The Four-Day War
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Napoleon's aphorism that "in war the moral is to the material as three to one" was never more fully proved than in the amazing four-day war in the Middle East, which neared its end yesterday with Egypt's and Syria's acceptance of a cease-fire.

An offensive spirit, a will to fight, a high morale and good leadership characterized the Israeli Army that overran its foes in record time, and shook the Middle East's political structure to its foundations.

The Israeli brand of "blitzkrieg" or lightning war was built around air power and armor and motorized and mechanized forces. But in their order of battle the Arabs counted a greater number of tanks and planes, and technologically these were equal or superior to the Israeli equipment. What was lacking on the Arab side were soldiers of equal heart and spirit, men trained as masters of their technology and, above all, leaders who led.

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Israel virtually decided the issue—as the Israeli chief of air staff said—in the first three hours with its own Middle East version of Pearl Harbor. Israeli aircraft attacked many widely separated Egyptian, Jordanian and Syrian fields by surprise, destroying most of the enemy's combat aircraft on the ground. But the surprise factor, though important, was probably less so than the ineffectiveness of the Arab airmen—not so much as pilots, but as combat forces.

The air superiority initially won gave Israel a tremendous advantage the Arabs were never able to overcome. Continuous air attacks broke the back of even prepared ground defenses. The Egyptian forces fight well from fortified or prepared positions and operate their weapons, as Moshe Dayan recalled in his book about the 1956 campaign, "automatically, accurately and efficiently"; but the terrain in Sinai makes mobile forces essential. Fixed fortifications are useful only as pivots or anchors for mobile maneuvering forces.

The Arabs have never shown the advanced training or technology necessary to conduct a mechanized war of maneuver—a war which is decided by the combined action of all arms, and particularly by close cooperation of air and armored forces. Some Egyptian units apparently fought bravely, but briefly and not well, and their armored counterattacks could never really make headway against Israeli domination of the skies.

On the Jordanian front, the rapid Israeli mobilization probably gave Tel Aviv an actual advantage in numbers. In any case, the much vaunted Arab Legion of the days of British rule was in no way what it used to be.

In effect, and in capsule, the four-day war in the Middle East was decided by a modern army—product of a country advanced in comparison with its neighbors—an army with excellent *esprit* and high leadership, which was pitted in a type of warfare it knew and over terrain ideally suited to its mechanization against forces essentially incapable of fighting modern, mobile war.

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