0	0	0
Kamal Adwan	April 9, 1973	Beirut, Lebanon	Black September	Small Arms	IDF, Mossad	1	0	4	1
Muhammad Youssef Najjar	April 9, 1973	Beirut, Lebanon	Black September	Small Arms	IDF, Mossad	1	0	1	0
Kamal Nasser	April 9, 1973	Beirut, Lebanon	PLO	Small Arms	IDF, Mossad	1	0	0	0
Zaid Mchasi	April 11, 1973	Athens, Greece	Black September	Explosive Device	Mossad	1	0	1	0
Mohammed Boudia	June 28, 1973	Paris, France	PLO	Explosive Device	Mossad	1	0	0	1
Ahmed Bouchiki (mistaken for Ali Hassan Salameh)	July 21, 1973	Lillehammer, Norway	None	Small Arms	Mossad	0	1	1	0
Ali Hassan Salameh	January 22, 1979	Beirut, Lebanon	Black September	Explosive Device	Mossad	1	0	7	0
Khalil El-Wazir (Abu Jihad)	April 16, 1988	Tunis, Tunisia	Faah, PLO	Small Arms	IDF	1	0	2	0
Abbas al-Musawi	February 16, 1992	Lebanon, Beirut	Hezbollah	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	1	0	2	1
Fathi Shaqaqi	October 26, 1995	Sterna, Malta	Islamic Jihad	Small Arms	Mossad	1	0	0	0
Yahya Ayyash	January 6, 1996	Gaza Strip	Hamas	Explosive Device	Shim Bet	1	0	0	3
Khaled Mashal	September 25, 1997	Amman, Jordan	Hamas	Other	Mossad	0	1	0	0

Appendix 2– Israeli Targeting Operations during the Second Intifada (2000-2005)

Target	Date	Location	Affiliation	Method	Targeting Organization	Period	Intended Target Eliminated	Adverse Political Consequences	Civilian/Non-target Casualties	Directly Linked Retaliatory Attacks
Hussein Mohammed Abayat	November 9, 2000	West Bank	Fatah	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	0	2	0
Thabet Ahmad Thabet	December 31, 2000	West Bank	Fatah	Small Arms	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	1	0	1
Iyad Mahmoud Nayer Hardan	April 5, 2001	West Bank	PIJ	Explosive Device	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	0	0	0
Omar Sadeh	July 17, 2001	West Bank	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	0	2	0
Jamal Mansour	July 31, 2001	West Bank	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	0	2	0.5
Jamal Salim Damuni	July 31, 2001	West Bank	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	0	3	0.5
Adnan Al-Ghoul	August 22, 2001	Gaza	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	2000 - 2004	0	0	1	0
Abu Ali Mustafa a-Zhri	August 27, 2001	West Bank	PFLP	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	0	0	3
Mahmoud Abu Hamud	November 23, 2001	West Bank	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	0	2	2
Raed Muhammad Raif Karimi	January 14, 2002	West Bank	Fatah	Explosive Device	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	1	0	2
Salah Mustafa Shehadeh	July 22, 2002	Gaza	Hamas	F-16	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	1	14	2
Ibrahim Maqadmeh	March 8, 2003	Gaza	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	0	1	0
Abdalla Abd al-Qader al Qawasmeih	June 21, 2003	West Bank	Hamas	Small Arms	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	0	0	0
Ismael Abu Shanab	August 21, 2003	Gaza	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	0	1	0
Sheikh Ahmed Ismael Hassan Yassin	March 22, 2004	Gaza	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	1	6	1
Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi	April 17, 2004	Gaza	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	0	2	1
Wael Talib Muhammad Nassar	May 30, 2004	Gaza	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	0	0	0
Bashir Khalil Dibash	October 5, 2004	Gaza	PIJ	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	0	0	0
Adnan Al-Ghoul	October 21, 2004	Gaza	Hamas	Helicopter Missile Fire	IDF	2000 - 2004	1	0	0	0

Original Research Proposal

Topic: Israeli Defense Force Targeted Killings before and after the Second Intifada.

Thesis: The targeting of suspected and known terrorist leaders and high value targets (HVTs) as part of an overall counterterror and counterinsurgency strategy is not a new phenomenon in Israel. Indeed, the state of Israel has utilized targeted killings, hereinafter referred to as precision strikes, as a means to reduce the terrorist threat and eliminate would be aggressors to the State in large part since the State's inception in 1948. However, much has changed over the years. Following far-reaching changes made to Israel's policy of precision strikes during and after the Second Intifada, it is necessary to examine if these policy changes have resulted in an increase or decrease in success in terms of reducing the terrorist threat to Israel.

1. Introduction: Precision strikes, although controversial on both moral and legal grounds, have long been a tool of government statecraft used to eliminate suspected and know terrorist leaders and high value targets (HVTs) in an attempt to preempt and prevent future terrorist attacks and disrupt the activities of terrorist organizations. Precision strike as a counterterrorism strategy falls within the broader category of leadership decapitation theory, which suggests that terrorist organizations are prone to dissolution when individuals holding positions of leadership, or skills which are not readily transferable to their successors (such as a skilled bomb maker), are removed.

The theoretical framework of this thesis will begin by examining leadership decapitation theory in its broader context within the field of counterterrorism studies. The study of Israeli decapitation theory will then be expanded upon and conclude with an examination of Israel's past and present policy of precision strike.

2. History: Although never overtly admitting to utilizing precision strikes as a measure of its counterterrorism policy prior to the Second Intifada, Israel has a long history of actively targeting terrorist leaders and HVTs which it deems a threat to its security. One of the most well-known examples of this is Operation Wrath of God, in which several teams of Israeli intelligence officers with varying degrees of operational autonomy were dispatched to Europe and Lebanon to eliminate terrorist targets suspected and known to have had a hand in planning and executing the 1972 Munich Olympic massacre in which 11 Israeli hostages were kidnapped and subsequently murdered. Further instances in the 1980s and 1990s include the targeting of several high ranking political and military leaders with the PLO, Hezbollah and Hamas. Fast-forward to the twenty first century and precision strikes remain a key element of Israeli counterterrorism policy; however, during the Second Intifada a number of key changes to its policy were implemented and will serve as the problem discussion of this thesis.
3. Problems: Examining Israeli precision strike policy is important for three primary reasons:
 - a. During the Second Intifada, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) announced the adoption of an overt precision strike policy to eliminate targets which were

deemed impossible to capture for arrest and trial. This move was contrary to the previous policy of covert precision strikes used only under exceptional circumstances, which were never officially confirmed or denied by Israeli policy makers. The overt recognition of such a policy meant that precision strikes would now be codified into law and serve as a cornerstone for targeting individuals deemed to pose a security threat to the state of Israel.

- b. Prior to the Second Intifada, precision strikes carried out by the IDF closely resembled the methods employed by the terrorists they sought to target (i.e. small caliber arms and controlled explosive devices were used to eliminate targets). However, during the Second Intifada a transition to more overt means of targeting took place which saw a sharp increase in the utilization of heavy explosives deployed by fighter jets, helicopter gunships and unmanned aerial vehicles, which were often deployed in densely populated urban areas, thus increasing the potential for collateral damage.
 - c. Prior to the Second Intifada, precision strikes primarily targeted high ranking military and political officials, terrorist activists ranking high in their respective organizations, or individuals who possessed a non-transferable skillset (i.e. nuclear scientists, skilled bomb makers etc.). However, during the Second Intifada and continuing to-date, a trend of targeting mid-ranking terrorist activists has been apparent which requires consistently removing individuals as they step up to fill positions of leadership once held by their predecessors.
4. Objective: Using a longitudinal case study as a research approach, the aim of this thesis is to analyze and assess Israel's policy of precision strike both before and after the Second Intifada in an attempt to determine if changes made to the policy during the Second Intifada have resulted in a more successful counterterrorism campaign in terms of removing top leadership, reducing retaliatory strikes, and avoiding civilian casualties in the form of collateral damage. The exact number of cases to be examined, as well as the method of analysis to determine the success of an operation, will be discussed and agreed upon with Prof. Bureš.