



The Albatross of Decisive Victory: War and Policy Between Egypt and Israel in the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli Wars (Contributions in Military Studies)

George W. Gawrych

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In 1967, the Israeli Defense Forces defeated the combined armies of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria in a mere six days. This remarkable military accomplishment would, however, have the ultimate effect of creating an albatross around the neck of the Israeli Army, as Israelis would now expect the next conventional war with the Arabs to achieve similar results: a quick, decisive victory with relatively few casualties. Although Egyptian forces were militarily inferior to those of Israel, President Anwar Sadat developed a successful limited war strategy designed to exploit this unrealistic expectation.

Rather than aiming to achieve a military victory or to seize strategic terrain, Sadat merely sought to break a diplomatic stalemate with a major military operation designed to soften Israeli intransigence toward negotiations and to force a change in U.S. foreign policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. In support of these political aims, the Egyptian Armed Forces set out to discredit the Israeli Army's prowess by inflicting heavy casualties in a limited war. Sadat's success in regaining the entire Sinai without another armed struggle holds an important lesson for the United States. After its dramatic victory in Desert Storm, American armed forces feel compelled to win the next conventional war quickly, decisively, and with relatively few casualties, much like the challenge that faced Israel after the 1967 war.



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