

ISRAEL'S MILITARY DOCTRINE

EHUD EILAM

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Preface

Since 1948, when Israel was established, its national security policy had to do mostly with Israel's conflict with Arab states.¹ In the period of 1948–1982 the IDF confronted Arab militaries, mostly those of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, in a series of high-intensity wars. Israel, since 1948, had to deal also with guerrillas and terror. This challenge took center stage beginning in the early 1980s.

In recent decades, Israel confronted hybrid forces: Hezbollah in 2006² and Hamas, in 2008–2009 and in 2014.³ Israel also dealt with prolonged low-intensity wars in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1987–1993 and in 2000–2005.⁴ It showed how Israel's top security challenge changed from running a high-intensity war—the last one was in 1982—to confronting nonstate organizations.

This book focuses on Arab nonstate organizations including PLO, Hamas, and Hezbollah, by comparing the wars between them and Israel in 1982, 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 to the high-intensity wars between Israel and Arab states in 1948–1949, 1956, 1967, and 1973. The book examines several major issues, mostly in regard to the Israeli military doctrine.

Until the 1990s Israel's greatest concern was handling a massive offensive that could have been launched by one Arab state or more. In the worst case Arab forces might have managed to defeat the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) and to annihilate Israel. In the confrontations against the Palestinians or Hezbollah since 1982 there was not such a risk to Israel since its foes, with all their hybrid capabilities, were relatively weak.

For Israel, gaining a decisive victory was a tall order because its foes were either too big, such as Egypt, or too evasive, like Hezbollah and Hamas. Israel seized all of Sinai in 1967 but it was not enough to coerce Egypt to recognize Israel's right to exist. Israel could have conquered a large part of Lebanon in 2006 and the Gaza Strip in 2008–2009 and in 2014 but its rivals there would have continued to fight. Military and political constraints would have forced Israel to withdraw from there sooner or later. Therefore Israel had to begin to be satisfied with limited achievements in fighting hybrid foes and recognize that it is very difficult to destroy them.

The fight on Sinai in 1967–1973—two high-intensity wars (1967 and 1973) and one attrition war (1967–1970)—was very costly for Egypt. This was a major factor in convincing Egypt that defeating Israel is so hard, if not impossible, that it is better to have peace with it. Hezbollah and

Hamas, in spite of the price they paid in confronting Israel, did not yet reach the same conclusion.

The Israeli military doctrine is based on striving for a quick victory by launching a massive offensive deep into Arab territory. The IDF buildup relies on land and air forces with a relatively small navy. The majority of the troops come from the reserves.⁵ This doctrine and build up had to be adjusted as part of Israel's conflict with its hybrid foes. This is the main subject of the book: the transition the IDF had to make from running high-intensity wars to confronting hybrid forces.

The book deals with military aspects solely and not with political, social, economic, cultural, moral, and legal matters. It focuses on Arab hybrid forces, mostly Hamas and Hezbollah, that combine the ability to conduct guerrilla and terror attacks, setting up ambushes with conventional capabilities and having all kinds of rockets and missiles. Yet unlike the IDF they don't have armor or an air force, so they are much more a guerrilla force than a modern military.

The book relies on sources such as books and articles including "IDF Strategy," a document that was released to the public on 13 August 2015. The text includes hundreds of endnotes supporting my ideas. The information and references are always incorporated into the text itself, in a way that does not disrupt the flow of reading. The only purpose of the endnote is to reveal the details of the source.

I hold an MA and a PhD in my field of expertise: Israel's national strategy and military doctrine. I have been involved with research into those subjects for more than twenty years. I worked for a few years as a researcher in my field for Israel's Ministry of Defense, as a private contractor. This book is a completely personal project and is not a part of any research I did for the Israeli Ministry of Defense. This research expresses my personal views and it does not necessarily represent the opinions of others. I have worked on this research in Israel and also where I now reside, in the United States. For readers with questions or comments about the book, please write to Ehud Eilam at: Ehudei2014@gmail.com.

NOTES

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3. Raphael S. Cohen, David E. Johnson, David E. Thaler, Brenna Allen, Elizabeth M. Bartels, James Cahill, Shira Efron, *From Cast Lead to Protective Edge: Lessons from Israel's Wars in Gaza* (Rand, 2017) https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1888.html.

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Introduction

The book starts by explaining Israel's national security policy while examining its neighbors. Then the book focuses on the IDF's doctrine and buildup, mostly by looking into the air and the ground corps. Other issues have to do with offense and defense, infrastructure and manpower.

Chapter 1 is on the relations between Israel, Arabs, and Iran. Egypt and Jordan keep their peace treaty with Israel. It is a cold peace, but at least there is security cooperation between Israel and those two Arab states. The PA (Palestinian Authority) struggles to survive, without having peace talks with Israel. Iraq and particularly Syria are entangled in a fierce internal fight. Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas are Israel's biggest enemies.

Chapter 2 is on Israel's national security policy, such as how Israel deals with the lack of strategic depth, economic constraints, and the balance of power that is clearly in favor of Arab states. The United States is Israel's patron; those relations were tested during several crises and wars.

Chapter 3 is on the main principles of the IDF's doctrine and the buildup, which had to be adjusted to confront hybrid forces. The IDF has to deter its foes by getting ready for combat and if necessary to launch a preventive war or a preemptive strike. During the offensive the IDF combines strategy and firepower. Its operational goals are seizing territory and destroying Arab forces. The IDF trains its troops to fight in different terrains such as in rugged areas in Lebanon. The IDF also has to make sure that its corps and weapons systems are fit to fight hybrid forces.

Chapter 4 is on the rockets that are in the hands of Hezbollah and Hamas. For Israel the rockets are the new threat in the skies, which in a way replaces the challenge that was posed by Arab air forces. The IAF (Israeli Air Force) has to destroy rockets, in the air, with the Iron Dome, and on the ground, which is compared with how the IAF attacked Arab airfields during high-intensity wars.

Chapter 5 is on how IAF provides close air support, including in urban areas. The IAF also conducts strategic bombardment, gathers intelligence, and delivers supplies and troops.

Chapter 6 is on the Israeli ground forces. The infantry takes center stage due to its importance in the fight against hybrid forces. The infantry requires better APC (armored personal vehicles) than its old M-113,

which is still in service. The armor supports the infantry and so do the artillery and the logistical corps.

Chapter 7 is on operational factors such as airborne attacks that allow the IDF to land almost anywhere, as it did during many raids. The Israeli navy guards the coast from sea incursions and also assists the ground units.

Chapter 8 is on how the IDF relies on offense by using surprise and force concentration in one front. The IDF can penetrate into Arab territory while moving on a wide front.

Chapter 9 is on defense in depth. The IDF preferred to rely on forward defense in order to prevent the foe from gaining any achievement, which often was not feasible. In some cases the IDF implemented defense in depth, including during withdrawals from Arab territories.

Chapter 10 is on infrastructure, such as posts, which serves to protect Israeli troops. The IDF gained experience in building all kinds of fortifications, including as part of confronting hybrid forces.

Chapter 11 is on the manpower. Israeli soldiers are known for their ability to adjust to changing circumstances. The motivation of those troops was tested in tough situations, like when there was ongoing friction with the Arab population, as part of a fight against hybrid forces.

List of Abbreviations

APC: Armor Personal Carrier
ASL: Army of South Lebanon
IAF: Israeli Air Force
IDF: Israel Defense Forces
IED: Improvised explosive device
IRGC: Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
MB: Muslim Brotherhood
PA: Palestinian Authority
PLO: Palestine Liberation Organization
UAV: Unmanned air vehicle

ONE

Israel, Arabs, and Iran

Arab states are no longer a substantial threat to Israel. Egypt still has the strongest Arab military, but as long as Egypt does not change its policy, the 1979 peace treaty between the two states will remain. Jordan too has peace with Israel, although, as with Egypt, this peace has been quite cold. The most positive factor is the security cooperation between Israel and both Jordan and Egypt. Syria is Israel's enemy, but the former lost most of its military might following the Syrian civil war. Israel's main foes are Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas, which continue to build up their strength.

SYRIA

Syria, under the leadership of Hafez al Assad (1970–2000) was a major player in the region.¹ For Syria its conflict with Israel served both internal reasons, like suppressing the opposition at home by calling to support the regime against Israel, and external reasons, such as improving Syria's position in the Arab world. Syria also sought to gain back the Golan Heights, which Israel seized in the 1967 war.

Since 1976 Hafez al Assad had refused to fight Israel because such a war might have undermined his regime.² Assad did strive to have "strategic parity" with Israel. Yet Assad was aware of the Israeli military might and that Israeli troops in the Golan Heights were about 65 kilometers south of Damascus, which served as deterrence but also as a reason for Assad to recapture the Golan Heights. The meltdown of Syria's patron, the Soviet Union, in 1991 was a substantial blow to Assad's regional ambitions, including in regard to Israel.

Iraq served as a Syrian ally against Israel, mostly in the 1973 war. At the same time Syria and Iraq were rivals, as part of the struggle to reach hegemony in the Arab world. The alliance between Iran and Assad,

which goes back to the early 1980s, when Iraq and Iran fought each other, increased the tension between Iran and Syria at the time. The peak was in the 1991 war, when Syria joined not only Arab states but Western ones as well, against Iraq. The conquest of Iraq in 2003 and its huge internal problems ever since meant it will not threaten Syria but also that Iraq could not assist Syria in confronting Israel.

There were peace talks between Israel and Syria in the 1990s, which failed. In 2000 Bashar al Assad came into power. He had peace talks with Israel, indirect ones, in 2008, which ended following the war between Israel and Hamas in 2008–2009.³ Hamas was a Syrian ally, yet Assad did not intervene, let alone open a second front against Israel. Later on there could have been a war between Israel and Syria,⁴ but it did not occur.

In 2011 the Syrian civil war started. Hamas was supposed to be Assad's ally. Yet Hamas, even if the group ignored Assad's lack of support when Hamas confronted Israel in 2008–2009, decided it was too risky to join Assad against his rivals. The conflict in Syria had several dimensions. One of the most major ones was the struggle between Sunnis, those inside Syria and Arab states that helped them, and Shiites, Assad and his Iranian allies. Hamas, as a Sunni group, was needed since this would have allowed Assad to show that some Sunnis, from outside Syria, back Assad. For the latter, Hamas was more vital politically since militarily Hamas was not that strong and it required all its men in case there is another confrontation with Israel, which indeed happened in 2014. Hamas was also isolated in the Gaza Strip and had difficulties sending fighters to Syria.

Losing Hamas as a partner was not Assad's biggest trouble. Assad's survival depended on his armed forces, which were considered to be quite a formidable force, yet the latter was worn down during the civil war due to casualties and desertions. The political, military, and financial assistance of Iran, Hezbollah, and Russia not only saved Assad from defeat but by early 2018 it was seemed that Assad is winning. Yet Syria is almost a failed state. Assad's economy is in a very bad shape and his forces are still quite weak. They were not able to restore the strength they had prior to the war due to massive loss of troops and weapons systems. Assad's military, the main challenge to the IDF since the mid-1980s, posed in recent years quite a minor threat to Israel.

Assad argued on December 8, 2016, that Israel is still a foe since it holds the Golan Heights.⁵ Yet Assad did not want to fight Israel, knowing that his forces were no match for the IDF. Furthermore Assad was busier in getting back other areas around Syria. After all, the size of Syria is 185,000 square kilometers, while the Golan Heights is only 1,200 square kilometers, quite tiny compared with the rest of that country.

In May 2016, in south Syria, near the border with Israel, the best-known armed groups that might have turned against Israel were "Liwa Shuhada al-Yarmouk (the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade, LSY), Harakat al-

Muthanna al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Muthanna Movement, HMI), Syrian al-Qa'ida affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra, and Jama'at Bayt al-Maqdis al-Islamiyya (Islamic Bayt al-Maqdis Group-JBMI).” Those outfits posed a low risk to Israel since they preferred to fight each other.⁶ Mohammed Al-loush, the political leader of Syria's Army of Islam, claimed in late September 2016 that Syrian rebels don't want to fight with Israel.⁷ Even if they had confronted Israel they were mostly lightly armed and therefore militarily they were completely inferior. At most, those groups could have conducted tiny raids on Israeli sites, mostly the civilian ones.

There were reports that some of those groups on the border actually collaborated with Israel and received aid from it.⁸ However Israel was not about to repeat its attempt from 1982, when Israel strove to establish a pro-Israeli regime in Lebanon, by collaborating with Bachir Gemayel, a leader of a powerful militia of the Christians of Lebanon. Gemayel was assassinated a few months after the IDF penetrated Lebanon. It was a bitter lesson for Israel not to use the IDF to determine who would be the head of an Arab country.

Since 2011 the IDF opened fire, in a very selective way, at Assad's military positions on the border. It followed fire into Israel from the Syrian side that usually happened by mistake, during battles in that torn country. Israel has also launched almost 100 air strikes inside Syria since 2012, aimed at stopping the delivery of advanced weapons to Hezbollah.⁹ On March 17, 2017, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu argued that “when we identify attempts to transfer advanced weapons to Hezbollah and we have intelligence and it is operationally feasible, we act to prevent it. . . . We are fully determined and the evidence of that it that we are acting. Everybody must take that into account—everybody.”¹⁰

By July 2017 Israel had given medical aid to more than 3,000 Syrians¹¹ who crossed the border, with Israel's permission. It was humanitarian aid, which showed that Israel helps, in a symbolic way, considering the hundreds of thousands of Syrian who were wounded. Yet treating so many wounded should have been part of a vast international effort, including trying to end the war.

IRAN AND HEZBOLLAH

The sharp decline of Israel's enemies, Syria and Iraq, while the peace between Israel and both Egypt and Jordan remain, left basically only one state, and not an Arab one, as Israel's main foe, Iran. The latter, which had quite congenial relations with Israel until the late 1970s, has wished since then to destroy its former partner. Iran copied the Arab method of using its conflict with Israel in order to gain influence, as part of its desire to reach hegemony in the region. Iran also has been supporting guerrilla and terror groups that assaulted Israel. Iran prefers that to confronting

Israel directly. There was never a high-intensity war between the two states since there is more than 1,000 kilometers between them, a fact that helps Iran to avoid such a confrontation. In this sense Iran learned from the era of high-intensity wars between Israel and the Arabs that it is safer not to challenge Israel in the conventional battlefield. Iran called again and again for the destruction of Israel and used the distance between them as an excuse why Iran does not attack Israel. Arab states near Israel, like Egypt, obviously could not have done the same, when the two states were rivals.

Hezbollah has been an Iranian proxy, based in Lebanon. Hezbollah proved its combat capability at the 2006 war. Since then this group had invested heavily, with massive Iranian aid, in upgrading its fire base in Lebanon, directed at Israel. Since Israel left Lebanon in 2000, Hezbollah has not started a war. In 2000–2006 there was some friction between Israel and Hezbollah, but they managed to contain it.

“Strategic stability between Israel and Hezbollah prevails because of the mutual understanding that this remains the best outcome of their competition. However, this principle only works as long as this competition is not altered by external factors.”¹² In July 2006 Hezbollah captured two Israeli troops, a provocation that escalated quickly into a war, which could have been prevented if both sides were more careful. Since 2006 Hezbollah and Israel have been cautious enough to keep the border between them almost completely quiet. They both deterred each other and also each one had other security priorities. Israel was busy handling Hamas, while Hezbollah got involved in the Syrian civil war.

Hezbollah has been depending on Iran for economic, political, and military support, which gives Iran an enormous leverage. Hezbollah has no other patron it could have approached. Iran has other protégés, although Hezbollah has been the most powerful one. Hezbollah has been especially important because of its position in Lebanon. Hezbollah has a strong grip there, including having members in the government, but it could still avoid taking official responsibility like a state must do. This is a significant advantage. Hezbollah has also been located next to Israel, which allows the group to attack Israel if it serves an Iranian interest, for example if Israel bombs Iran’s nuclear sites. As long as Iran does not try to produce a nuclear weapon, Israel avoids attacking it. Meanwhile Iran wishes that Hezbollah does not risk all the huge investment Iran made in it. Nevertheless, at any moment, such as because of an incident in the north of Israel that got out of control, there could have been an escalation due to miscalculations by one or both sides that would have ignited a confrontation.

Hamas and Hezbollah don’t accept Israel’s right to exist. Those groups claim that Israel holds their territory. Yet Hezbollah demands to receive a tiny area, near the Israeli border with Lebanon, while Hamas dreams of controlling all the land that is now the state of Israel. Hezbol-

lah and Hamas are also Iranian protégés. Yet Hezbollah agreed to fight for Assad, as Iran wanted it to do, which cost Hezbollah dearly both in taking major casualties and in absorbing heavy criticism in the Arab world, including in Lebanon, for helping Assad kill Sunni civilians. Hamas dared to defy Iran by not joining Iran in backing Assad. Israel might have preferred that Hamas would have been occupied in Syria since then the group might have not focused on Israel. It could also be argued that if Hamas had stayed an Iranian protégé than maybe Iran would have restrained Hamas, as Iran did with Hezbollah, in order to save its capabilities for when Iran needs it most, like if Israel attacks Iran. However years before the rift between Hamas and Iran, the former launched thousands of rockets and mortar shells at Israel. Iran, which provided Hamas with this arsenal, could have tried to stop the firing at Israel but did not. Iran and particularly Hamas took a risk that Israel could have retaken the Gaza Strip, a step which would have toppled Hamas. The Gaza Strip is important to Iran because it is near Israel and Hamas rules it, which was appealing to Iran. However Hezbollah, like Iran, is Shiite, not Sunni like Hamas. Hezbollah has been a dominant force in Lebanon and actually runs there a kind of state within a state. Furthermore, the Gaza Strip is much smaller than Lebanon and does not have Lebanon's infrastructure like airfields and harbors. Therefore Iran has been allowing Hamas to fire at Israel, assuming that in the worst case Israel would bring down Hamas. Hezbollah has been more vital to Iran, than Hamas is. It was also easier to supply Hezbollah because of its border with Syria while Iran had to send weapons to the Gaza Strip on a much longer and riskier route.

Lebanon served as a shield for Syria's western flank.¹³ Major parts of Lebanon have been under direct Syrian control or influence since the mid-1970s. Syria regarded Lebanon as part of "Greater Syria." Yet in 2005 Syria was forced to take its military out of Lebanon. Furthermore, following the Syrian civil war, Hezbollah sent its men to assist Assad, inside Syria. Iran and Hezbollah used the war in Syria to increase their grip there. Iran might seek to create a kind of "Greater Iran."

Meanwhile Iran's growing presence in Syria worries Israel. The latter has also been concerned that Hezbollah might create there a base against Israel, near the Golan Heights. In January 2018 Iran had in Syria 82,000 fighters under its direct control, including 3,000 members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and 9,000 members of Hezbollah.¹⁴ However Hezbollah has to split its forces between Lebanon and the Golan Heights. This is quite a challenge to a nonstate organization that has fewer than 50,000 men, one that takes its manpower from a community that has only two million people. Hezbollah had already lost at least 1,700 men in Syria by early 2018. Furthermore Hezbollah could already fire at every spot in Israel, putting at risk six million Jews, so for that the group does not need to be in Syria. As to attacking the Golan Heights itself,

from Syria, there are 20,000 Israelis who live there. A deadly attack on the Golan Heights, particularly one that will cause significant civilian losses, will bring a fierce Israeli response inside Syria. If there is further deterioration, at a certain point Israel could act directly against Assad. Even if only Hezbollah attacks Israel the latter could see Assad as responsible, as Israel did in 2011, when fire from Syria hit the Golan Heights. Assad will not want to face the IDF, fearing for his rule. Iran and Hezbollah will not wish that either, after investing so much in helping Assad in recent years.

Sami Nader, the Director of the Levant Institute for Strategic Affairs, argued in late July 2016 that Hezbollah might start a limited confrontation with Israel in order to improve its image.¹⁵ However Hezbollah preferred to continue its propaganda war against Israel while avoiding an actual fight with it.

In Iran in mid 2017 GDP grew and inflation went down, but there was vast unemployment and a need of “structural reforms to reduce cronyism, corruption, and interference by revolutionary institution.” This harmed Iran’s economy more than international restrictions.¹⁶ In early 2018 Iran’s economy remained vulnerable and frail.¹⁷ The bad shape of Iran’s economy made it harder for Iran to give financial aid to its allies across the Middle East. Already Iran faced an economic crisis that might have undermined its regime. Ironically, after pouring so much money into destabilizing other governments, the one in Iran might have been in trouble. The unrest across Iran in late December 2017–mid January 2018, due to economic hardships, was a warning sign for the regime there.

SAUDI ARABIA

On May 20, 2017, the US State Department announced a huge arms deal with Saudi Arabia worth \$110 billion. It was aimed to strengthen the kingdom against Iran. The sales were in “border security and counterterrorism, maritime and coastal security, air force modernization, air and missile defense, and cybersecurity and communications upgrades.”¹⁸ Following that, two Israeli ministers voiced concern about Israel’s ability to keep its qualitative military edge in regard to the Arabs. How much should Israel be worried? Israel and Saudi Arabia have been considering Iran to be a sworn enemy, so Israel has an interest in allowing the kingdom to be able to confront Iran successfully. Furthermore, since Israel has no border with Saudi Arabia there is no risk of a Saudi ground attack against Israel. Saudi Arabia could send forces to confront Israel from Arab states that are near Israel, as part of an Arab coalition against Israel. Yet in past wars the Saudi contribution in this matter was very limited, if any. Furthermore, in the near future it is very unlikely that there will be an Arab alliance against Israel.

The Arab peace initiative from 2002, aiming at solving the Arab–Israeli conflict, was created by Saudi Arabia, because Arab Gulf states require peace with Israel in order to concentrate on Iran. Actually, Arab states could collaborate with Israel against Iran even without ending the Arab–Israeli conflict, particularly considering all the hardships and obstacles it involves. In the past Israel and Arabs had all kinds of cooperation with each other against other Arabs, without signing an official agreement, let alone a peace treaty. However, it is better for both Israel and Gulf Arab states to minimize the friction between them, and if possible to reach a peace treaty, not only because of Iran.

THE PALESTINIANS

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank were until 1967 under the control of Arab governments, not a Palestinian one. Jordan held the West Bank and Egypt ruled the Gaza Strip. In the early and mid-1950s the Gaza Strip and the West Bank served as a springboard to launching Palestinian incursions against Israel. Egypt and Jordan sometimes tried to stop those penetrations, but at other times those two Arab states ignored them. Furthermore Egypt, at a certain stage, even organized Palestinian assaults.

In the 1956 war, Israel took the Gaza Strip and annihilated the base of terrorist and guerrillas that was there.¹⁹ Israel returned the Gaza Strip to Egypt after several months. In 1967 Israel seized both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Jordan did not try to regain the West Bank while Egypt strove to get back Sinai, not the Gaza Strip. The PLO tried to replace those Arab states by clashing with Israel in the West Bank, but the PLO failed. There were also skirmishes in the Gaza Strip in the early 1970s. Later on the PLO played a symbolic role in the 1973 war while in the 1982 war in Lebanon the PLO took center stage, although the IDF fought then also against Syrian forces that were deployed in Lebanon. Overall in that period the PLO carried some political weight, yet Israel was focused on Arab states because they were much more powerful than the PLO and more dangerous to Israel.

In 1994, the PA was established, as part of the Oslo Accords. The PA received about 80 percent of the Gaza Strip. In 2005, Israel, without signing an agreement with the PA, left the rest of the Gaza Strip. The PA therefore became in charge of all the Gaza Strip but, in 2007 Hamas took over the Gaza Strip by force. That area became, as in the 1950s, a base from which to attack Israel. Instead of an Egyptian rule Hamas called the shots. Hamas also used the Gaza Strip to strike Israel and in other periods Hamas tried to keep the status quo and to restrain those in the Gaza Strip that tried to break it.

Since 2007 Israel has had to deal with two Palestinian entities: Hamas's rule in the Gaza Strip and the PA in the West Bank. Hamas and the PA, led by Fatah, have been bitter rivals. Both the PA and Hamas want to have a Palestinian state that will be under their control, without sharing power with their Palestinian foe. Israel and the PA have their disputes, but at least at the security level they cooperate with each other against Hamas in the West Bank. In the Gaza Strip, Israel, without the help of the PA, had clashed with Hamas, mostly in two wars, one in 2008–2009 and the other in 2014.

Brig. General (res.) Moni Chorev argued in March 2016 that Hamas is the "most immediate threat."²⁰ However Hamas is not the most dangerous one. Hamas in the Gaza Strip, compared to Hezbollah, has fewer rockets and their range and warheads are much smaller than the ones Hezbollah has. Hamas also has fewer men than Hezbollah. If Hamas fires or penetrates into Israel through a tunnel and inflicts heavy casualties, the outcome could be its downfall, following the Israeli retaliation, if it includes a conquest of the entire Gaza Strip.

In 2018 there are around two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Most of them struggle to get their basic needs. Hamas has been responsible for them but in spite of its severe economic constraints Hamas continued to invest heavily in military buildup. Hamas planned to flood southern Israel with rockets and mortars while sending its best units to infiltrate into Israel by tunnels or by sea. Hamas did not seek a confrontation, but a clash could have happened if there was a change in the situation as the one that led to the 2014 war. Israel strove to continue with the fragile status quo.

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) ruled Egypt in 2012–2013, but their mistakes brought their downfall.²¹ This was a blow to Hamas, since they are an offshoot of the MB. Therefore the new ruler in Egypt, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, considers Hamas to be an enemy. It was grim shift for Hamas since Egypt is its only Arab neighbour. Sisi has been making a serious effort to stop the smuggling of weapons from Sinai to the Gaza Strip.

On February 1, 2016, Netanyahu warned that an attack from the tunnels will bring an aggressive response, much bigger than the one in the war of 2014.²² In mid-June 2016, after Avigdor Lieberman became the minister of defense, a top official from his office said that in the next round Hamas's regime will be toppled.²³ Israel therefore could decide to bring down Hamas. The next stage, which should be planned carefully, with or without the PA, will be to make sure the Gaza Strip will not serve as a base to attack Israel. Part of this process will be fixing the crumbling infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, in order to provide basic services for the population there and to convince them that collaborating with Israel is better than confronting it. Yet this will be a very long, complicated, and expensive project and there is no guarantee it will be successful. Further-

more, even a kind of prosperity might not stop some Palestinians from confronting Israel.

Another option for Israel has been to seize the Gaza Strip, topple Hamas, and then to withdraw, but the results might be chaos in the Gaza Strip. This will not serve Israel well, since there is very little chance that it will lead to the rise of a new regime that will be less hostile than Hamas. It is no wonder that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opposes toppling Hamas, as he did in the 2014 war.

In the West Bank, both Israel and the PA seem unwilling to compromise too much. It is possible to reach a mutual understanding in regard to borders, Jerusalem, and demilitarizing of the Palestinian state. Meanwhile the two sides built some foundations for a future agreement, even without dealing with it directly. First of all, they have direct lines of communications, besides the fact that in a short drive they could actually meet face-to-face, when senior officials from the security establishment of both sides do on a regular basis, as part of the security cooperation between them. This process is important not only in saving lives of both Israelis and Palestinians and protecting property but also in preventing an escalation. Furthermore, it helps in building confidence between top figures from both sides, in a field that will be essential in any future negotiations.

In mid-September 2016 Israel and the PA reached an agreement regarding the supply of electricity from Israel to the PA. The two sides should have continued with similar steps in order to improve the current status quo and to develop mutual trust. It will help in achieving an overall agreement if and when it is on the table. In the same time there should be reconciliation, as part of a peace process, not only between Israel and Palestinians but also inside both Israel, between left- and right-wing parties and factions, and among the Palestinians too, mostly between the PA and Hamas. This is an essential factor in ensuring that a future peace accord will last.

Without peace talks, let alone some kind of hope, Palestinians feel that they are at a dead end. Already there is quite a lot of tension in the West Bank, following a wave of Palestinian assaults against Israelis, which started in October 2015. It claimed the lives of more than 200 Palestinians and 60 Israelis. At any given moment it is enough that in one incident many Israelis and/or Palestinians will be killed, to cause a serious deterioration and maybe even a confrontation. Armed Palestinian groups, including members of the Palestinian security forces, might join the fight. In such a case unrest could turn into a much more severe conflict.

Many Israelis assume that the current status quo, as fragile as it is, could continue for a long time, so they don't need to be worried too much. Therefore they ignore the conflict and focus on their personal problems. The Palestinian issue gets more attention in Israel when there is a confrontation with them. Yet then Israel tends to concentrate on

winning and at least ending the clash as soon as possible, by relying on military measures, not diplomacy.

The UN Security Council approved on December 23, 2016, resolution 2334 that saw all Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including those in east Jerusalem, as having “no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.” The resolution demanded to stop “all settlement activities” in those areas.²⁴ It was a political blow to Israel and a sign that time is not working in favor of Israel, assuming that lack of a solution might bring the international community to take further steps at the expense of Israel.

Maybe the best chance of achieving progress is if the PA and Israel manage to talk directly with each other, without approaching other states to help them. The international community could assist, as when it tried to encourage Israel and the PA to return for another round of negotiations. European initiatives did not succeed and the Obama administration did not seem eager in 2015–2016 to invest much in this matter due to its complexity, the lack of trust between the PA and Israel, failures in the past, and other priorities including those that had to do with the Middle East, such as fighting ISIS. The Trump administration worked on restarting the talks between Israel and the PA. Yet there was a rift between the United States and the PA after Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel, on December 6, 2017.

ISIS served as a “welcome diversion” for Iran, in avoiding Western pressure.²⁵ For those in Israel who did not want the international community to focus on the Arab–Israeli conflict, ISIS was too a kind of a strategic distraction. In this sense destroying ISIS is vital because it will clear the way and increase the odds that the international community will assist Israel and the Arabs, mostly the Palestinians, in talking with each other.

The 2002 Arab Peace Initiative could be a base for negotiations, not only between Israel and the Palestinians, although this conflict has been the main issue in the Arab–Israeli conflict. Israel is reluctant to accept this Arab initiative but it might consider it if the alternatives are worse, like facing huge international pressure. Either way Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia, could play a key role in this process, as long as those states are not under threat. The defeats that ISIS absorbed help in stabilizing the region, which allow Arab states to turn to talks with Israel. Israel seeks to bypass the Palestinian issue and to see Arab states as potential allies in the struggle against Iran. However since the latter does not want peace between Israel and the Palestinians, then dealing with this subject could assist in containing Iran and in improving the relations between Israel and Arabs as well.

On May 1, 2017, Hamas published a policy document in which the group argued it does not strive to destroy Israel, yet without recognizing

it. Either way Israel ignored this announcement.²⁶ It was still a positive sign since even if Hamas is not part of the negotiations between Israel and the PA maybe the group might not cause problems in this matter. Hamas can provoke Israel by launching rockets at it, in order to force the latter to respond, which can bring a confrontation. This could disrupt the talks between Israel and the PA. Although the PA opposes Hamas talking with Israel, starting a war in the Gaza Strip might be politically too risky for the PA. In late 2017 and early 2018 the latter and Hamas tried reconciliation, but it went on slowly.

EGYPT

The 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt ended the conflict Israel had with its strongest Arab foe. Israel gave up the Sinai, about 60,000 square kilometers, while Egypt left the Arab war camp, which was a major setback to Arabs who sought to build another Arab coalition against Israel. The peace between Israel and Egypt has been quite cold. There has not been much economic activity, such as mutual trade. Very few Egyptians visited Israel as tourists because doing that required overcoming all kinds of hardships, such as receiving permission from the Egyptian government. Hundreds of thousands of Israelis visited Egypt, yet mostly Sinai, which has been seen as a relaxed and pastoral area. In the peninsula Israelis went on vacation abroad, saving traveling expenses since it is in a country nearby. In recent years Sinai became dangerous, which reduced the number of tourists, including the Israeli ones.

There has been tension between Israel and Egypt because of the former's nuclear project and Egypt's suspicions and fears about Israel's regional ambitions. Yet it seems, at least officially, that the main problem has been the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Due to that there were all kinds of crises and low points over the years, such as when Egypt recalled its ambassador from Israel. In spite of all that the 1979 peace treaty survived, quite an amazing success story, particularly because of all the wars, the ongoing Arab–Israeli conflict, and the nature of a region that has been often destabilized.

In the 1990s there was a violent struggle inside Egypt between the government's security forces and Islamic radicals. In recent years there is a similar fight, mostly in Sinai, between ISIS and the Egyptian security forces. Israel allowed Egypt to send tens of thousands of troops to Sinai. It was not an easy decision for Israel. On one hand, Israel strives to maintain the demilitarization of Sinai, a key factor in the 1979 peace treaty. On the other hand, Israel wishes to help Egypt to destroy ISIS, which could use Sinai to infiltrate into Israel and/or to launch rockets at it, which has already happened.

Egypt has been dealing with huge economic problems, yet the government continues to pour money into its military in order to keep its loyalty and also since Egypt has been considering Israel as a possible enemy. It means preparing for a high-intensity war. The Egyptian military has been busy in the low-intensity war in Sinai. However a large part of the Egyptian military could go on training for high-intensity war against Israel. This has been particularly true in regard to corps like the Egyptian air force and navy and many ground units like armored ones, which have not played a major role in the internal struggle inside Egypt.

The United States provides Egypt every year, since the late 1980s, with military aid in the amount of \$1.3 billion. The American goals have been to secure and stabilize both Egypt and the region and to keep the peace with Israel. The United States also strives to make Egypt “more democratic” while taking care of human rights. Yet the crackdown and the harsh conditions in Egyptian prisons increased the radicalization.²⁷ In September 2017, for the first time since 2009, the United States conducted “Bright Star,” joint US–Egyptian exercises that started in 1981.²⁸ On January 20, 2018, the US vice president, Mike Pence, during his visit in Egypt, declared that the United States supports Egypt in the fight against terror.²⁹

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TWO

Israel's National Security Policy

Israel's national security policy was formed following the 1948–1949 war. It deals with the Arab–Israeli conflict, relations with world powers like the United States, and issues such as strategic depth.

FOUNDATIONS

Israel has two basic strategic approaches. The first one, the “Iron wall,” relies on making the state into a fortress so it can defeat its foes while hoping to delay as much as possible the next round. The second strategy has been the “outstretched hand”: seeking to make Israel part of “a greater regional bloc to preempt shocks and minimize their impact, ease the burden of limited resources, and better contain threats or keep them as distant as possible from Israeli borders and society.”¹ Actually Israel implemented both of those methods over the years, sometimes emphasizing one more than the other.

The main threat to Israel was during the era of high-intensity wars (1948–1982). The shift occurred in 1982, when Israel confronted the PLO and Syrian forces. While in high-intensity wars in 1948–1973 the Palestinians, as part of the PLO or not, but played a minor role, in 1982 they were a major part of the war. Since then Israel has been fighting only hybrid and low-intensity wars, mostly against the Palestinians and also against Hezbollah. Even if Israel had lost those wars, there was not an immediate danger to its existence since Palestinians and Hezbollah are not strong enough to put the survival of Israel at risk. Israel tried to contain its enemies and keep them away from the Israeli population by deterring them and blocking their way to attack inside Israel. This approach was implemented against both Arab states and Arab nonstate organizations.

The IDF published "IDF Strategy" in August 2015. One of its goals is "strengthening the international and regional status of the State of Israel, while striving for peace with its neighbors."² Israel sought peace all the way back to 1949³ yet then Israel managed only to achieve a series of armistice agreements.⁴ Over the years Israel had all kinds of negotiations and contacts, directly or not, with Arab officials from the government and military, as with King Hussain of Jordan. Those talks sometimes led to understandings and even actual cooperation. Eventually Egypt, in 1979, and Jordan, in 1994, signed peace treaties with their Jewish neighbor. Israel and its two Arab peace partners continued to have disputes and crises but at least this friction did not bring another war. In contrast, the Oslo Accords in the 1990s between Israel and the Palestinians did not bring an end to the clashes between them. It could be said that it was easier to keep the peace with Arab states and not with the Palestinians, who had at most the PA, which is like an upgraded nonstate organization.

Arabs hoped that Israel will crumble from the inside because of social and economic troubles, following the pressure of the ongoing conflict with Arab states.⁵ Since 1948 there has been an Arab boycott on economic ties with Israel such as in trade, which caused Israel some hardships. Yet it did not isolate or undermine the Israeli economy. In recent decades, following among other factors the peace between Israel and Egypt and Jordan, the Arab boycott got much weaker.

David Ben Gurion emphasized the importance of investing in the economy, as part of national security.⁶ On July 9, 2015 Lior Akerman, a former brigadier-general who served as a division head in the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency), claimed that a "serious threat to Israel" is not the Palestinians but domestic social concerns, such as the problems with the health and educational systems.⁷ The dominance of the security concerns in Israel often brought the latter to concentrate at that issue, on the expense of others. Israel has been struggling to find a balance between the needs of the IDF and those of other sectors, a dilemma which mostly has to do with budget considerations. From time to time, particularly when there were fierce arguments between the ministry of defense and the ministry of finance, the Israeli media published reports and warnings about the threats Israel faces, and the danger of cutting the defense budget. Obviously it is essential not to neglect any vital ministry, for the good of the entire country. Furthermore the economy, health, and education systems assist, more or less, the IDF, and there are significant benefits due to the linkage between the economy and the IDF, as in creating Israel's prosperous high-tech industry.

In 2013 political frustration and economic hardships in Arab states might have caused them to blame Israel as an outlet.⁸ Arab regimes did it over the years, in order to divert attention from them. Arab nonstate organizations copied that method, and sometimes it led to war, as in

2014. Hamas could again turn public attention toward Israel so they will not demand Hamas to be accountable for the distress of its people in the Gaza Strip. In that sense Israel has to help its enemies, to save their economy from collapse so they will not accuse Israel for their troubles and drag it into a war. Israel could not do much in regard to Arab states in this matter because of the scale of their economic problems. Israel's resources and influence is quite limited, considering such a challenge. In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip Israel carries much more weight than in Arab states. The population in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is also much smaller than the one in Arab states, which makes it easier for Israel to use its leverage. Israel also controls the border to the PA. The PA does not have access to the sea and it depends on Israeli ports. Israel has the choice if and how much to help the PA to develop its economy. On the one hand, Israel hesitates to build a Palestinian economy that could support a state. On the other hand, a stronger Palestinian economy will offer jobs and therefore reduce the chances for unrest and will give the Palestinians in the West Bank an achievement they might not risk losing.

Another enormous challenge was to build a society from Jewish immigrants who came mostly from Arab states and Eastern Europe, each one with its own mentality and culture. The threat to the state helped in creating a basic common ground between the Israelis, with all the political disputes among them. It kept them united. In the last decades there has been a low probability of a high-intensity war but hybrid and low-intensity wars were enough to cause deep concerns among Israelis. Although the danger to Israel was bigger during high-intensity wars, mostly in 1967 and 1973, they did not involve fighting inside population centers. In contrast, hybrid and low-intensity wars created the impression that almost every Israeli is not secure, even those who live in the rear. The need to maintain personal safety of every Israeli has been a major component in assuring that the Israeli society could handle the conflict.

THE BALANCE OF POWER

Arab states have overwhelming superiority over Israel in the size of their population, territories, and natural resources, mostly oil. The asymmetry between Israel and Arab states did not change dramatically over the years. Some Arab states enjoy a specific advantage such as Egypt, which has the largest Arab population, or Saudi Arabia with its enormous oil fields. Israel made an effort to increase its population by encouraging both Jewish immigration to Israel and local population growth. In 1948 there were fewer than a million people in Israel while now there are about eight million; more than six million of them are Jews. However Arab states kept their superiority in the number of people. In addition, in 1999 Israel discovered huge natural gas fields in the Mediterranean, but

Arab states, mostly those in the gulf, have much more energy sources than Israel, including natural gas. Israel also has been investing in its manpower, developing its industry and building the IDF. Those steps did not change the balance of power. Yet, together with the chronic flaws of Arab militaries, it allowed Israel to survive and win wars.

The peace with Egypt and Jordan and the wars in Syria and Iraq that significantly weakened those two states changed the balance of power in favor of Israel. Furthermore some Arab states, mostly those in the gulf, near Iran, are much more concerned about Iran than about Israel. The latter actually never posed a real threat to those Arab states, while Iran does. Those Arab states, like Saudi Arabia, look for some kind of cooperation with Israel against Iran. In that sense the Arabs strategic advantages in size of population and oil could be used not against Israel but in a way to its benefit. This is important for Israel, because Iran has much more people, natural resources, and land than Israel. It will not be the end of the Arab–Israeli conflict but more of an unofficial, vague, and fragile start of what could turn into an anti-Iranian coalition between Arabs and Israel.

Iran has been having difficulties in exploiting its overwhelming superiority in the size of people and land against Israel because the distance between them is more than 1,000 kilometers. Iran has allies close to Israel, mostly Assad in Syria, Hezbollah, and Hamas. Yet those three are no match for Israel although they have more people than Israel. Assad controls most of the Syrian population, and there are also the Palestinians under Hamas's rule in the Gaza Strip and the Lebanese Shiites who support Hezbollah. In regard to natural resources, Israel has more, especially after Assad lost his oil fields. Hezbollah and Hamas have no oil or natural gas fields. As far as land the territory Assad has in Syria, together with the Gaza Strip and areas under Hezbollah control don't give them much of an edge over Israel. Militarily Hezbollah has a huge arsenal of rockets and also anti-tank missiles, but this group has only a few tanks and no weapons systems such as aircraft and ships. Assad has been receiving substantial Russian and Iranian assistance, but Assad lost many of his men, weapons systems, and equipment and he struggles to maintain his armed forces. Hamas has been the weakest partner among Iran's protégés near Israel.

In the 1967 war Arab states suffered their biggest and most humiliating defeat. However even then it was clear that Israel could not coerce Arab states, particularly the powerful ones like Egypt, to accept Israel's right to exist. If it was the opposite there was no guarantee that a foreign power, including the United States, would have come to save Israel, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, when the US–Israeli ties were not that tight.

Arab states, if they had managed to defeat the IDF, could have conquered all of Israel, and then to suppress any opposition. Israel, even after its greatest victory, in 1967, captured only a small part of Egypt and

Syria. In 1967 and 1973 the IDF approached Arab capital cities such as Damascus and Cairo. However conquering and controlling them, for months let alone years, would have been a huge burden on Israel, due to the size of those heavily populated cities. Israel experienced a kind of a similar challenge in Arab areas that are quite populated in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. There, since 1967, Israel has not had to fight an Arab state. Yet Israel paid a high price in blood and treasure for holding the West Bank and the Gaza Strip against guerrilla warfare and terror. Although the fight there was not only inside the cities it demonstrates the difficulties of controlling an Arab territory.

The lack of presence of Arab population did not mean that Israel had it easy. Sinai was quite empty in 1967, when Israel took it. Still, Israel suffered heavy casualties for keeping the peninsula, because Egypt was determined to retake it, which brought the war of attrition and the 1973 war.

Israel hoped that its achievements in the battlefield since 1948 will eventually convince Arab states to reconcile. The Israeli victories in 1956 and 1967 did not do that. Actually the vague results of the 1973 war, which ended in kind of a draw, might have helped more in bringing peace between Egypt and Israel. Syria and Iraq continued to oppose Israel. However since 1973 no Arab state has attacked Israel let alone by launching a massive offensive. Since the 1980s and particularly since 2006, Israel has been confronting Arab nonstate organizations. Those groups, like Hamas and Hezbollah, refuse to settle their disputes with Israel and certainly will not sign peace treaties with it. Those nonstate organizations hope to gain what the much stronger Arab states failed to achieve: to wear down Israel until it collapses.

ARAB MILITARY COALITIONS

One of the reasons for the Arab failures in the 1948–1949 war was their lack of unity and the bad cooperation between them.⁹ On June 5, 1967, there was an Arab alliance, yet when Egypt was attacked by Israel, the Syrian and the Jordanian forces, Egypt's main allies, did not contribute much to the Arab war effort. The Jordanian and Syrian militaries were much less powerful than the Egyptian one, but they could have done more to ease the pressure on it. Jordan and Syria missed the opportunity to strike Israel hard when the latter was occupied in fighting Egypt. Israel attacked Jordan in the same day, which was a certain gamble since at the time Israel had not yet defeated Egypt. After gaining victories on both the Jordanian and the Egyptian fronts, Israel attacked Syria. In the war of 2008–2009 between Israel and Hamas, the latter had allies, mostly Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah. None of them came to help their Palestinian partner.

In the 1980s there were several options for how to maximize the Arab military potential against Israel.¹⁰ Since then the concept of a coalition composed of Arab states has declined. Even before that, in spite of their desire to destroy Israel, it was not apparently their highest priority. Arab states were not able to put aside, if only temporary, the disputes between them so they could focus on beating Israel. This chronic weakness repeated itself in the era of high-intensity wars. Too often promises and treaties between Arab states regarding mutual cooperation against Israel did not carry much weight. It was a poor presentation of Arab solidarity in what was supposed their biggest test: fighting Israel.

In mid-September 2016 the IDF conducted a large-scale exercise that simulated how an escalation in the West Bank could lead to a confrontation between Israel and Hamas and Hezbollah, war on three fronts.¹¹ If groups like Hamas and Hezbollah act together it might be a kind of a new coalition against Israel, which will replace the old model that was based on Arab states.

The 1973 war showed how Arab states were able to join forces against Israel.¹² Yet Egypt wanted to start the war at night while Syria preferred to do it in the morning, because each one sought to ensure the success of its land offensive. Eventually they compromised on 2:00 p.m.¹³ If non-state organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah plan to attack Israel together, they will have fewer difficulties since they rely on firepower and not on massive ground offensives like the one Egypt and Syria carried out in 1973.

In the 1973 war, after Egypt and Syria, Iraq contributed more soldiers and weapons systems to the Arab coalition than any other Arab state. Iraq's expeditionary force crossed hundreds of kilometers and reached the front line at a critical time. In spite of the problems with its performance the Iraqi military helped Syria.¹⁴ Iraq joined the fight although Iraq was not an original part of the coalition, which was based on Syria and Egypt, which, in contrast to Iraq, have a border with Israel. Arab nonstate organizations could do the same. The leading members will be those that have a border with Israel: Hamas and Hezbollah. Other groups will send reinforcements from far away.

In 1970 Israel made Syria stop its invasion into Jordan, which was then struggling to survive a bitter fight against the PLO. Three years later Jordan came to assist Syria against Israel. Jordan was not eager to do that, but it did, in the name of Arab solidarity against Israel. There were other cases when Jordan was a foe/partner of Israel. The latter and the PA are sometimes rivals but they also collaborate together against Hamas in the West Bank. In the Gaza Strip, when there were confrontations between Israel and Hamas in 2008–2009 and 2014, the PA did not join Hamas, so there was no Palestinian solidarity.

During the 1973 war Jordanian, Syrian, and Iraqi militaries, were on the same front, firing on each other by mistake.¹⁵ It was clear since 1948

that Arab militaries have a common enemy, the IDF. Yet, prior to the 1973 war, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq did not train together against the IDF, so they paid the price in battle. There was not such a problem between Egypt and Syria, since each one was in a separate front. The same is true in regard to Hamas and Hezbollah, since they are located far away from each other. In the Golan Heights, there are several groups that could accidentally hit each other if they fight Israel. The chances of friendly fire increase because those outfits are less professional than Arab militaries. Yet they can also cause less casualties and damage because they don't have aircraft and heavy artillery.

In the 1973 war, Syria was convinced that Egypt would retake much more territory in Sinai than Egypt actually did. It was due to Egypt's military constraints, mostly its fear of maneuvering in an open area, a field in which the IDF had an edge. Therefore Egypt sought only to seize a few kilometers in the east bank of Sinai and then to start negotiations on receiving the rest of the peninsula. This concept caused a rift between Syria and Egypt. Two Arab nonstate organizations might also have disagreements about their war strategy, yet to begin with none of them will rely on the other's advance on the ground, since those groups can't capture any land from Israel to begin with.

In the 1973 war Syria could have, like Egypt, sought a relatively modest goal by seizing only a small part of the Golan Heights and then start a political campaign, aiming at getting back the rest of the Golan Heights. Syria did not do that, and eventually got almost nothing. Arab nonstate organizations could understand that they should have limited goals, in order to both increase their chances of success and also to prevent friction with their allies.

Egypt was very careful in the 1973 war, following a series of failures since 1948 in confronting Israel. Egypt, after getting a foothold on the east bank of the Suez Canal, preferred to avoid farther advance into Sinai. Its clear defeat on October 14, 1973, when it launched a massive offensive due to pressure by Syria, proved that. Two hundred Egyptian tanks were destroyed while the IDF lost about twenty-five tanks.¹⁶ It was a turning point in the war since the IDF gained the momentum and used it to cross the Suez Canal. Arab nonstate organizations could refuse if their allies urge them to get into a situation where they might absorb a serious blow.

During the 1973 war Israel managed to adjust to fighting several Arab militaries on two fronts in the same time. Israel survived the war and some even assumed it gained a victory. However the cost for Israel in that showdown and the memory of Arab successes in the beginning of that war were a traumatic experience for Israel. It reminded Israel that a strong coalition of Arab states was Israel's worst nightmare because it could have destroyed the state. In contrast, the most powerful coalition based on Arab nonstate organizations could not pose the same threat.

UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS

Israel possesses nuclear weapons,¹⁷ according to non-Israeli sources. The bomb was to be used only as the very last resort, if there is a threat to Israel's existence, like if Arab states had managed to defeat the IDF. Arab nonstate organizations can't beat the IDF, so Israel's nuclear arsenal is not needed against them.

Israel developed second-strike capability by having submarines with cruise missiles that carry nuclear warheads.¹⁸ Louis René Beres described several scenarios in this matter. He concluded that "looking ahead, Israel will need to rely increasingly on a multi-faceted doctrine of nuclear deterrence."¹⁹ Meanwhile, when Arab states tried to produce nuclear weapons, Israel prevented that by force, by launching air raids in Iraq in 1981 and in Syria in 2007. Arab nonstate organizations don't have the money, infrastructure, and manpower to build a nuclear weapon. At most they can steal one or produce a dirty nuclear bomb.

On July 14, 2015, Iran and world powers (The United States, France, Britain, Russia, China, and Germany) signed an agreement about limiting Iran's nuclear program (the JCPOA).²⁰ Before that Israel hoped to convince the international community to prevent Iran from having nuclear weapon capability. Israel even warned that the IAF might bomb Iran's nuclear sites.²¹ Iran might breach the agreement, officially or not, if it sees an opportunity to do it without risking a serious retribution. If Iran produces a nuclear weapon it might encourage its protégés to provoke Israel, assuming the latter will be deterred from striking back hard, fearing Iran. Yet in the past Iran was careful not to be dragged into wars between Israel and Hamas/Hezbollah. Iran wants its allies to fight for Iran, not the other way around, let alone force Iran to risk having a nuclear war with Israel. Iran might even restrain its partners not to challenge Israel in order not to coerce Iran to openly express support of them. Iran will not wish to increase the tension between it and Israel at a time that will not be convenient for Iran. It could happen when it best serves Iran's interest, as part of exploiting Iran's protégés or not.

"Both Egypt and Israel have been caught smuggling key components for chemical weapons in the past, including components for the manufacture of nerve gas."²² Prior to the 1967 war the IDF got ready in case Egypt had used its CW (chemical weapons).²³ Iraq used CW against Iran during the war between them in the 1980s.²⁴ On October 1990, Israel distributed gas masks to its people, fearing that Iraq might strike Israel with CW.²⁵ It did not happen. Furthermore Syria had a huge stockpile of CW but almost all of it was dismantled beginning in early 2013. It was an enormous relief for Israel, which for decades invested substantial amount of funds in preparing both its population and the IDF for chemical warfare.

ISIS used CW in 2016. Other Arab nonstate organization might do the same against Israel. Those groups will not enjoy the same infrastructure

and resources Arab states have, but CW are relatively easy to produce. The challenge is more to launch them, particularly since non-Arab states have no air force, but they do possess rockets, missiles, and UAV for that purpose. As with Arab states, the CW could serve Arab nonstate organizations as compensation for their military inferiority when facing Israel.

Arab regimes are vulnerable since their centers of power, civilian and military infrastructure, and population are exposed to Israeli retaliation, in case Arab states deployed CW against Israel. Egypt, even in its darkest hours, when Israel conquered Sinai in 1967 or when the IDF crossed the Suez Canal in 1973, did not use CW against Israel. In contrast to Arab states, Arab groups have fewer constraints. Arab groups might care less about an Israeli retaliation, since they don't have so many sites to protect, like an Arab government does. Furthermore, groups like Hamas and Hezbollah proved they are willing to put their own people in harm's way. Those groups also have underground shelters that give them a sense of security. However, like Arab regimes, Arab groups as well might be aware that the Israeli retribution for suffering a CW attack will be severe. Therefore those Arab groups might keep their CW for extreme situations such as to deter Israel from decapitating their leadership or seizing their territory.

ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES

The US–Israeli relations were developed over the years.²⁶ They survived many tests, such as the one in 1991. During the war against Iraq in 1991 the latter launched missiles at Israel. Iraq hoped to drag Israel into the war and by that to cause the anti-Iraq coalition to collapse since its Arab members could not have been seen as fighting with Israel against an Arab state. The United States deployed in Israel Patriot missiles to intercept Iraq's missiles, in order to prevent Israel from joining the war.²⁷ Israel stayed out of the war. Its deterrence took a hit, but this was worth it for Israel. Iraq's military machine that was upgraded during the 1980s could have contributed substantially to an Arab coalition against Israel. In 1991, thanks mostly to the United States, Iraq was defeated after losing a large part of its military might.

There were low chances that the Obama administration would have attacked Iran's nuclear sites. Obama wanted that his legacy to be an agreement with Iran, not a clash with Iran. However, if Obama was forced to attack Iran, he would have tried to assemble a coalition that includes Arab states, but not Israel. Iran is not an Arab country, like Iraq, but Arab states might not have wanted to be seen as officially joining forces with Israel against a Muslim state. Iran could have exploited that by ordering Hezbollah to fire at Israel. The latter would have responded at least against Hezbollah. The United States could have tried to show

that the fight of the coalition against Iran is separate from the confrontation between Israel and Hezbollah. In that way the United States would have hoped to keep Arab states inside the coalition. This was also the American strategy against ISIS. In both Syria and Iraq the United States did not ask Israel to participate in the battles since it would have complicated even more what was already a dicey situation. In Iraq the American partners there, like the Iraqis and Iran, did not want Israeli involvement. In Syria the Kurds and even some rebel groups might not have minded that but still Israel was left out of the battles. Israel did give the United States information about Syria.

In 2016–2017 a fragile alliance between Kurds, Syrian rebels, Iraqi security forces and militias, with US support, mostly from the air, inflicted major blows to ISIS. The peak was the retaking of Mosul. ISIS, in contrast to Iraq in 1991, did not try to provoke Israel from its positions near Israel, in Sinai, and in the Golan Heights. ISIS was not much of a problem for Israel but if ISIS had spread, it could have become one. This danger was prevented following the actions that were taken by the United States and its allies.

On April 8, 2015, Israel's Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon mentioned that "Israelis know that the United States is Israel's greatest friend and strategic ally."²⁸ The two states share basic interests like keeping the peace between Israel and both Jordan and Egypt. As for guerrilla and terror groups, in contrast to its American patron, Israel has been less concerned about Al-Qaida or ISIS and more worried about Hezbollah and Hamas. This showed the differences between the perspectives of Israel, which has been focusing on enemies on its border, and the United States, which has been looking at the entire region and also on the global effect. In spite of that Israel and its American patron have enough common ground in those matters so they could cooperate with each other in a fertile and an effective way.

Russia has been officially involved in the Syrian civil war since late 2015. Russia collaborated with Hezbollah, but if there was a war between the latter and Israel, then Russia would have probably not intervened. Therefore the United States too could have stayed out of the war, which was crucial in stopping in advance a dangerous escalation. Russia is not a superpower, but it has a huge nuclear arsenal, and that alone must be taken into very serious consideration in any case where there might be a collision between the United States and Russia, not only in regard to Israel.

On January 2016, following the Russian military intervention in Syria, King Abdullah II of Jordan said that Russian fighters approached the southern Syrian border near Israel and Jordan. There those Russian aircraft "were met with Israeli and Jordanian F-16s," according to King Abdullah.²⁹ This was a very rare recognition by an Arab leader that his country and Israel collaborated together against another state that hap-

pens to be a foreign power, a non-Israeli and non-Arab one. Israel did not officially admit that this kind of incident occurred. If it did and even if this cooperation was in this one case only, it showed how US aircraft, manned by Israelis and Jordanians, deterred their Russian counterparts.

HOW MUCH DOES ISRAEL RELY ON THE UNITED STATES?

The United States gives Israel huge military aid, aiming to keep what has been called Israel's QME (qualitative military edge).³⁰ In the 1960s the United States started to provide Israel with tanks like the M-48³¹ and aircraft such as the F-4 fighter-bomber. Since then the IDF, mostly the IAF, has relied on American weapons. The American goal was to allow Israel to defeat Arab militaries, which enjoyed substantial advantages: superiority in the numbers of troops and weapons systems and military and political backup by the Soviet Union. In spite of the peace with Jordan and Egypt and the decline of Iraq and Syria, Israel still needs to maintain its conventional military capabilities. However, as the United States tries to do with Egypt, which also receives generous American military aid, Israel too should adapt to confronting guerrilla war and terror. It means Israel has to get American aid that will have the right balance between weapons systems like the F-35, which are designed against conventional militaries, and other platforms that are effective against nonstate organizations.

Israel has to make sure the United States accepts that Israel might have no choice but to run a campaign, and in some cases even to launch a preemptive strike. Israel could attack without informing the United States, which will allow the latter to claim that because of the Israeli approach the United States could not have stopped the Israeli offensive. Yet the United States might insist on knowing about an Israeli attack in advance, particularly if the superpower opposes it.

Israel requires US support in the international arena such as in the UN Security Council. It was more important in the era of high-intensity wars, since the stakes were bigger, compared with hybrid and low-intensity wars. Furthermore, from the 1950s to the 1980s Israel faced the Soviet Union, the patron of Egypt and Syria. When Israel confronted Hezbollah and Hamas, they had only Iran at their side. Iran is much weaker than the Soviet Union. In the 1956 war the Soviet Union tried to scare Israel with a nuclear attack, while Iran does not have a nuclear bomb to begin with.

Iran gave Hezbollah tens of thousands of rockets that can inflict heavy casualties among Israelis, but rockets can't seize any part of Israel. The thousands of armored vehicles and artillery pieces together with hundreds of aircraft the Soviet Union delivered to Egypt and Syria gave those two Arab states the option to conquer all of Israel. Furthermore Iran, in

contrast to the Soviet Union during its deployment in Egypt 1969–1970, did not send its own forces let alone in a massive scale to fight together with Hamas/Hezbollah against Israel.

Relying on the US arsenal makes it easier for Israel since it depends on one source of supply for ammunition and spare parts, but at the same time it gives the United States a substantial leverage on Israel. The United States, in order to force its opinion, could reduce and even stop the delivery of weapons and ammunition to the IDF.

The IDF receives US assistance in many fields. The most dominant and vital ones have to do with the IAF and precision-guided munition for both Israeli aircraft and artillery. During a war Arab hybrid groups might shoot down one and even a few Israeli aircraft but it will not be as bad as in the 1973 war, when more than 100 Israeli aircraft were intercepted, mostly by anti-aircraft fire. Therefore the IAF could go on fighting a hybrid foe without receiving new aircraft from the United States, including after the war, due to its minor losses. The IAF will need spare parts for its US aircraft but during a war, even one that goes on for a month or two, and also after it the IAF might manage with its current stockpiles, if the United States does not resupply the IAF. The IAF could adjust its activities in order not to wear down its aircraft so there will be less need of spare parts. This goal could be accomplished since the threat to Israel is less than in a high-intensity war. In the worst case the IAF could do “cannibalization”: to dismantle spare parts from aircraft that are already grounded and buy spare parts from states that have US aircraft.

A more serious problem for the IAF, and also for the IDF’s artillery corps, might be if they run out of US precision-guided munition, following a lack of US support. Yet then the IDF could use unguided munitions—less accurate ones—which will increase the chances of collateral damage during urban combat. The United States will not want that to happen. Furthermore the IDF does not need to spend so much ammunition to begin with since its foe has much fewer troops and weapons systems, compared with an Arab military.

Israel therefore might be able to manage without US military aid during a war, since Hamas/Hezbollah are much less dangerous than Arab militaries. Israel, without strong US support, might face more difficulties in combat, but it will not be as bad as in a high-intensity war, where the challenges are greater. However the United States could punish Israel in other ways such as freezing intelligence cooperation and/or not protecting Israel in the UN, which will cost Israel dearly, particularly if Israel is subjected to international sanctions.

REGIME CHANGE?

The frustration in Egypt about its failures in the 1948–1949 war was one of the reasons for the revolution that happened there in 1952. Israel did not plan that in 1948, since Egypt was the one that attacked Israel and the latter just tried to survive. In the end of the 1948–1949 war Israel gained some achievements, but they were part of beating the Egyptian forces and seizing land. Their goal was not to start a process that would lead to a revolution in Egypt. In 1956 and 1967 Israel attacked Egypt, which was under the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser, following Nasser's provocations such as closing the Tiran Straits. It is possible that Israel hoped that one of the results of its offensive would be the downfall of Nasser. Yet in spite of Israel's decisive victories, especially in 1967, that shocked Egypt, Nasser stayed in power.

In the 1982 war one of Israel's goals was to create a pro-Israeli government in Lebanon. While in cases like in 1967 Israel only hoped for regime change as a result of defeating an Arab military, in 1982 Israel made a direct effort to use force to help its Arab ally to become the ruler of his state. Israel might have succeeded since its Arab partner, Lebanese Christians, were then a relatively powerful force in Lebanon, a torn and weak country. Israel also did not face an Arab coalition. Israel had to deal only with one Arab state, Syria, which lost the battles. However Israel's attempt to establish a friendly regime in Lebanon failed.

During the 2014 war Israel's Strategic Affairs Minister, Yuval Steinitz, supported both the toppling of Hamas and the capturing of the Gaza Strip for several weeks so it could be disarmed.³² The Interior Minister, Gideon Sa'ar, called to defeat Hamas' military wing.³³ On October 23, 2016 Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman threatened to destroy Hamas "completely" in case of another war.³⁴ Actually Israel already tried to topple Hamas. Israel has been running a siege on the Gaza Strip, after Hamas took over that area in 2007. Israel attempted to put economic pressure on Hamas, aiming at bringing down its rule. It did not work and Israel adjusted its approach by increasing the delivery of basic needs such as food and oil to the Gaza Strip, at a rate of up to a thousand trucks a day in 2017. The goal was to prevent humanitarian disaster and by that, indirectly, to maintain Hamas in power for lack of a better alternative.

"IDF Strategy" from 2015 argued that the IDF will "affect the enemy's regime survivability."³⁵ In spite of failing to do that in the past, the IDF still considers such an option, if only as a last option and/or to threaten the foe in order to deter it from starting a war. This approach does not necessarily require the use of force. Israel has quite an economic leverage over the PA since Israel's economy is much more powerful and Israel controls the borders of the PA. Without some kind of prosperity in the PA, there could be discontent that will be turned against Israel. However, unrest in the West Bank might be turned against the PA, even bringing its

downfall. This is therefore a way for Israel to topple the PA without doing it directly, by force, and by that to avoid international criticism. Yet this is a dicey strategy since Israel needs the PA for security reasons and also to provide other public services for the Palestinians, those Israel wishes to stay out of.

On October 29, 1956, just before a war had started, an Israeli jet intercepted an Egyptian plane. Senior Egyptian officers who were aboard that aircraft were killed.³⁶ Killing of Arab figures became quite a common Israeli method in dealing with those who were in top positions or even in charge of guerrilla and terror groups.³⁷ The goal was to deter those who were left but sometimes the new leader was more dangerous to Israel than its previous adversary, as when Hassan Nasrallah became the head of Hezbollah. Sometimes commanders of guerrilla and terror groups were also political leaders but it did not give them immunity. In some cases Israel hesitated in harming a leader of a nonstate organization, as it was with Yasser Arafat, when he was leading the PLO and later on also the PA. Israel also avoided assassinating the heads of Arab states

On November 21, 2014, Hamas spokesman said that "Israeli leaders are legitimate targets for assassination."³⁸ Such killing happened before when an Israeli minister, Rehavam Ze'evi, was murdered on October 17, 2001, by a Palestinian terror organization. It was retaliation, after one of their leaders was eliminated by Israel. This was another risk Israel had to take into consideration in this matter.

There were unrests in Iran like those that occurred from June 2009 to early 2010 and in December 2017–January 2018. They did not lead to a change let alone a revolution. Yet if there is another round of protests it might be more powerful than its previous ones, which might shake and even bring down the regime there. States like the United States, Israel, and Sunni-led Arab states, which seek to topple the Iranian regime, should help those inside Iran who want the same. A collapse of the current Iranian regime could have a major impact on Iran's protégés, non-state organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas. Without Iranian support those Arab groups, and their hybrid forces, will be much weaker.

STRATEGIC DEPTH

Israel is quite small, 22,072 square kilometers, including the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem, (without the West Bank). The state is also quite narrow, which has been particularly important in the center of the country, the Tel Aviv area, where Israel has most of its population and infrastructure. This has been clear since the early 1950s.³⁹ Another vital area has been the city of Haifa, about 100 kilometers north of Tel Aviv, due to its vast population, harbor (the biggest one in the country), and industry, such as refineries. There are other key areas in Israel, mostly the

one in Jerusalem that has its unique value because of its history, particularly in the religious and national context.

The West Bank is about 25 kilometers east of the Tel Aviv area. Until 1967, the West Bank was a kind of huge Arab bridgehead inside Israel, from which Arab forces could have attacked all of Israel's vital areas, including cutting the state in half. Since 1967, Israel has held the West Bank, which increased its strategic depth but only by a few dozen kilometers, at most. Until the early 1990s one of Israel's greatest concerns was an offensive by Arab militaries, such as by the Jordanian and the Iraqi ones. The 1991 war, which inflicted a major blow to Iraq's military capabilities, reduced the threat to Israel. The 1994 peace treaty with Jordan strengthened Israel's safety. The collapse of Iraq in 2003 removed completely the possibility of an Iraqi attack from Jordan. In 2000–2005 Israelis absorbed Palestinian attacks that came out of the West Bank. The solution is controlling the West Bank and at least having a strong and effective barrier between Palestinian and Israeli areas, to protect Israelis from Palestinian assaults.

The Golan Heights is about 180 kilometers northeast of Tel Aviv. Until 1967 there were many skirmishes between Israel and Syria on that border, which involved also shooting on civilian places. Following the capture of the Golan Heights in 1967, Israel added up to 25 kilometers to its strategic depth. Israel's towns and villages near the old border were better secured, yet the new settlements that were built in the Golan Heights were under threat, mostly when Syria launched a massive land offensive in 1973. The border there was almost complete quiet from 1974 until 2011, when the Syrian civil war started. As a result of the fight between Assad and his rivals, shells accidentally hit the Golan Heights. There were also a few direct attacks on Israelis on the border but Israelis in the rest of the Golan Heights and in other areas of Israel were safe. Still, Israel needs the depth of the Golan Heights, as minor as it is, in order to hold back penetrations there.

Syria could have attacked Israel from Lebanon,⁴⁰ when Syrian forces were deployed there, from the late 1970s until 2005. However the Syrian military presence in Lebanon was relatively small. Between Lebanon and the Tel Aviv area there is about 200 kilometers so there was not much risk to Israel's most vital area. In that sense Israel did not need to keep its troops in Lebanon in 1982–2000, unless Israel wanted to use Lebanon to invade Syria. Following the decline of Syrian military might since the early 1990s, Syria was less dangerous so there were fewer chances that Israel would have launched an offensive against Syria, including from Lebanon.

Hezbollah became Israel's main enemy in Lebanon, particularly after that group launched rockets at the Israeli population. The Israeli deployment in Lebanon therefore did not deter and actually gave Hezbollah a motive to fire at Israel. The latter could have expanded its grip in Leba-

non in order to push back Hezbollah but the group might have received from Iran and Syria long-range rockets, to bypass the Israeli-held areas. Israel offered instead to leave Lebanon in 2000. Hezbollah did not fire at Israel until 2006.

The Gaza Strip is about 80 kilometers south of the Tel Aviv area. Until 1967, when the Gaza Strip was under Egyptian control, it served as a possible jumping-off point for an Egyptian offensive. It could have been a massive attack, if Egypt had managed to concentrate its forces in the Gaza Strip without Israel finding out about it. However the only attacks that came out of the Gaza Strip were tiny and they were carried out by Palestinians. When the IDF seized the Gaza Strip in 1967 it added several kilometers to Israel's strategic depth.

Israel left most of the Gaza Strip in 1994 and the rest in 2005, a step that had shortened Israel's defense lines. Israel had built a barrier around the Gaza Strip, which was quite effective in stopping infiltrations. In that sense there was less need of strategic depth although it is always better to have it in case someone manages to penetrate and then try to reach an Israeli city, town, or a village.

Sinai is at least 150 kilometers south of the Tel Aviv area. In 1949–1967 the Egyptian military presence there was usually quite minor. Yet it was difficult for Israel to detect in time a massive Egyptian deployment, as was proved in February 1960, when Egypt did actually that. From 1967 to the early 1980s holding the Sinai gave Israel huge strategic depth, which helped Israel in 1973 although the Egyptian attack occurred because Israel conquered Sinai. Furthermore, Egypt's military was not capable of advancing deep into Israeli territory. Following the return of the peninsula to Egyptian hands it was demilitarized. It gave the IDF time in case of a sudden and quick Egyptian military movement toward the Israeli border, particularly when considering the might and mobility of the Egyptian armed forces. It never happened. There were only several infiltrations from Sinai, not by Egypt's troops but by guerrilla and terror groups. Those assaults were at the edge of the south of Israel, in the Negev. Israel has there a depth of a few dozen kilometers that might be enough to stop an assault coming from Sinai, before it reaches a population center like the city of Beersheba. Yet there is the city of Eilat and some tiny Israeli villages that are located very close and even right on the Egyptian border. Obviously they have been much more exposed to attacks.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE IDF

Avi Kober emphasized in 2015 that in Israel "for many years now the military echelon has had enormous influence over decision-making processes and policymaking on issues of war and peace."⁴¹ In October 2015 Lt. Col. Alon Paz, who served as a strategist in the IDF's Strategic Plan-

ning Division, argued that “most positions in the broader security apparatus are filled by former military officers . . . the National Security Council, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other branches are still relatively weak and lack the skills to effectively participate in the security discourse. Other than the military, then, almost no organization provides influential analysis and expert opinion to political decision makers. As a result, intelligence and planning efforts are focused almost exclusively on the adversary’s military capabilities.”⁴² Brig. General (res.) Moni Chorev claimed in March 2016 that “there is a need for a strategic mechanism for planning and conducting national-level operations, to provide necessary depth and long-term vision for the campaign as a whole. Such a mechanism would offer indepth analyses of the enemy and of the diplomatic environment; support a broader and more suitable approach than that provided by military analysis alone; and contribute to the integration of all strategic efforts, alongside military activity, leading to collaborative learning processes, and to better-synchronized and more effective action at the national level.”⁴³ This has to do with high-, hybrid, and low-intensity wars.

“IDF Strategy” from 2015 “is the theoretical and practical infrastructure for all other military documents. As such, it is based on vital national interests, on the conventions of national security and on the foundations of military theory and practice. It provides a guideline to combining the elementary conventions of national security with the principles and rules of military theories.”⁴⁴ It was the first time the IDF released to the public such a document. The Israeli government never did a similar move, knowingly leaving its policy open for interpretations, which was one of the main reasons for this approach. Israeli politicians wish to have freedom of action to do whatever they want, without having the constraints of an official national security policy. Sometimes it was not necessarily a bad thing. The IDF did not create such a policy, instead of its civilian masters, but “IDF strategy” does have elements that have to do with what is supposed to be the national platform of the state. “IDF strategy” shows, again, the enormous weight the IDF has in Israel.

One of the goals of “IDF strategy” is to preserve Israel as a democratic state.⁴⁵ The IDF is strong enough to suppress any Arab/Jewish group that might try to take over the state. The IDF itself has been based on reserves or civilian soldiers. With all the disputes between the citizens there was never a battle between two Israeli units, because of politics or any other reason for that matter. Also there was never a case in which a military unit tried to initiate a coup. At most troops raised arguments regarding all kinds of issues, including political ones. A few of them stuck to their guns by refusing to serve in the West Bank, even if it meant going to jail. Another scenario was that the Israeli high command or part of it had decided that because of Israel’s huge security challenges democracy must be replaced with a military or civilian dictatorship. It never happened, in

spite of all the crises that occurred over the years in civil-military relations. The decline of the main threat to Israel, a high-intensity war, gives even less reason to argue that because of security risks Israel requires a powerful leadership at the expense of its democracy.

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THREE

Doctrine and Buildup

Israel has been dealing with guerrilla warfare and terror since it was established, mostly by fighting Palestinian groups. Since the 1980s Hezbollah became one of Israel's main foes in regard to hybrid and low-intensity wars. The IDF had to adjust its doctrine and buildup according to that.

DETERRENCE

Maj. Gen (ret.). Doron Almog, claimed in 2005 that "Israel has essentially followed a cumulative deterrent strategy with three key components." The first one is Israel's victories. "The second is "Israel's huge technological-doctrinal advantage over its Arab neighbors, which among other things has allowed Israel not only to produce sophisticated weapons systems but also to improve their integration at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. This same technological-doctrinal advantage also has made possible targeted operations against Israel's adversaries. The third feature is Israel's image as a nuclear power, which the Israeli government has continued to hone while avoiding an official declaration of the country's nuclear capability."¹ "IDF Strategy" from 2015 argued that deterrence is based on previous wars, day-to-day actions, and the Israeli ability to use force. It has to take into consideration the foe's strength and nature. Deterrence has to convince the enemy to respond, or not to do so.²

Over the years Israel and Arab states were aware that Israel, in spite of its achievements in high-intensity wars, could not have conquered or coerced Arab states to accept Israel's right to exist. Yet Arab states understood that Israel could defeat them in battle and inflict a lot of casualties and damages that made them think twice before confronting it. Israel,

due to its strength, has more options in regard to Arab nonstate organizations, compared to Arab states. Yet Israel decided not to invest resources in trying to destroy or to force an Arab nonstate organization such as Hezbollah or Hamas to recognize Israel's right to exist. Instead, Israel focused on deterring Arab nonstate organizations from confronting Israel and at least to postpone the next war as much as possible. Israel had more or less the same principles in dealing with Arab states. Israel basically strove to keep a status quo, as fragile as it was sometimes. As long as groups like Hezbollah or Hamas did not attack Israel the latter could have tolerated that, in order to avoid a war. Israel did retaliate and conducted preemptive raids and other missions on the ground, air, and sea yet their goal was to deter the foe. This kind of approach sometimes caused tension but in other cases it prevented escalation that could have brought a major clash and even a war.

The 2006 war started following a provocation by Hezbollah: an attack on an Israeli patrol on the border, in which two of its troops were captured. Hezbollah did not seek war among others because of Israel's military might. This is why Hezbollah has almost never fired at Israel since 2000. Yet Israel did not deter Hezbollah from conducting the raid in 2006. Israel wished to restore its deterrence but for that there was no need to go to war since Hezbollah launched only one assault, and quite a limited one, not a full-scale offensive. In that sense Israel deterred Hezbollah by convincing the group not to start a war. Yet Israel ignored that since it hoped to crush Hezbollah but Israel's experience, not only with Hezbollah, should have taught Israel how difficult it is to beat a nonstate organization. Ironically the 2006 war itself harmed the Israeli deterrence since as the war went on it showed that Hezbollah can hold on. Therefore Israel had to invest more and more efforts in order to rebuild its deterrence.

In the 2006 war the IDF, by relying on firepower, inflicted heavy casualties and severe damage to Hezbollah but the IDF did not defeat Hezbollah. It is possible that to begin with the IDF was not up for that task at the time since it was used to low-intensity warfare in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, not to confront a hybrid foe in Lebanon. Failing to realize that situation caused many mistakes and determined the outcome of the war, which undermined Israel's deterrence in regard to Hezbollah and other Arab actors as well.

"A deterrence situation such as the Israel-Hezbollah stand-off since 2006 is a social construct emanating from strategic players. It is not a natural state and requires constant adaptations to mitigate the risks of miscalculation."³ This reality was therefore quite fragile. Any incident might have caused a war like the skirmish that took place on January 28, 2015. Two Israeli troops, who were driving in a convey, on the border between Israel and Lebanon, were killed by an anti-tank missile that was

fired by Hezbollah from Lebanon.⁴ Israel restrained itself and the border returned to calm, with all the tension that was there.

Following the 2006 war Hezbollah became part of the Lebanese government. "Legitimacy and state attributes are genuine assets for Hezbollah and worth preserving. It does however require being accountable to a broader constituency helps increase Hezbollah's susceptibility to deterrence. This socio-political awareness has the potential to constrain its freedom of military action by creating internal Lebanese dissent against future attacks."⁵ Hezbollah absorbed criticism inside Lebanon because of the price Lebanon paid in the 2006 war, which was part of Israel's attempt to restore its deterrence. However the main reason for the restraint Hezbollah demonstrated might have been its Iranian patron that supervises it closely. Iran does not want its protégé to be entangled again in a war, like in 2006 at a time when a war with Israel does not serve Iranian interests. If since 2006 Israel had attacked Iran's nuclear sites, then Iran would have probably ordered the group to fire at Israel, even if both Lebanon and Hezbollah would have suffered badly, following the Israeli response. In that sense Israel's deterrence in regard to Hezbollah was not that strong.

"Particularly in the Israeli context of operations against elusive non-state adversaries, future deterrent capacity is constantly refreshed by battlefield performance. Poor performance erodes deterrence just as surely as good performance creates it."⁶ IDF's weaknesses, as they were showed in the 2006 war, might have been one of the reasons for the 2008–2009 war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Hezbollah, since 2006, was careful not to provoke Israel but it did not stop the group from investing heavily in preparing for war while openly threatening Israel with its public announcements.

The blows Hamas took in the 2008–2009 war reduced significantly its attacks against Israel after that round. Yet Israel's deterrence melted down gradually since Hamas resumed the firing at Israel. After the 2014 war, Israel deterred Hamas from attacking Israel, this time for a longer time, compared with the 2008–2009 war. Yet this outcome was not only because of the 2014 war. Hamas ran into difficulties in rearming since Egypt was quite effective in destroying tunnels that were used to smuggle weapons from Sinai to the Gaza Strip.

As part of creating deterrence Israel inflicted casualties to its hybrid foes in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars. Yet those groups refilled their ranks, like Arab militaries did in the era of high-intensity wars. Israel also damaged its foes' military and civilian infrastructure but it was rebuilt and to begin with Hamas and Hezbollah did not rely on huge camps like a conventional military. In that sense it was difficult to deter nonstate organizations.

WINNING THE CONFRONTATION

Ariel Sharon, as a division commander in the 1973 war, claimed that from strategic perspective Israel did not win.⁷ On October 22, 1973, Henry Kissinger, the US secretary of state, argued that Israel won although it paid dearly while Egypt did not earn anything.⁸ Yet Egypt and Syria announced that they gained a victory.⁹ It depends of course on what is the definition of a victory. For sure Egypt and Syria did better than previous wars, when Arab states were clearly defeated, particularly in 1967. Furthermore in 1973 major Arab reinforcements flooded into Syria, where they delayed the Israeli advance. Israel understood that it could not achieve much more in that front so it agreed to a cease-fire. On the Egyptian front Israel surrounded Egypt's 3rd Army but did not destroy it and Egyptian forces held the ground they took from the IDF in the beginning of the war. Israel did prove that even after absorbing a massive surprise attack on two fronts it managed to turn the tide of war in its favor.

Israel had to win every high-intensity war. Even if Israel had lost and still survived, the long-term ramifications could have been quite negative. Many in Israel might have assumed that it is better for them to leave it, immigration into Israel and foreign investments might have slowed down. The Arabs might have believed that Israel is gradually crumbling and wait for the right opportunity to launch the final blow.

There were low-intensity wars between Israel and Arab states, like with Egypt in 1967–1970, which ended in kind of a draw. Egypt failed in pushing Israel back from the Suez Canal let alone from Sinai, while Israel was forced to run an attrition war that cost it dearly. The low-intensity war in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1987–1993 brought the Oslo Accords, which created the PA. This outcome could be considered as a Palestinian success since before 1987 Israel did not want to hand over such powers to the Palestinians. In the low-intensity war of 2000–2005 Israel gradually managed to suppress the Palestinian guerrilla and terror activities. It was a long process and the two sides paid a high price. In 2005 Israel left areas in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, which was an achievement for the Palestinians.

In the early twenty-first century there was a "belief spread among IDF senior commanders that asymmetrical wars became "wars of conviction," or "wars of consciousness which meant that it was no longer necessary to defeat the enemy in the traditional way but rather to create a victory appearance." Two years before the 2006 war one of the lessons learned from a major exercise, Firestones-9, was that stopping the launching of rockets required affecting the enemy's capabilities, not its "consciousness." However the IDF stuck to its concept of wars of conviction.¹⁰ The 2006 war showed how difficult it is to get the image of a victory. Since 2006 Israel ran two wars, in 2008–2009 and in 2014 that ended more or

less in a tie. In each of those wars Hamas took quite a major hit yet Hamas fought back by such means as firing rockets at Israel throughout the entire war.

According to the "IDF Strategy" from 2015 the IDF strives to win and to "dictate terms for the end of hostilities" while reducing damages to the Israeli population.¹¹ Jonathan Schanzer claimed in late April 2017 that "the Israelis have warned repeatedly that the next war with Hezbollah could be one in which Israel will seek nothing less than total defeat and ousting of Hezbollah from Lebanon."¹² This follows the draws in previous rounds, which caused frustration in Israel, particularly due to its clear military superiority over Hamas and Hezbollah. However in both Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, having the upper hand against an evasive foe is not easy. Israel could conquer a large part of Lebanon and all the Gaza Strip and inflict heavy casualties but its enemies still will not be beaten completely.

QUICK VICTORY

The IDF sought a quick victory¹³ following the 1948–1949 war that lasted almost a year. The next high-intensity wars were much shorter. The wars in 1956 and 1967 lasted about a week and in both of them Israel won. The 1973 October war went on for about three weeks and in the end it was not clear if Israel had won. The war in 1982 had stretched for almost four months since the campaign in the Lebanese capital city dragged on for about three months and even then it led to a compromise. The PLO was forced out of Lebanon but it survived.

Israel had long low-intensity wars with Arab states, like the one with Egypt in 1967–1970 and the Palestinians, in 1987–1993 and 2000–2005. Israel also confronted hybrid foes. The war against Hezbollah in 2006 continued thirty-four days, the one against Hamas in the Gaza Strip in 2008–2009 lasted twenty-two days, and the one in 2014 dragged on for fifty days.

In 1956 and 1967 Arab states like Syria and Jordan could have helped Egypt. In both wars Jordan and Syria did not launch a major attack against Israel. The latter used it to quickly defeat Egypt. In 1973, following the combined Egyptian–Syrian offensive, it took time for the IDF to regroup and to try to end the war as soon as possible. The wars in 1982, 2006, 2008–2009, and particularly the one in 2014 were longer than high-intensity wars in 1956, 1967 and 1973. Israel's rivals, the PLO in 1982, Hezbollah in 2006, and Hamas in 2008–2009 and 2014 were left alone to face a much stronger enemy, the IDF. Yet Israel hesitated over if and when to storm into a heavily populated urban area. The difficulty of finding and hitting the enemy prolonged the wars in 1982, 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014.

Israel needed a rapid victory in any kind of war, as part of strengthening Israeli deterrence i.e., convincing its foes not to confront Israel. The swift Israeli victory in 1956 was effective in both preventing an attack by the Egyptian military and in ending guerrilla and terror strikes from the Gaza Strip. Yet after the fast victory in 1967, although it was more impressive than the one in 1956, Israel had to deal with low-intensity war in all the three fronts where it won in 1967. The IDF was confronted by both Arab militaries, mostly the Egyptian one, and guerrilla and terror groups, particularly the PLO. In the 1973 war Israel did not reach a quick victory and in a way Israel did not even win. Following it there was an attrition war between Israel and Syria, until 1974, while the PLO attacked Israel across the 1970s. In 1982, 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 Israel did not gain a fast victory, if any. On one hand, after the 1982 war Israel had to fight Hezbollah for almost two decades. On the other hand since 1982 Arab states did not confront Israel. Hezbollah did the same for more than a decade after 2006. Hamas restrained itself for a few years after the 2014 war and for much less time after the 2008–2009 war. Therefore even when Israel did not achieve a quick victory there were different results in regard to its deterrence.

A fast victory was supposed to reduce Israel's casualties. In 1956 and 1967 the war ended in about a week. In 1956 Israel lost almost 200 troops while in 1967 the cost was almost 800. In the 2006 war, which went on for thirty-four days, 165 Israelis were killed. In the 2014 war, which lasted fifty days, seventy-two Israelis were killed. There were of course all kinds of reasons for the differences in the amount of casualties between the wars such as the strength of Israel's foes. Yet because of that it could be argued that in fighting a hybrid foe, when there is not a danger to the existence of the state as in a high-intensity war, then ending the war as soon as possible might not be the most urgent and important goal. For example sometimes rushing can cause more casualties. It is better to wait for the best opportunity to strike and not to attack too fast, particularly when the conditions on the ground are in favor of the foe.

A rapid victory was meant to lower Israel's expenses, like the consumption of various resources, military and civilian alike. Yet if the IDF is more careful in using its ammunition there will be less urgency to end the war quickly before the IDF runs out of ammunition. It is doable since in fighting a hybrid force, which has no tanks or aircraft there are fewer targets than in a high-intensity war. A hybrid force like Hezbollah can have hundreds and even thousands of rocket sites. Yet to begin with the Israeli goal should not be destroying all of them but mostly those that have the long-range rockets and/or biggest number of rockets. Furthermore the IDF should find and go after its foe's center of gravity. The IDF also does not necessarily have to strike every site that is considered as headquarter since in terms of a hybrid force it could mean just a civilian place, which can easily be replaced with another spot. Some of them are

where a commander's family lives. Either way those so-called headquarters are usually not a modern command-and-control center with advanced military equipment such as sophisticated communication gear. Therefore Israel should rethink before bombing those targets. By that Israel not only reduces the chances of collateral damage but also save ammunition, which is important particularly if it is precision-guided munition.

A short war was also required in order to discharge the reserves. Keeping tens let alone hundreds of thousands of them in active duty cost the state a lot of money in providing them with their needs and also because of losing all the work those reservists did in their civilian life. The 1956 and 1967 wars ended in about a week so the Israeli economy did not suffer much. The 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars went on from one to two months, so reserves had to serve more in active duty but to begin with fewer of them were called, compared to 1956 and 1967. This difference reduced the pressure to gain a fast victory.

In the era of high-intensity wars the front line was sometimes close to Israel's cities, towns, and villages, mostly in 1948 and also in the north and in the center of Israel in 1967 and in the Golan Heights in 1973. In some cases the battles ran inside populated areas, mostly in 1948. Yet, since 1949, most of the Israeli population has been kept out of harm's way during war. Israel still had to win fast in a high-intensity war, since the balance of power was in favor of the Arabs. If the IDF got worn down during the war it might have lost, and then the entire country, with the Israeli population, would have been at risk.

In the 2006 and 2014 wars the majority of Israelis were in the range of the rockets that were fired at Israel. Yet only a relatively small part of the Israeli population was exposed to most of the rockets. Even those citizens did not go to the street en masse, demanding their government to gain a rapid victory no matter what will be the ramifications. Furthermore there was no danger that the enemy, a nonstate organization, which was inferior to the IDF, could win and conquer any Israeli territory. It explains why in 2006 and 2014 Israel was not forced to rush to end those wars quickly, although of course Israel wanted it.

Another reason why Israel strove to end the war quickly was the fear that its foes will be joined by other Arab states, as Iraq did in every high-intensity war, particularly in 1973. Yet in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars Hamas/Hezbollah did not receive help let alone direct military support from Arab states. Actually many Arab states were against those groups and in a way in favor of Israel.

Israel needed a rapid victory before the international community intervenes, aiming to end the war, which often meant stopping Israel from reaching its objectives. It was like that especially in the high-intensity wars. In 1956 and 1967 Israel sought to exploit its success in the battlefield to gain more ground. In 1973 Israel needed more time to com-

plete the siege of Egypt's 3rd Army and then to destroy that force. The time pressure on Israel was diplomatic, including by friendly powers such as the United States.

Israel had to be concerned also about a military intervention against it, by the Soviet Union, the patron of Egypt and Syria. In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars Iran supported its protégés, Israel's foes, but Iran was far less powerful than the Soviet Union was. Iran also was not willing to confront Israel directly, as the Soviet Union almost did. In that sense, in the wars against Hezbollah/Hamas, Israel did not need to finish the wars.

Following the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, Hezbollah and Hamas were proud that they managed to hold on so long, much more than Arab militaries did in high-intensity wars. Yet it was not so much because of the capability of those hybrid forces but due to Israel's mistakes and constraints. Israel should have emphasized during the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars that striving for a short war is not mandatory: a longer war does not mean that Israel has failed. Such an approach would have reduced the pressure on Israel. Furthermore, in regard to Hamas/Hezbollah, it would have taken the wind out of their sails.

Prior to a war sometimes postponing the start of the war helped Israel in getting international legitimacy for the use of force, as was the case in 1967. This approach also benefited the IDF, since it had more time to organize and train its troops, mostly the reserves. During the 2006 and 2014 wars, Israel delayed its ground offensive. Israel launched a massive air attack, but sending in the land units had much more impact, including for world public opinion. By waiting before initiating a ground offensive, Israel strove to gain both international support and time to better prepare for combat.

LAUNCHING A PREVENTIVE WAR OR A PREEMPTIVE STRIKE

Since 1949, if Arab militaries had invaded Israel, the IDF would have carried out a counterattack. However, due to Israel's lack of strategic depth, Arab forces could have reached key areas before the IDF had managed to block them. Therefore the IDF had to take the initiative from the start of the war to run a preventive war or a preemptive strike.¹⁴ The basic concept is to fight in the best possible terms for Israel, after getting an alert about its foe's intentions and preparations. Yet Israel had to be very careful not to be blamed for igniting a war, particularly when it was difficult to prove that war was unavoidable.

Egypt's huge arms deal of September 27, 1955, with the Soviet Union, included dozens of aircraft and hundreds of armed vehicles such as tanks.¹⁵ It was one of the main reasons for Israel to launch a preventive

war in 1956. Israel was worried that Egypt's massive military buildup might allow it, in a few years or even less, to beat the IDF. Therefore Israel attacked first. Egypt's military was defeated in 1956, yet in 1960 it deployed three divisions in Sinai, which led to a crisis that could have ended in a war. It proved that four years after the 1956 war Egypt was willing to fight.

In 1982 Israel launched a preventive war against the PLO in Lebanon in order to defeat it and stop the group from getting stronger in that country, a development which Israel saw as a threat. The PLO took a major hit and was kicked out of Lebanon, but a decade later the group was allowed by Israel to rule, with restrictions, most of the Gaza Strip and a small part of the West Bank.

Israel could have launched a preemptive attack when there was a danger that an Arab offensive might start in a matter of weeks let alone days or even hours. On one hand, Israel faced accusations of being the aggressor, as in a preventive war. Israel also did not want to start a war by mistake, with negative ramifications. On the other hand, because of Israel's lack of strategic depth and since the balance of power was against it, waiting too long was risky if Arabs attacked first. Such a case happened in mid May 1967, when Egypt sent massive reinforcements into Sinai. In response, Israel did the same from its side of the border. After three weeks of intense tension, Israel attacked. Although the Egyptian military might not have posed much of a threat to Israel, following its poor performance in the war, it was revealed only during the battles.

In the 2014 war, one of Israel's main goals was to destroy tunnels in the Gaza Strip that led into Israel, before they could have served Hamas as a route to infiltrate into Israel with dozens if not hundreds of gunmen. It was kind of a preemptive strike, much less critical than in 1967, because Hamas was much weaker than Egypt was in 1967. Yet for Israel it was important to stop in advance an attack from the tunnels.

During the 1980s and the 1990s, Syria deployed up to six divisions on the border with Israel, in the Golan Heights.¹⁶ At any given moment Syria could have started an offensive, aiming at recapturing all or part of the Golan Heights. It seemed more likely when there were periods of tension. Furthermore Israel could have considered a preventive war, before Syria became more powerful and/or got a good opportunity to attack. Israel was aware that even if the IDF attacks, in the best conditions for the latter, the price Israel would have paid might have been significant, although probably lower than if Syria strikes first. However, Israel decided to wait and accepted this dangerous situation for several decades. The civil war in Syria brought a meltdown of the Syrian armed forces. A very costly war between Israel and Syria was avoided due to the Syrian civil war. Israel did not cause the terrible war in Syria, which actually came as a surprise to Israel. The Israeli restraint for so many years paid off quite well for Israel, with all the risks that were involved.

Since 2006 Hezbollah has been acquiring more and more rockets. The group does not have the strength the Syrian armed forces had, but Hezbollah's growing arsenal of rockets has been the biggest threat to Israel, as Syrian forces were in the past. The Israeli approach toward Hezbollah has been to deter this group while being careful not to get dragged into an unnecessary war. It is a similar approach to the one Israel had toward Syria at one time. Israel could hope that after Syria's military almost crumbled because of the civil war in its country maybe the same will happen in Lebanon; Hezbollah will eventually become much weaker due to internal reasons that have to do with Lebanon.

According to the "IDF Strategy" from 2015 the IDF needs to be able to conduct "a preliminary strike, in accordance with early warning indications, to thwart an attempt to harm Israel."¹⁷ The Israeli operation in this matter could be very minor, such as arresting a suspect in the West Bank who plans to attack Israelis, or bigger, such as bombing a delivery of weapons in Syria before it reaches Hezbollah. The Israeli action could go up all the way to conducting quite a vast offensive against enemy infrastructure such as rockets.

ANNIHILATING ARAB UNITS AND SEIZING ARAB TERRITORIES

The IDF had two major operational goals beginning the 1950s: to destroy Arab forces and/or conquering areas.¹⁸ Annihilating Arab units was essential, particularly when they attacked Israel or were about to do that. This process included not necessarily focusing on killing Arab troops but on breaking Arab units to pieces so they can't function. The meltdown of an Arab unit often caused its troops to surrender or to retreat from their posts while leaving their vehicles, weapons, and sometimes also their uniforms. In other cases, for example, following the collapse of an Arab division, some of its brigades and battalions kept on fighting, but they were far less effective. In the 1982, 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, the PLO, Hezbollah, and Hamas relied on small formations, usually less than a company and even a platoon. The IDF therefore did not focus on dismantling such tiny units but on pushing them out of its way and killing their members.

In the era of high-intensity wars Israel seized land for various political, military, and economic purposes and sometimes also because of ideological, religious, and historical reasons. The conquest of Sinai in 1967–1982 was vital, because it gave Israel strategic depth, oil, plenty of space for bases and training, and the control of the Tiran Straits while watching closely the Suez Canal. The seizing of the West Bank since 1967 has been important to defend Israel's population centers. In contrast, in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars the goal was to accomplish the mis-

sions, which were mostly to destroy military infrastructure. The IDF took only tiny areas in the Gaza Strip/Lebanon and left all of them in a matter of days or weeks. Ron Tira claimed in 2016 that the IDF sees seizing and even a presence in enemy land as a “liability.”¹⁹

Israel avoided approaching Arab capital cities like Damascus or Cairo, let alone under siege (in 1967 and 1973). For Israel it was too complicated and risky, putting them because the Soviet Union might have confronted Israel. In 1982 Israel besieged the PLO in Beirut and eventually controlled the city for several weeks. In the 2006 war Israel could have gone again all the way to Beirut, where Hezbollah’s main headquarter was, but Israel hesitated most of the war to conduct a large ground offensive in south Lebanon. Reaching Beirut by land was not even an option. Israel also avoided regaining control of Gaza City in 2008–2009 and 2014, even for a short time in order to retaliate, destroy military infrastructure, and deter Hamas.

In the 1967 war, Israel seized vast areas, mostly in Sinai, and also destroyed large parts of Arab militaries, particularly the Egyptian one. Arab states, including those that lost a lot of land, refused neither to recognize nor to negotiate with Israel. A decade later, getting back the Sinai was for Egypt a major reason to agree to have a peace treaty with Israel, which meant recognizing Israel. The same was supposed to happen with Syria in the 1990s but the peace talks with the Assad regime ended without an agreement. Jordan gave up the West Bank in 1988, an area the kingdom lost in 1967. In 1994 Jordan officially accepted Israel’s right to exist by signing a peace treaty with Israel, which did not include returning the West Bank to Jordan. This occurred in the same year in which Israel, following the Oslo Accords, gave the PA most of the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank. In contrast to the peace process with Egypt, the one with the PA did not lead to a final agreement but to another war, in 2000. In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars Hamas/Hezbollah did not lose land, but even if Israel had conquered large parts of Lebanon or all of the Gaza Strip its enemies there would have continued to defy it and to reject any idea of talking with it about peace.

During the 1973 war the IDF recaptured all the territory it lost in the Golan Heights in the start of that showdown and then the IDF conquered another 500 square kilometers inside Syria, which was returned to Syria after the war, following negotiations. During the uprising in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1987–1993, the IDF did not have to recapture large areas. Yet the IDF had numerous times to reclaim its hold in tiny zones like streets and corners that were taken by Palestinian demonstrators who were often violent due to their use of stones and Molotov cocktails. In 1994 the IDF gave the PA cities in the West Bank as part of the Oslo Accords. In 2002 the IDF had to retake many of those cities since they turned into guerrilla and terror bases. Later on, the PA got them back, again, without a fight.

In 2004 the IDF might have seized part of Sinai in case of a war with Egypt.²⁰ The IDF would probably not have tried to reach all the way to the Suez Canal, as in 1967, or close to there, as in 1956. The IDF could have captured vast areas, but the fight might have continued. The IDF would have had to deal with logistical hardships due to a deployment deep inside Sinai. It would have been quite a constraint if the war had lasted for months against a powerful Arab military.

In the 1967 war, neutralizing Arab air forces by the IAF paved the way to attacking Arab ground units. In the 1973 war the IAF had to destroy Arab anti-aircraft batteries in order to gain freedom of action to bomb Arab land forces. In the 2006 war the IDF had to beat Hezbollah's combatants with anti-tank missiles so the IDF can reach those who fired rockets at Israel. Therefore the IDF had to defeat a certain enemy force, which protected its brothers in arms. It could be added that in the 1948–1982 wars the IDF had to destroy weapons systems such as aircraft, tanks, artillery pieces, and vessels. In the wars of 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014, the IDF's main challenge was to annihilate missiles and mostly rockets.

Sometimes the IDF ran into enemy strongholds that put up a tough fight, as in 1956 in Um Katef, a big Egyptian post in northeast Sinai. The IDF could not have bypassed this vital site, which controlled a major line of communication. The resistance there did not last long, less than two days, but meanwhile it disrupted Israeli operations. In the 1982 war, PLO gunmen fought fiercely in south Lebanon, in the city of Sidon, which is on the main route to Beirut. In some places in Sidon, the battles went on for almost a week. It did not stop the IDF from advancing north toward Beirut, but it cost the IDF casualties.

The IDF seized key positions, including up in the mountains, such as in Mount Hermon in the north of the Golan Heights, which cover a large part of the Golan Heights. Israel gained that spot in 1967, lost its camp there in the first day of the 1973 war, and recaptured the base at the end of that showdown. In the 1982 war the IDF seized a PLO stronghold in Belfort Castle in south Lebanon, which overlooks the area around it.

In many cases conquering vital areas and annihilating major Arab forces came together, like in 1967, when the IDF penetrated deep into Sinai, a maneuver that both brought the collapse of Egyptian units and gave Israel the control of the peninsula. In 1982 the IDF seized south Lebanon, a move that caused the collapse of the PLO's army. In the 2006 war and particularly in the 2008–2009 and 2014 wars, IDF penetration into Arab territory was quite minor, so there were not many chances to hit Arab forces. The Israeli advance did urge its foes to send their men to combat, which put them at risk. Yet the IDF had to struggle to find and strike even a single hostile fighter since the latter used the terrain, such as the urban area in the Gaza Strip, to their advantage.

RAIDS

During the border wars in the 1950s, the IDF conducted raids as a response to Palestinian infiltrations into Israel. In many occasions the Palestinians penetrated because of economic reasons, but sometimes they harmed Israelis, including civilians. In the beginning of the border wars, the IDF attacked Arab villages and later Arab police and military camps, in order to deter Arab governments from allowing, let alone supporting, the Palestinian incursions. Israel might have also exploited the raids as a way to cause an escalation that would lead to war with Jordan and/or Egypt. In that sense Israel wanted the Palestinians to continue with their minor invasion into Israel so it could serve as a reason for Israel to run raids, aiming at starting a war with a neighboring Arab state. It is not clear, therefore, if the Israeli raids were meant to deter Arab states or to drag them into a war.

The IDF launched raids during the war of attrition in 1969–1970, in order to retaliate and to coerce Egypt to reduce its attacks against Israeli troops who were deployed across the Suez Canal. Against Arab nonstate organizations, mostly the PLO, the IDF launched numerous raids beginning in the 1960s in order to retaliate for and deter hostile actions against Israel.

At the tactical level, a raid served to capture weapons, equipment, documents, and prisoners. Yet usually the main goal was to destroy an Arab force, like the garrison of a post. Since there was no intention to seize land in each raid, the Israeli force left the objective that was attacked and returned to Israel, which allowed its foe to recover and to claim that it pushed back the Israeli troops.

A typical raid took several hours, and it often happened at night. Israeli troops arrived and left their objective on foot or with helicopters or land vehicles. The Israeli task force in those raids was based almost always on the infantry, including elite units and Special Forces. In some raids, tanks and combat engineers participated too. Fire support from aircraft and artillery was usually not used prior to the attack in order to keep the element of surprise, but they were kept at hand in case the raid ran into troubles. The IDF sometimes blocked the way to the objective, aiming to cut off its enemy so it could not retreat and/or receive reinforcements. The size of the Israeli force could have been up to a brigade, but this was rare. Usually the IDF sent a company or a platoon.

Following the 1979 peace treaty, Sinai has been demilitarized. If Egypt had started a massive deployment and/or building of fortifications in all of Sinai, without Israeli permission, there would have been a major crisis. Israel could have invaded Sinai, aiming to destroy Egyptian units, dismantle the infrastructure, and then withdraw. It would have been a giant raid, in the operational level, not a tactical one. During that raid the IDF would not have run into fortifications as the ones that delayed the IDF in

its offensive in Sinai in 1956 and 1967. The IDF would have captured vehicles and equipment and tried to demoralize Egyptian soldiers as retribution for breaking the demilitarization and in order to deter Egypt from doing it again. Israel could have the same concept in regard to Hamas or Hezbollah. The IDF could conduct a large-scale raid, aiming to destroy rockets and military infrastructure in Lebanon/the Gaza Strip. In the Gaza Strip, the IDF will also go after the tunnels there, particularly those that lead into Israel. After the IDF accomplishes its missions its troops will withdraw back to the border.

FIREPOWER VS. MANEUVER

During the era of high-intensity wars the IDF lacked firepower. It could not have afforded buying sufficient number of bombers and/or artillery pieces to try to achieve its objectives by relying on crushing the foe with bombs, shells, and rockets. The firepower the IDF had was not massive or accurate enough to defeat its foes. Therefore the IDF depended on a combination of firepower and maneuver, according to the circumstances.

During the negotiations on the Sinai Interim Agreement in the mid-1970s, Israel was willing to give up large parts of Sinai, assuming that if the Egyptian military attacks it will be defeated due to the Israeli edge in maneuver warfare.²¹ In the 1982 war the IDF preferred, during its ground offensive, to rely heavily on firepower.²² Prior to the 2006 war many in the IDF believed in “the idea of decisive victory via firepower.”²³ In spite of its maneuver skills, the IDF chose to rely on firepower, especially in 2006. While in 1982 Israeli ground units went all the way to Beirut, in 2006 the IDF reached the Lebanese capital city only from the air. The Israeli land attack was limited to south Lebanon. It happened because the IDF strove to avoid casualties by relying on firepower. The IDF was encouraged to do that following the dramatic upgrading of IDF’s firepower, mostly in the IAF, and its availability, since Israel had only one front in both 1982 and 2006. Israel’s enemies in those wars could not have returned the favor since their firepower was much less than the IDF possessed, which was another reason for the IDF to depend on its firepower.

In 1982 and 2006 Israeli firepower inflicted severe casualties to Israel’s enemies, but there was also collateral damage. The IDF tried not to harm civilians, but it was not easy since Arab nonstate organizations hid behind their population, often while firing at the Israeli population. IDF’s firepower also caused substantial damage to the military and civilian infrastructure of Israel’s foes. However it was not sufficient to win. The IDF understood it could not neglect its ground units—its maneuver capabilities—in spite of all the advantages of firepower. The IDF tried to have more balance between maneuver and firepower, yet in the 2008–2009 and

2014 wars, firepower was quite dominant due to the same factors as in 2006. There were also similar ramifications such as collateral damage. The Israeli firepower, mostly the IAF, destroyed hundreds of targets and disrupted Hamas' operations but it was not sufficient to destroy many of Hamas' rockets or its motivation to fire them at Israel. An Israeli ground offensive that would have penetrated deep into the Gaza Strip, together with the IAF, could have helped to reach those two major goals.

The "IDF Strategy" from 2015 called to use firepower with "maximum power from the outset of the conflict in the front and in the depth" in a proportional way and without wasting munitions.²⁴ The IDF strives to avoid mistakes that were made during the 2006 war, when the IDF spent too much ammunition, particularly since the results were not satisfactory after fighting only one enemy, which was much weaker than the IDF.

According to "IDF Strategy" from 2015 the IDF needs to be able to strike hundreds of targets per day. It will be done in three ways: fire at preplanned targets, fire at occasional targets, and close support fire. This will require cooperation between various units and following safety rules²⁵ which shows the potential complexity and importance of using firepower.

ARAB FIREPOWER

In the 1967 war Jordan and Syria limited their steps to opening fire on Israeli objectives, mostly near the border, without conducting a major maneuver. Although those Arab militaries had hundreds of weapons systems such as tanks, these were not used as part of a ground offensive.

Syria, since around 2000, basically gave up the option of launching a large-scale ground offensive in the Golan Heights, like the one that it carried out in 1973. Instead Syria decided to rely on firepower, mostly artillery, missiles, and rockets, not aircraft. It could have inflicted heavy losses and caused substantial damage. At the same time Syria could have tried to conduct some raids and maybe even to seize a piece of ground near the border, almost as a symbolic act.

Hezbollah does not have an option to conduct a major land offensive, for lack of enough manpower and weapons systems such as tanks. At most Hezbollah could storm the Israeli border with thousands of men, in a kind of a mass infantry attack. Instead Hezbollah plans to send dozens and maybe hundreds of fighters to seize Israeli sites on the border, knowing it will only be a matter of days, if not hours, before Israel retakes back its territory. Hezbollah will try to turn this raid into a propaganda victory. Israel should explain, including to its own population, that the tiny penetration into its country did not give Hezbollah any significant achievement. Yet some in the media, including in Israel, might present it as a catastrophe for Israel, ignoring the simple logic that it is almost

impossible to prevent such an attack. The nature of the terrain on the border allows Hezbollah's gunmen to approach and then to charge into Israel, with complete surprise. Unless the IDF receives a specific warning, which explains where and when the attack comes, then Hezbollah can infiltrate into Israel.

Hezbollah, knowing that its maneuver options are very limited, has been relying on rockets. Many of Hezbollah's rockets are not meant to be moved around. This lack of mobility helps the IDF in pinpointing them. Many rockets are also inside a building, which hides but does not shield them very well from Israeli air and artillery bombardments. Other rockets are better protected since they are underground. One of their main advantages is that there are up to 150,000 of them, so Hezbollah could afford losing some of them to Israeli attacks, interception, or malfunctions. Some of the rockets are accurate enough to strike valuable Israeli objectives. Hezbollah could also launch dozens of less-accurate rockets, at only one target, assuming that at least a few of them will hit where they are supposed to.

Hamas, like Hezbollah, does not have weapons systems or enough men to launch a big land offensive, let alone to conquer Israeli land. Hamas, as Hezbollah, also relies on its rockets, but its arsenal is inferior to the one Hezbollah has, both in quantity and quality. Hamas has also experienced the interception of many of its rockets since 2012. Therefore Hamas decided to develop its maneuver skills, by investing heavily in digging tunnels that open a way, literally, to run ground attacks against Israel.

Therefore both Israel and its hybrid foes have been relying, to a large extent, on firepower. They, especially of course the IDF, have maneuver capabilities, but firepower plays a major and maybe even the main role in their strategic and operational thinking. For each side it is also an answer to its rival's growing firepower. In this sense they fight fire with fire.

In 1949–1967 the Egyptian military, from its position in the Gaza Strip, could have attacked, aiming to cut off the Negev area from the rest of Israel. Hamas could not have done the same. At most Hamas could have tried to disrupt day-to-day life in the Negev by concentrating its firepower there. In 2012, 1,632 rockets hit Israel. In 2013 the number went down significantly, to 36.²⁶ This shelling from the Gaza Strip increased in mid-2014, which led to the confrontation in July that year. It showed the impact of using firepower against Israel, even without launching ground attacks against it.

In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, Hamas and Hezbollah had rockets that were not that accurate, so they were fired at large objectives, and still many landed in open areas. Hamas and Hezbollah did not focus on huge military targets but on cities and towns. Some Israeli cities that were hit have military bases, like the harbors in Haifa and Ashdod. However it seemed that Hezbollah and Hamas aimed at civilians there, not at

troops. It made more military sense for Hezbollah and Hamas to shoot on military objectives such as airfields, from which the IAF launched sorties against them, in order to create disarray in those bases. Yet Hamas and Hezbollah preferred to strike the Israeli population.

In 2017 the prevailing assessment in the IDF was that Hezbollah will fire its long-range missiles in the start of the next war, aiming to inflict maximum damage, as soon as possible. Furthermore, Hezbollah seeks to launch those missiles before the IAF destroys them, as it did in the first night of the 2006 war.²⁷

Since the late 1960s the IAF has not proved to be very effective in suppressing Arab artillery fire. "The IDF's gradual improvement of strike capability over the years was more or less matched by the Arabs' improvement of survivability and redundancy."²⁸ A ground offensive might have better chances in this matter, by seizing the enemy fire bases. Yet Israel hesitated to do that because of the fear of casualties and due to the location of Arab artillery that sometimes was out of reach of Israel's land units. There was also the concern regarding international criticism,²⁹ particularly if there is a lot of collateral damage.

THE IMPACT OF THE TERRAIN AND THE WEATHER

In the high-intensity wars, the theater of war included Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, the north of the Red Sea, and the Eastern Mediterranean. The theater of operations was usually confined to quite limited fronts, mostly in the Golan Heights and Sinai, where the crucial battles took place in certain areas, like fortified posts, bridgeheads, and major crossroads. In the 1982, 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars the theater of war included Israel, Lebanon, and the Gaza Strip. The theater of operations was mostly the north of Israel and the south of Lebanon/the south of Israel and most of the Gaza Strip and particularly the outskirts of that area. The IDF therefore fought in all kinds of areas, from vast and mostly empty areas like Sinai to dense populated places such as the Gaza Strip. Israeli troops maneuvered in various terrains: in open desert in Sinai and in hills and mountains in the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and Lebanon. For high-intensity, hybrid, and low-intensity wars in Syria and Lebanon, the IDF trained in similar terrain and weather, like in rocky and steep areas in the north of Israel, in the Galilee and the Golan Heights. For exercising against Hamas in the Gaza strip the suitable terrain and weather is in the south of Israel, in the Negev desert, like in the huge camp in Tse'elom.

In the 1967 war, in the battle on Aum-Catuf in northeast Sinai, the IDF implemented lessons learned from its attack in the same sector eleven years before, in 1956.³⁰ It was an example of how the IDF, which fought in the same fronts again and again, over time became familiar with their terrain and weather. It was like that in Sinai in 1956 and 1967, yet then the

battles lasted only a few days. The IDF had much more time to study the terrain during its long deployments in Sinai. The first one went on several months, from late 1956 to early 1957. The second one lasted from 1967 to 1981, when the peninsula was not a battlefield, except from the war of attrition in 1967–1970 and the 1973 war, but the fight then was only near the Suez Canal. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip were captured by Israel in 1967, which allowed the IDF to know those areas well over the years. It helped the IDF during low-intensity wars there in 1987–1993 and in 2000–2005. In 2005 Israel left the Gaza Strip, so in 2008–2009 and particularly in 2014 there were fewer Israeli troops who were familiar with the Gaza Strip. In south Lebanon in the 1980s and in the 1990s, when Israel confronted Hezbollah, the IDF got adjusted to that area throughout the stay there. After the withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, the IDF went back there, during the 2006 war, and by then some of its troops were not familiar with Lebanon.

Since 1948 the IDF has had to take into consideration that battles could occur on several fronts at the same time. Israeli units exercised in advance, preparing to carry out a mission in a certain sector against a specific enemy. Yet in the war an Israeli unit was often sent to deal with a sector it was less familiar with. Although the IDF always fought Arabs, there were differences in the way each Arab military/group fought and also in the nature of the terrain in each front.

Israeli troops had to be ready to fight against an Arab military or a guerrilla and terror organization. Sometimes an Arab military/group appeared on more than one front. The Iraqi military fought against Israel in the 1948–1949 war in the West Bank, while in 1973 the two sides clashed inside Syria. The PLO confronted Israel from Jordan, until 1970, and then from Lebanon during the 1970s. Sometimes the IDF fought a conventional military in one war and a group in another war, on the same front. For example in the Gaza Strip, the IDF confronted the Egyptian military in 1956 and 1967 and Hamas in 2008–2009 and in 2014. Therefore Israeli troops had to be familiar with different kinds of enemies and fronts.

The IDF has to be able to fight not only in various terrain and weather conditions but also at night. The IDF has used night warfare since the 1948–1949 war yet in the 1982 war in Lebanon the IDF often avoided advancing during darkness. In fighting hybrid and in low-intensity wars since 2000 the IDF emphasized the use of night warfare.

In the wars against Palestinians in 1982, 2008–2009, and 2014, the latter were under siege in a major city, Beirut in 1982 and Gaza in 2008–2009 and 2014. Yet their own population and the nature of urban warfare protected them from a full-scale Israeli ground offensive. This kind of attack was effective against Arab forces in 1956 and 1967 since they were caught in an open terrain and cut to pieces. In 2006 Hezbollah's fighters were not in one main city. They were spread in many locations across the south of Lebanon. Israel, which did not want to launch a land offensive to

begin with, carried out very limited raids. Eventually the IDF conducted a vast offensive that bypassed cities and towns, yet it was not very successful.

TRAINING

In the early 1950s Israel had to handle a low-intensity war. The IDF preferred not to deal with that since it strove to concentrate on training for a high-intensity war,³¹ Israel's main threat. Losing such a war might have put at risk the survival of Israel. Therefore preparing for a high-intensity war was a top priority until the 1990s. Over the years the IDF conducted many exercises, according to scenarios that fitted high-intensity wars.

At the same time the IDF could not have avoided fighting low-intensity wars against Arab states and/or Palestinians. There were also the hybrid wars of 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014, which replaced to a large extent the high-intensity wars.

For the IDF hybrid and low-intensity wars were often easier compared to high-intensity wars. With all the complications and challenges of low-intensity and hybrid wars, they posed much less of a threat to Israel than a high-intensity war. Of course the IDF still had to train well for every confrontation, but even if it had lost a hybrid or a low-intensity war the outcome was not as dangerous as in absorbing a defeat in a high-intensity war. The IDF could have always exploited its overwhelming superiority in firepower to stop an Arab success in a hybrid or in a low-intensity war. In this sense the IDF could have taken risks in its buildup such as in training, assuming that even in the worst case, in a hybrid or a low-intensity war, Israel will still survive, which was not guaranteed during a high-intensity war.

Prior to the 1956 war, which was initiated by Israel, the IDF had several months to train its forces. Prior to the 1967 war, the IDF had about three weeks to organize and even to train its troops, following the crisis that started in mid-May. On October 6, 1973, when Egypt and Syria launched their surprise offensive, the IDF received several hours to hastily collect its reserves. Still, their skills that were developed before the war, in exercises, made it possible for the IDF to stop the Arab advance and then to turn the tide of war in its favor. Prior to the 2006 war, the reserves were neglected for years, and the results were seen in the war. Before the 2008–2009 war the IDF trained its troops, following the traumatic experience from the 2006 war. The IDF trained also prior to the 2014 war. Yet infantry brigades did not exercise properly for that war, since they were occupied in day-to-day security activity.³² It should also be mentioned that, compared to high-intensity wars, the IDF had more

time to train its troops during the war since the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars were longer and less demanding than those in 1956, 1967, and 1973.

“IDF Strategy” from 2015 explained the three positions in which the IDF could be: routine, emergency and war.³³ According to that the IDF planned and conducted its exercises. Many times drills were cancelled or stopped at a certain stage since there was a crisis in another sector that required sending the troops there.

On March 22, 2015, the IDF ran its biggest exercise since the war of 2014. According to the scenario of the drill, the IDF had to block infiltrations from the Gaza Strip while massive amount of rockets and mortar shells hit Israel.³⁴ In mid-November 2016 the IAF carried out a large-scale exercise, in which all its units participated. It included attacking many targets in a short time, landing troops from the air, delivering supplies, and intercepting rockets. The scenario was a war in Lebanon.³⁵ In late June 2016 the IDF ran for five days a series of drills, which examined its air, land, and sea units in adjusting to emergency situations. It was all part of the training for another war against Hamas and/or Hezbollah. In September 2017, the IDF conducted its biggest exercise in almost two decades, aimed against Hezbollah.

IDF’s Command and Staff College was established in 1954. Its Tactical Command College was created in 1999. “It seemed to mark a breakthrough in the institutionalized professional education and training of Israeli commanders.” However intellectual aspects of the military profession were turned down such as military theory.³⁶ It was a mistake since this kind of training is a very easy, cheap, and of course safe way for officers to learn methods and ideas from others.

THE CORPS AND SPECIAL UNITS

The IDF, which was created during the 1948–1949 war, was then based on underground organizations, mostly the “Hagana.” Many times its troops had on-the-job training since they had to learn how to become soldiers while fighting.³⁷ In the start of the war the IDF had mostly light arms, and almost no aircraft or tanks which made it look like a kind of a hybrid force. During that war the IDF gradually became a conventional military. The IDF was based on the infantry until the late 1950s, as hybrid groups do, but in contrast to them the IDF’s infantry had, even in the 1950s, the support of tanks and aircraft. Since the late 1950s the IDF relied on the IAF and the armor.

Since the late 1980s the Israeli infantry has become more valuable than other corps like the armor because of the infantry’s importance in fighting guerrilla warfare and terror in Lebanon, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. The nature of both the enemy and the terrain made the infantry more suitable for those kinds of confrontations.

The armor contributed its share by assisting the infantry and laying ambushes. The tanks were deployed in small numbers: battalions, companies, and platoons. This was quite a different fight from high-intensity wars in 1956, 1967, and 1973, when Israeli armor divisions conducted vast operations while the Israeli infantry played a secondary role.

The Israeli assumption since the 1960s has been that pouring a large amount of money into the IAF was worth it since the IAF guarantees that there will not be a military catastrophe. Infantry, armor, and other ground corps like combat engineers also require huge budgets. Still, in the worst-case scenario for Israel, in a hybrid or a high-intensity war, Israeli planes might find it difficult to operate because of attacks on their airfields by rockets. Israel's ground units together with helicopters that don't require a runway, could not be pinned down to a base like a plane. They could pull out from their bases, including under heavy fire, regroup somewhere, and go on the offensive even in those harsh conditions.

The IAF has to continue to be ready to strike Iran's nuclear sites, if Iran tries to produce a nuclear weapon. Israel's ground forces, which can't reach Iran anyway, since it is too far away, could focus on exercising against enemies which are close to Israel, mostly nonstate organizations like Hezbollah.

The IDF created special units for all kinds of purposes, including fighting guerrilla warfare and terror. Some of them have existed for a very short time, such as the "101" in the mid-1950s that was dismantled after a few months. Yet it was known later on as a model for fighting spirit, mostly among the paratroops. Other units, like Duvdevan, which was founded in 1986, had conducted high-risk arrests and assassinations as part of the conflict with the Palestinians. In the 2006 war Israeli elite units proved to be effective at the tactical level but at the strategic level they were not used properly.³⁸

In the 2014 war the IDF attacked the Gaza Strip with units like the 36th and the 162nd divisions, which were supposed to be ready to fight on each of Israel's fronts.³⁹ Other divisions were assigned to a specific front, like the Gaza division. In the Golan Heights, following the Syrian civil war, the veteran 36th division was replaced by the new 210th division. The mission of the 210th division and the Gaza division has been to deal with day-to-day security, including a possible low-intensity war.

In an effort to reduce costs, sometimes drills were conducted without an actual maneuver and/or by doing them only with officers and non-commissioned officers. Vast exercises, in the level of a division, were not needed as part of the preparation for hybrid let alone low-intensity wars. In hybrid wars the IDF has to use divisions but not as in high-intensity wars since Hamas and Hezbollah don't possess divisions or even brigades, certainly not like those in Arab militaries that have armored vehicles. The task of the Israeli divisions is not to break the enemy formation, as in a high-intensity war, but to destroy military infrastructure and ar-

senal such as rockets and to confront Arab combatants who fought alone or in small details.

WEAPONS SYSTEMS

From the late 1950s, for about a decade, almost the entire IAF was based on French jets like the Mirage and Super Mystere. Since the late 1960s the IAF has been relying on American weapons systems. It started with the F-4 and the A-4. The IAF assimilated the F-16A and F-15A in the late 1970s. The F-16 C/D arrived in the early 1990s, followed by the F-15I in the late 1990s, F-16I in around 2004, and F-35A since 2016. Besides the A-4, which was an attack plane, all the other aircraft were fighter-bombers capable of both intercepting other aircraft and bombing ground targets. The IDF, for lack of budget and manpower, had to rely on versatile weapons systems, not on those that carry out only one mission. This is true also in regard to armor. Over the years most of the Israeli tanks were main battle tanks like the M-48/60 Patton, the Centurion, and later on the Merkava (Mark 1-4) that serve various purposes like confronting Arab tanks, supporting the infantry, and charging enemy bases. In a few cases the IDF had light tanks like the AMX-13, which were fit mostly for reconnaissance.

Arab nonstate organizations don't have tanks or aircraft, so in fighting those groups, a major part of the purpose of the IDF's tanks and planes was no longer needed. Israeli fighter-bombers and tanks still have to be able to beat their counterparts, but it is less important than in the era of high-intensity wars. Therefore Israeli fighter-bomber aircraft have to focus on bombing rockets before they will be fired at Israel. Israeli tanks have to be better protected against anti-tank missiles and to be effective in helping the Israeli infantry. It means adjusting the Israeli fighter-bomber and tanks such as by adding sub systems and ammunitions that fit their relatively new tasks.

The IAF has to be ready to carry out missions such as long-range strikes in Iran. Therefore Israel, mostly with money from the American aid, invests billions of dollars in the F-35. The budget, time, and energy that was given to the F-35 should be compared to requirements of hybrid wars, where aircraft such as the AH-64 and A-10 are important, in giving air support to ground units. The IAF has the AH-64 and could receive more. The IAF does not have the A-10, but the IAF could assimilate this plane with much less cost than the F-35, particularly since the United States might take the A-10 out of service. In the past many American weapons systems found their way to Israel after the United States did not need them anymore.

Israel lost a few aircraft and dozens of armored vehicles during the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars. It was quite a low cost to pay compared

with Israel's high-intensity wars in 1967 and 1973. Furthermore in the fight against hybrid foes, the IDF was much more powerful than it was in the high-intensity wars. Therefore in the wars since 2006 the IDF could have gone on fighting without worrying too much that it might run out of weapons systems. Israel of course had to minimize its losses but also not to overestimate and consider the destruction of a weapons system, including the more expensive and prestigious ones like aircraft, as a major blow. Giving too much attention to that was counterproductive, and it served its enemy's propagand.

In recent decades Israel invested heavily in its military industry.⁴⁰ Some of the Israeli products were meant especially against hybrid forces like creating the Iron Dome and upgrading the protection of tanks and APC, while other products such as satellites were built to spy on remote states like Iran. The latter has been the patron of Israel's hybrid foes, yet watching Iran from above was not part of Israel's conflict with Hamas or Hezbollah. It was aimed to monitor Iran's nuclear project and missile program.

On June 8, 1967, during the war, the IAF stopped bombing Egyptian vehicles in the Mitla Pass in Sinai since the IDF sought to capture them unharmed⁴¹ and then to assimilate them. It was a cheap way to get weapons, instead of buying them, in a time when Israel tried to save money as much as possible. In recent decades Israel's economy became much stronger, so the IDF does not have to make a special effort to seize enemy arsenal intact, unless Israel's foes use an advanced weapon, one that Israel seeks to learn, in order to know how to deal with it. In regard to Arab hybrid forces it has to do with weapons like rockets that Israel could capture and then check it.

Following the conquest of Sinai in the 1967 war, the IDF had to find booby traps there, including those that were in deserted Arab vehicles,⁴² ones which the IDF wanted to take. In hybrid wars the IDF had to be careful of IEDs that were on roads or in houses. In some cases the IEDs were quite powerful, as those that destroyed Israeli tanks in the Gaza Strip in 2000–2005. The lessons learned from that bitter experience helped the IDF to better protect its tanks.

BUILDUP OF HYBRID FORCES

"The contemporary hybrid threat actor is a practitioner of unrestricted operational art that aptly combines regular and irregular capabilities simultaneously into a unified operational force to achieve strategic effects."⁴³ It has to do also with Arab hybrid forces.

In the 1982 war the PLO was about a division strong, and in the process of transforming from a guerrilla group into a military, which included having battalions and dozens of tanks.⁴⁴ Rafael Eitan, the IDF's

chief of staff in the 1982 war, claimed that the change in the PLO worked in favor of the IDF, which prefers to deal with a military and not with a group.⁴⁵ During the war "PLO brigades were quickly scattered," which actually helped their men confront the IDF.⁴⁶ Most of the Palestinian troops of the "Castel" brigade that had six battalions tended to withdraw, and the entire unit disintegrated under the Israeli pressure.⁴⁷ In 2006 Hezbollah's command-and-control system functioned and its "territorial units were decentralized and operated autonomously."⁴⁸ Hezbollah fighters demonstrated a high level of initiative and flexibility.⁴⁹ They were considered to be a tougher adversary than PLO was in 1982⁵⁰ although many PLO fighters proved their courage and determination.⁵¹

Hezbollah's military performance improved in recent years due to combat experience this outfit gained during the Syrian civil war, including by learning from fighting side by side with the Russian military.⁵² Yet the IDF is much stronger than the enemy Hezbollah encountered in Syria. The tactics Hezbollah used in Syria, such as fighting in a large formation, might not work in Lebanon against the IDF since Hezbollah's men will be exposed to massive Israeli firepower.

In mid-2017 Hamas had "27,000 armed men divided into six regional brigades, with 25 battalions and 106 companies. Of this military array, 2,500 armed men are members of the Nuhba, Hamas's elite unit. A third of these troops are intended to be sent to carry out attacks inside Israeli territory. These gunmen are supposed to strike from the sea (the naval commandos), from the air (using flying ATVs or motorized gliders, for example), and, of course, from the ground, mainly via cross-border tunnels, from which they would emerge to raid an Israeli residential community or army base in order to kidnap and kill."⁵³

Hezbollah is better armed than Hamas. In compared to Hamas it is easier for Hezbollah to receive weapons from Iran and Syria since Hezbollah has a border with Syria. Hamas on the other hand depends on Egypt's willingness and capability to stop the smuggling of weapons and ammunition. from Sinai to the Gaza Strip. In recent years Egypt blocked a major part of this route, as part of its fight against ISIS, which receives assistance from Hamas.

Hezbollah had to take into consideration that if it tries to receive anti-aircraft missiles and chemical weapons, then "the organization would be ready to gamble on Israel's restraint in front of such transfer."⁵⁴ Israel tried to stop the delivery of advanced weapons systems by bombing them inside Syria, since 2011, when it seems that this arsenal was about to be sent to Hezbollah. Israel has been striving to disrupt the buildup of the Palestinians as well. Israel prevented weapons and ammunition from getting into the Gaza Strip by bombing stockpiles in Sudan on October 23, 2012, and by capturing ships carrying such cargo. This was done for example on March 15, 2011, in the Mediterranean Sea and on March 5, 2014, in the Red Sea.

Although there is a similarity between Arab militaries and Arab hybrid groups, like in language, there are also major differences between them. An Arab military has thousands of armored vehicles. Hezbollah has a few armored vehicles, while Hamas does not have any of them at all. Those groups therefore don't need transporters for tanks and APCs. Those groups do move men and light arms but for that they can use almost any kind of vehicle, including a civilian one. On the battlefield itself, Arab soldiers maneuvered with their armored vehicles that gave speed, protection, and firepower. Yet Arab's tanks and APC were also exposed, particularly in open areas, such as the desert, while a fighter from Hezbollah or Hamas found cover when he was in rugged terrain or in an urban area or underground.

The IDF relied since it was established on Western weapons systems. Arab militaries did the same like the Jordanian one. In the 1960s and 1970s there was a certain military similarity between the Syrian and Egyptian militaries since they relied on Soviet weapons and training. There is also a certain resemblance between Hamas and Hezbollah in tactics and weapons since they have been relying on infantry tactics and artillery like rockets and mortars that were produced by Russia/the Soviet Union or Iran.

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FOUR

The New Threat in the Skies

Air superiority gives complete control of the air: the ability to conduct bombardments without running into major resistance while preventing the foe from launching massive air attacks. This was a main goal of the IAF in every high-intensity war. In hybrid wars, the IAF enjoyed air superiority since its foes had no air force, yet the IAF faced other challenges, such as intercepting rockets.

SECURING THE SKIES

At the start of the 1948–1949 war the IAF, which was created then, could not have prevented Egyptian air raids on the Israeli rear. Gradually, during the war, the IAF managed to secure Israeli cities. In the 1956 war, France and Britain, as part of their secret agreement with Israel, destroyed the Egyptian air force. Yet it took Britain and France several days to accomplish this mission and meanwhile Israeli forces in Sinai and the Israeli rear were exposed to Egyptian air attacks. Egypt launched only two sorties that did not cause much damage. It was a unique case in which Israel relied on two foreign powers to achieve air superiority.

On the first day of the 1967 war, on June 5, the IDF launched both an air and a ground offensive against Egypt. The IDF did not postpone its ground offensive until the IAF gained air superiority, which would have secured Israel's land units from Egyptian bombardments. This gamble paid off, since the Egyptian air force was basically neutralized in a few hours. Egypt still hoped that its land forces could hold on. Iraq had the same assumption in the 1991 war. However, in a vast desert terrain Arab forces in both 1967 and 1991 crumbled under the combined pressure of air and ground attacks.

The Jordanian and Syrian air forces were taken out of action on June 5, 1967, after the IAF destroyed the Egyptian air force. This outcome allowed Israel to launch a ground attack against Jordan on the same day and to wait in the Syrian front, assuming correctly that Syria would not dare to attack after its air force was defeated.

In early 1970, during the war of attrition, the IAF exploited its edge in the air to bomb inside Egypt.¹ A similar situation in the 1973 war allowed the IAF to strike on both fronts, in the front line and in the rear, particularly inside Syria. Arab planes managed here and there to attack Israeli land units, but only in the front line, and they did not disrupt Israeli operations.

In 1982, the IAF gained air superiority over Lebanon after defeating the Syrian air force. In the wars that occurred since then the IAF did not have to gain air superiority because its foes did not have an air force to begin with.

DESTROYING THE PLANES/ROCKETS

In the 1948–1949 war the IAF carried out its first bombardments on Arab airfields, which was one of its main missions over the years. Since the 1970s and mostly following the 2006 war, destroying rockets has become its top priority. Those two tasks could be compared.

In February 1955 the IDF's planning branch claimed that ground forces could attack Arab airfields.² Israeli land units conquered Arab airfields in each of the high-intensity wars. Arab planes had to escape in time or they were sitting ducks. Arab rockets too had to be removed or they faced destruction, when Israeli land forces approached to where those rockets were. However the IDF depended more on the IAF in regard to attacking both airfields and rockets.

On the eve of the 1956 war, the IAF assimilated its newest jet, the Mystere 4A, but there were not enough qualified pilots for those planes and even those who flew them lacked experience.³ In spite of that the IAF planned to attack the Egyptian airfields, but the Israeli government decided not to carry out this offensive and not to rely solely on the IAF in defending Israel's skies. This led to an alliance with France and Britain, which did the work for the IAF by storming Egyptian airfields.

In the fight against rockets, the IAF had problems, particularly in the beginning of this struggle. It was a new challenge for the IAF, like with attacking Arab airfields in the 1950s. Israel's air crews had to learn how to find and bomb the rockets. Nevertheless Israel did not ask its allies like the United States to do this job instead of the IAF. In contrast to the 1950s, in the 1970s the IAF was much more powerful. Israel had a lot of confidence in its air force and the threat of the rockets was not as serious as the one that was posed by Arab air forces in the 1950s.

In the first two days of the 1956 war the IAF assumed that the air forces of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan might attack Israeli airfields.⁴ This scenario was possible again in 1967 and in 1973 but it did not take place in any of those wars. In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars Hamas and Hezbollah could have fired rockets together at Israel, including on its airfields, but it did not happen.

Prior to the 1967 war both Israel and Egypt had plans to attack their enemy's airfields.⁵ Aircraft, particularly fighters, could be scrambled very fast, and rockets could be fired quite quickly. Therefore attacking airfields or rocket sites had to be done by relying on surprise and also on a force massive enough to wipe out the objectives before they can respond. However, Israeli planes were in danger during an attack on Arab airfields in 1967, when Arab fighters managed to take off. In contrast when Israeli aircraft bombed rocket sites and rockets were launched, it did not put the Israeli air crews at risk.

On June 5, 1967, the IAF dispatched almost all its jets, about 200 of them, to bomb Egypt's airfields.⁶ Since then, like in the last decade, the enormous upgrading of IAF's fighter-bombers allowed each plane to be much more effective than those that were in service in the 1960s. This improved the capability of the IAF to strike both airfields and rocket sites.

On the first day of the 1967 war, the IAF, as part of its attack on Egyptian airfields, focused on destroying long-range heavy bombers such as the Tupolev-16 that could have bombed the Israeli rear. At the start of the 2006 war, the IAF annihilated Hezbollah's long-range rockets before they could have inflicted a blow to Israeli cities.

In the second day of the 1973 war, the IAF had to stop its attack on Egyptian airfields in order to divert planes to block the Syrian offensive in the Golan Heights.⁷ In wars since 2006, Israel had only one front, so the IAF was able to concentrate on destroying rockets.

In the 1973 war the IAF could have tried to neutralize Egyptian airfields. Yet it was more challenging than in 1967 since those bases had in 1973 hardened aircraft shelters, and runways that were bombed could have been returned into action quite fast. For the IAF, attacking airfields might not have been worth the losses, effort, and time, especially since the IAF already had plenty on its plate. It had to save its strength for other missions like air support. During the wars against hybrid forces, the IAF had several missions to accomplish. Still, a nonstate organization was not that strong, and the IAF had enough aircraft, which allowed it to pay close attention to rocket sites. This task became more difficult since Hezbollah and Hamas learned from their clashes with the IAF. Some rockets, like aircraft in Arab airfields, are protected in bunkers.

In the 2014 war, some rockets were operated with remote control, which secured their crews.⁸ Arab aircraft of course needed their air crews inside them or else the planes were useless. Furthermore, a plane was

more versatile than a rocket but a plane depended on a runway while a rocket, even underground, required only a shaft to be fired.

In the 1973 war, from 7 October, the second day of that showdown, the Syrian and Egyptian air forces allocated 90 percent of their sorties to defend their airfields.⁹ It was the results of the traumatic effect of the 1967 war, when the IAF successfully stormed Arab airfields. The overwhelming attention that was given in 1973 to defend Arab airfields and the planes there was at the expense of other tasks such as patrolling the front line and attacking Israeli targets. It seems that protecting the planes was more important than using them in combat. The rockets that belong to Arab nonstate organizations are their strategic arm, as the air force is for Arab militaries. Hamas and especially Hezbollah avoided many times going to war because they preferred to save their rockets for the right time. Those Arab groups knew that in a war their rocket sites will be a primary target for the IAF. Even during the wars, since 2006, some of the rockets were kept for use later on in the war and some of them were not fired at all. This approach helped to shield them, since places that launched rockets faced an Israeli strike, aimed at retribution and preventing more launching from that point.

In the 1973 war, the IAF preferred not to pay the cost of a full-scale attack on Egyptian airfields, as in 1967. It was enough to launch several sorties against Egyptian airfields. This approach urged Egypt to keep almost all its aircraft to defend its airfields, instead of sending them to the front line. In wars since 2006, flying over Lebanon and the Gaza Strip delivered the message that the IAF could attack any target on the ground, which caused Hamas and Hezbollah to be careful in using their rockets.

In the 1991 war against Iraq, the latter launched surface-to-surface missiles at Israel, which the IDF could not have intercepted, so the United States deployed Patriot missiles in Israel. The Patriot failed. The United States also did not succeed in locating and destroying the Iraqi surface-to-surface missiles before they were fired. US forces did a better job in attacking Iraqi airfields, hitting or coercing Iraqi planes to escape to nearby Iran, which prevented an Iraqi air strike against Israel. During the 1991 war Israel absorbed a few casualties and some damages. Furthermore Israel understood that in the future it might lose many more lives if it is attacked by long-range missiles. The IDF had to learn how to destroy surface-to-surface missiles that are located hundreds of kilometers away from Israel. The IDF already trained to bomb remote Arab airfields, from which long-range Arab bombers could have reached Israel. In both cases the IDF could have dispatched aircraft and airborne troops.

Israel monitors Arab airfields and rocket sites by using surveillance measures on the ground and in the air. In the attacks against Arab airfields, in 1967 and 1973, the main goal was to hit aircraft. In an offensive against rocket bases, the top priority was to hit their launchers and their crews. Arab airfields were in dozens of well-known places, while surface-

to-surface missiles and rockets could be deployed all over, in hundreds of locations. Lebanon and particularly the Gaza Strip have a border with Israel and they are relatively small. Yet the Israeli intelligence had to work hard to find out where Hamas and Hezbollah stored their rockets.

In recent years the IAF ran several major exercises, which examined its units as part of the fight against rockets. The drills included defending and operating Israeli air bases during a rocket attack, which also helped to prepare in case those camps are bombed by Arab planes, but this was not the purpose of the training.

ANTI-AIRCRAFT WARFARE

In the 1967 war, Egyptian anti-aircraft units intercepted 21 Israeli planes.¹⁰ During the war of attrition, in 1969–1970, the potential of anti-aircraft missiles was showed¹¹ so before the 1973 war Egypt invested heavily in its anti-aircraft forces, not in aircraft.¹² Syria did the same. By that time those Arab militaries relied not on a multirole system, the aircraft, but on the anti-aircraft weapon that can only intercept aircraft. The anti-aircraft batteries also had a slow mobility and a killing range of a few dozen kilometers, while a plane is much faster and it reaches targets hundreds of kilometers away. Nevertheless the anti-aircraft formations, with all their downsides, were quite effective in 1973. They shot down dozens of Israeli planes, occupied the IAF, and made it much more difficult for the IAF to assist Israel's ground units. The IAF absorbed criticism for its performance.¹³ In the 1982 war, the IAF defeated both the Syrian air force and the Syrian air defense batteries, in Lebanon.¹⁴ This was an impressive yet quite a limited victory since only a small percent of the Syrian anti-aircraft formation was transferred to Lebanon. Overall there was a long and tough struggle between the IAF and anti-aircraft weapons, missiles, and/or guns, which went on from the 1948–1949 war.

In 2007 the IAF destroyed a Syrian nuclear reactor. Since 2011 the IAF launched more than 100 air strikes inside Syria, aiming to prevent the delivery of weapons such as advanced rockets and anti-aircraft missiles to Hezbollah in Lebanon. There were some occasions in which Assad's forces launched anti-aircraft missiles, but none of the Israeli planes was shot down. Those were isolated cases, not a full-scale collision between the IAF and the Syrian air defense. In the same time the IAF prepared to attack Iran's nuclear sites, a task that would have required neutralizing at least part of the Iranian air defense. Since 2016 Iran has had the S-300, a sophisticated anti-aircraft system. If the IAF attacks Iran it will be done with standoff missiles and other measures that became more and more important in recent decades, mostly electronic and cyber warfare.

In previous wars Hezbollah and Hamas did not possess a formidable air defense, if any. Arab groups had to rely on shoulder-fired anti-aircraft

missiles, light anti-aircraft guns, and heavy machine guns. This arsenal put Israeli aircraft at risk, but only in low altitude. In 2006 Hezbollah managed to shoot down an Israeli helicopter by using an anti-tank missile, as a kind of an improvised anti-aircraft weapon.

Considering the strike capability of Arab airpower, it was essential, since 1948, to train Israeli troops how to protect themselves and their vehicles, in passive ways, in case they are under an air bombardment. Those methods include keeping a space between them, putting on camouflage, and digging in. The IDF tended to neglect those kinds of steps due to other priorities and the belief that the IAF will secure the skies. Indeed Arab air strikes were quite rare. They occurred mostly in 1973 and even then they did not have much of an effect. Furthermore the IDF did not experience such an attack since 1982 because it only fought against hybrid foes that have no airpower. Yet those groups have rockets and mortars that hit Israeli soldiers from above, as air attacks do. Therefore Israelis troops have to be familiar with patterns that resemble those that were used to protect them against Arab aircraft during the era of high-intensity wars.

ANTI-MISSILE/ROCKET

At the beginning of the 1973 war, Egypt launched long-range air-to-surface missiles that were supposed to strike the Israeli rear, but they missed or were shot down by Israeli jets since the missiles were quite slow. At the end of that war Egypt launched a scud into Sinai, which was under Israeli control. It was the first time Israel was attacked by this kind of surface-to-surface missile. Following the Iran–Iraq war (1980–1988), when both sides attacked each other with surface-to-surface missiles,¹⁵ Israel became aware of the need to shoot them down. In the 1991 war a few dozen Iraqi long-range missiles hit Israel, which urged Israel to increase its effort in this important matter.

Israel developed the Arrow system, aimed at intercepting surface-to-surface missiles. On January 10, 2018, a test of “Arrow 3” was cancelled, for the second time in a month. It was part of the process of upgrading the Arrow. Israel has been working on that project with strong support from its American patron. The two states also conducted joint exercises in this field like “Jenifer Cobra.” The United States assisted Israel with the Iron Dome as well. In the start of the 2014 war the Iron Dome, by intercepting rockets, gave time both to the Israeli government, to decide its next steps, and to the IDF, to organize and train its troops, mostly the reserves. Yet there was a debate about how effective the Iron Dome was, including in regard to the cost of relying on such a system due to the price of its missiles. Hybrid foes like Hamas and Hezbollah, which possess tens of thousands of rockets, could overwhelm the Iron Dome. Israel

knows the Iron Dome could not defend every civilian and military site, so the system will be deployed in key places such as vital infrastructure and major bases. The latter has to include camps where reserves get organized, in order to allow them to be ready for combat by limiting the casualties and damages they will absorb from rockets.

During the 2014 war, 4,000 alarms were raised inside Israel.¹⁶ Israelis had shelters and/or protected space inside their apartments/houses, in case the Iron Dome did not work. Another way was just to leave home temporarily. During the 2006 war, the firing of rockets from Lebanon caused about 200,000 Israelis to flee from the north to the center of Israel,¹⁷ which was safer. Yet since then Hezbollah assimilated missiles and rockets that could reach every spot in Israel. Although some areas, mostly in the south of Israel, will be more secure, the feeling might be that there is no way to run. In 2017 Israel drew up “contingency plans to evacuate up to a quarter-million civilians from border communities to protect them from attacks from Hamas, Hezbollah or other terror groups.”¹⁸

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FIVE

Air-Ground Operations

The IAF strives for air supremacy so it can focus on assisting Israel's ground units by carrying out missions such as air strikes, gathering information, and delivering supplies. The IAF can also conduct strategic bombardments.

GENERAL FACTORS

In some of Israel's wars, the air campaign took center stage, such as during the war of attrition against Egypt, in 1969–1970, and in the 2006 war as well. In the 2008–2009 and 2014 wars, the air offensive started in the beginning of the war, before the Israeli ground offensive was launched. Even after the IDF's ground forces attacked, the IAF continued to play a major role, until the end of the confrontation.

In high-intensity wars the IAF attacked the arsenal of Arab's militaries such as their armored vehicles, artillery pieces, aircraft, and ships. Almost all of them could have maneuvered. In hybrid wars the targets were mostly rockets or mortars. Often they lacked mobility: they were not stationed on a vehicle, which made it more difficult for them to escape Israeli air strikes. They were also without much or any protection, unless they were underground. Rockets and particularly mortars are much smaller targets than a vehicle like a tank and it is relatively simple to deploy, camouflage, and fire them, which makes it a challenge to find and destroy them, let alone when they are in urban areas.

Heavy bombardments could not only cause casualties and damages but also undermine morale, up to a breaking point. This was seen among Arab troops in the 1967 war, mostly in Sinai. In the 2014 war "airpower alone failed to deliver the results the IDF needed" including to "achieve the broader strategic aim of deterring Hamas."¹ However the ongoing air

attacks on the Gaza Strip were one of the reasons that eventually convinced Hamas to end that round.

The weather impacts the finding and bombing of targets, which depends on the season when the war takes place. Most of Israel's high-intensity wars happened in the same period, more or less: in early November in 1956, early June 1967 and October 1973, when the weather was relatively comfortable. The same was in 2006 and 2014, when the war occurred in July–August. Furthermore, as Israel's aircraft improved over the years, so did their capability to operate in harsh weather. However the weather still has an influence such as on gathering data from the air with UAV. In other cases, dust, like in desert terrain such as in the Gaza Strip, helps to expose those on the ground but also to cover their exact location. In addition shock waves and shrapnel of air bombs is less deadly in the desert, since sand absorbs some of it, while mountains and rugged terrains intensify it, because of pieces of rocks that spread around.

AIR SUPPORT AND AIR INTERDICTION

The IAF found it difficult to provide close air support in all its high-intensity wars.² The same was the case in the 2006 war. In the 2008–2009 and 2014 wars there was an improvement in this matter. For example, in 2014, it took up to thirty minutes to provide ground units with air strikes.³ In the 2014 war the IAF also reduced the minimum security distance between the targets and the IDF's land forces.⁴ According to "IDF Strategy" from 2015 the IDF should use "fire support against an entrenched enemy, at low range and with small safety margins (in the case of close air support)."⁵ The IDF therefore risked hitting its own troops due to the proximity of its foe to Israeli soldiers. The IAF, thanks to US military aid and Israeli military and air industry, improved its bombing capabilities, such as accuracy, which was crucial when its enemy was very near to Israeli troops. It happened when their rival had attacked or was in defensive position but its men were not able to retreat or did not want to do so.

The IDF developed advanced command-and-control systems that helped its troops to call in airpower, like in the 2014 war. However the IDF should teach its soldiers not to overload those systems with requests for air support. Israeli troops also should not rely too much on airpower. They have to know when it is better to use other methods or a different kind of fire support, such as artillery, although the latter is not always at hand or accurate enough.

The IAF used its gunships, the AH-1, in 1982, in Lebanon, against the Syrian military. The gunship, including the AH-64, has played an important role in fighting hybrid forces since 2006. Warplanes are faster and

have bigger cargo than the gunship. Yet the latter does not need runways like a plane, which allows the IDF to deploy the gunship in various areas. The gunship could also remain in a certain point in the air, like a flying tank, which makes it a very effective tool in providing close support. Its accurate missiles and night vision capability are also essential in assisting ground units. This cooperation was done in several ways. For example in the 2008–2009 war the presence of Israeli ground troops was enough to cause Hamas's gunmen to get out of their cover, which exposed them to deadly fire from AH-64.

In the 2014 war, in any given time, there were on average forty Israeli aircraft, including UAV, over the Gaza Strip. This activity was coordinated with Iron Dome and artillery since they all operated in the same airspace.⁶ It shows the complexity in trying to gather intelligence while intercepting rockets and providing fire support from the ground and the air.

The IAF practiced air interdiction in past wars like in Sinai in 1956 and in 1967 and in Lebanon in 1982.⁷ It served in disrupting Arab military operations such as in blocking Arab reinforcements and supply from getting to the front line, which made it easier for Israeli ground forces to accomplish their missions. The arrival of more Arab troops to the front line might have caught Israeli troops there outnumbered and/or unprepared if they were still busy fighting other Arab units.

In past wars the IAF hit Israeli land units by mistake. This is another advantage of air interdiction: preventing friendly fire since the IAF bombed far way from the front line, where there were no Israeli land forces. The latter were exposed when the IAF was not aware of their location, for example when Israeli ground units advanced fast and deep into Arab territory. There was less risk of that in the 2006 war and particularly in the 2008–2009 and 2014 wars, since the IDF did not penetrate much into Arab land. However in hybrid wars it was more difficult to carry out air interdiction since the targets were smaller than in high-intensity wars so it was harder to hit them. When supply or reinforcements went through tunnels it was almost impossible to hit them from the air.

STRATEGIC BOMBARDMENTS

In the 1967 war the IAF achieved air superiority. Israel did not exploit this advantage to threaten Egypt, Jordan, and Syria that if they don't accept Israel's right to exist then Israel would bomb their rear. Israel avoided that if only because it feared Soviet involvement. Western powers that wished to end the war would have also opposed an Israeli strategic air attack on Arab cities.

In the war of attrition, in 1969–1970, the IAF enjoyed a clear edge over the Egyptian air force. Israel used that to launch a series of air attacks inside the Egyptian rear, aimed at urging Egypt to halt its operations against the IDF along the Suez Canal. The IAF bombed mostly military targets like factories that sometimes were near residential areas, in order to put pressure on the Egyptian government.⁸ This Israeli approach gained limited results.

In the 1973 war Israel sought to end the showdown in the Syrian front by combining a ground offensive and an air bombardment on strategic objectives such as refineries and power stations. Yet Syria kept on fighting. Israel did not intensify its efforts. Israel was aware that although the Syrian air force could not return the favor, the Soviet Union might dispatch its troops to confront Israel, if the latter had gone too far with its air bombardments.

In the war in Lebanon in 1982 Israel wished to kick Syrian forces out of Lebanon by conducting an air and ground offensive inside Lebanon. The IAF did not bomb any targets inside Syria among others because the latter had long-range surface-to-surface missiles that can reach Israeli cities.

In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars Israel attacked the Arab rear. As in high-intensity wars it was easier to identify infrastructure in the rear than camouflaged targets on the front line. Furthermore in 1969–1970, 1973, and 1982, and definitely in 1967 the IAF controlled the air. In wars against hybrid forces, the latter did not have aircraft and their air defense was weak. Hamas in 2008–2009 and 2014 and Hezbollah in 2006 also did not have the support of a superpower, unlike Egypt and Syria that had in the past the Soviet Union on their side. Although Hamas and Hezbollah launched rockets at the Israeli rear, Israel could have bombed them much harder. The need to reduce both collateral damage and international criticism limited Israel's ability to use strategic bombardments.

IDF's Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Gadi Eisenkot said on March 19, 2017, that in the next war against Hezbollah "there will be a clear address: the state of Lebanon and the terror groups operating in its territory and under its authority."⁹ It has to do with the 2006 war. Then Hezbollah did not rule Lebanon, unlike Hamas did in its territory, the Gaza Strip, in 2008–2009 and in 2014. In 2006 Israel did attack, in a limited way, Lebanese infrastructure that served Hezbollah. Israel could have expanded the campaign in order to push the Lebanese government to coerce Hezbollah to stop firing at Israel. Yet it might not have worked since the Lebanese government was too weak and Hezbollah was quite strong politically. Furthermore the United States and other Western states opposed a massive Israeli attack on the Lebanese government that was considered to be moderate.

In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars the IAF bombed strategic infrastructure. As in 1969–1970 and 1973, the Israeli goal was to force the Arab

side to accept Israel's terms and at least to agree to a cease-fire. However, in 2008–2009 and 2014, as in 1969–1970 and 1973, Israel had limited its strategic bombardments, in order not to cause heavy damages and particularly not to inflict major casualties among civilians. The idea was to show the foe that Israel can escalate its bombardments and hit any objectives at any time.

The IAF had a few heavy bombers, B-17s, until the mid-1950s. Since then the IAF has relied on the fighter-bomber. In the late 1990s the IAF assimilated the F-15I, which is not a heavy bomber, but it carries quite a big cargo, up to eleven tons, and it can strike several thousands of kilometers away. This aircraft was required as part of the preparations to bomb Iran's nuclear sites. The F-15I could also bomb other targets there, including strategic infrastructure, in case of a war between those two states. The F-15I could also be used on any other front for the same purpose.

The IAF has, for long-range attacks, disposable air fuel tanks and KC-707 and KC-130 tankers for aerial refueling. In a raid that took place on October 1, 1985, the IAF's F-15 reached all the way to Tunisia, about 2,300 kilometers from Israel, in the bombing of PLO's headquarters there. In the last decade Israeli air crews trained over the Mediterranean Sea for long-range strikes in Iran. This kind of capability allows the IAF to strike both states and nonstate organizations all over the Middle East.

AERIAL INTELLIGENCE AND LOGISTICS

The IDF found out the value of aerial reconnaissance during the wars of 1956 and 1967.¹⁰ An aircraft has an overall view that contributes significantly in collecting data. Since the late 1960s the IAF started to use UAVs for this kind of mission, which saved the need to put its air crews at risk. The number of UAVs increased drastically in the last two decades, which required the IDF to coordinate between them and other weapons systems like helicopters. A UAV might be intercepted or crash because of technical problems, which will embarrass Israel, particularly if it occurs inside Egypt or Jordan that have peace with Israel. Israel also has its own satellites to observe states that are far away from it, like Iran.

The IAF evacuated wounded. For example in the 2014 war it took 250 wounded from the front line.¹¹ The IAF also transferred troops and supply by air, which was important when there was not enough time to send them by land. In other cases roads were jammed or under threat because of enemy fire, ambushes, or IEDs, like in Lebanon in the 1990s and in the Gaza Strip in 2000–2005. The IAF could have transferred equipment and troops by air in conflicts that went on for years, as long as the logistical demands were relatively minor. In a war, even one that lasts only a few weeks, when the needs are quite big, the IAF could not keep up with the demands by itself. The IAF can't replace ground transportation since the

IAF has only several cargo planes like C-130 and dozens of helicopters, including heavy ones, the CH-53. They could not compete with thousands of trucks. Israel's hybrid enemies are much smaller than Arab militaries, so in fighting the former the IDF requires much smaller forces than in a high-intensity war, which makes it easier to deliver supplies. Nevertheless the IDF could not rely on the IAF for that purpose, as was seen in the 2006 war.

In the 1982 war Israeli transport planes landed on roads in Lebanon.¹² In other wars, like in 1956, Israeli C-47 planes landed in an open field. In other cases supplies were parachuted or thrown out of the plane while it was flying a few meters above the ground. Helicopters brought troops and equipment and ammunition to all kinds of places, with or without landing there.

THE IRANIAN FACTOR AND THE ROCKETS

The IAF had trained to attack Iranian nuclear sites, if Israel had decided there was no other way to stop Iran from producing a nuclear weapon. This was one of the main scenarios the IAF prepared to since the late 1990s. At the same time the IAF had to be ready for other missions, mostly to bomb rockets in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, quite a different task. Iranian nuclear sites are well protected, while rockets are more exposed since nonstate organizations don't have Iran's air defense let alone aircraft. Some rockets are underground, as some as Iran's nuclear sites are, but the latter are located much deeper. Iranian sites don't have to be close to the surface since they don't launch anything, while rockets do have to be where they could be fired. Overall rockets are more vulnerable but Hezbollah has up to 150,000 of them, and each one is a tiny target in compared to a nuclear site.

The distance to the target is a significant factor. Attacking rockets near Israel, in Lebanon or in the Gaza Strip, requires only crossing the border. In contrast, Iran is more than a thousand kilometers from Israel, so getting there is much more complicated because of several aspects. One, it is more difficult to gather information on the objectives. Two, the IAF has to make sure its aircraft have enough fuel for the round-trip flight. Third, there might be a need to rescue Israeli air crews that will abandon their aircraft in Iran or near it. Israel will also have to reach some kind of understanding with Arab states, since the IAF has to pass over them on the way to Iran and back. Furthermore all those constraints will become more complicated if Israel, following its strike in Iran, will be entangled in a much longer campaign than just a raid on Iran's nuclear facilities.

The Syrian air force was the IAF's main opponent, following the 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. The decline of the Syrian air force since the 1990s, a process that accelerated during the Syrian civil war,

allowed the IAF to invest more resources and time in other fields like preparing to attack rockets in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip and/or Iran's nuclear sites. The IAF had to find a balance between its tasks. The IAF attacked rockets in every war since 1982, while an attack on Iran did not take place and chances it might occur went down quite dramatically after July 14, 2015, when the JCPOA was signed. Yet the IAF has to keep the capability to attack in Iran, if the latter tries to produce a nuclear weapon. Neglecting this task will be a gamble, considering all the effort and time the IAF will require to be ready again to bomb Iran. Furthermore letting Iran have a nuclear weapon is much more dangerous than all the rockets that were fired and those that could be launched at Israel.

The IAF should learn from its experience. Prior to the 1967 war, the IAF prepared to gain air superiority by focusing on air-to-air combat and storming Arab airfields, a mission that was accomplished with a huge success in 1967. However in air-ground operations, the IAF often did not excel during the 1967 war. Although achieving air superiority was a top priority, it was at the expense of giving air support. The same goes with the dilemma of whether to concentrate on attacking Iran, air-to-air combat, or destroying rockets.

NOTES

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SIX

Ground Forces

Airpower played a major role in both high-intensity wars and in fighting hybrid forces. However, ground units were essential too and often they could not have been replaced by aircraft. The traditional corps—armor, infantry, artillery, and combat engineers—and the logistic ones remain the backbone of the IDF.

THE ARMOR CORPS

Since the 1950s the main challenge of the Israeli armor corps was to defeat their Arab counterparts, mostly the Egyptians. The latter was the strongest armor corps among the Arab militaries, following massive Soviet aid. For example in the 1967 war Israel had 1,000 medium tanks while Egypt had 1,300 medium tanks.¹ In the 1967 war there were several major armor clashes such as on June 6, around Bir Lhafan, a vital cross-road in Sinai. Two Egyptian brigades were destroyed there.² A much bigger collision happened in the 1973 war, on October 14, when 1,000 Egyptian tanks confronted about 750 Israeli tanks. Egypt lost around 250 tanks while the IDF lost a few dozen tanks. It was the last huge tank battle between Israel and the Arabs.

Following the 1979 peace treaty with Egypt, Israel focused on Syria. In the 1980s and in the 1990s, Israel and Syria might have confronted each other in the Golan Heights. Thousands of tanks, from both sides, might have been involved in the battles. The IDF, in spite of its powerful air force, did not rely on the IAF alone. Israeli tank crews trained to defeat the Syrian armor. Since 2000 Syria made a sharp shift in its buildup, in which the tank was less important. The Syrian civil war reduced dramatically the capabilities and size of the Syrian armor. In addition the collapse of Iraq in 2003, and its military, which used to possess thousands of

tanks, removed another threat to Israel. Hezbollah acquired, during the civil war in Syria, several tanks. Other nonstate organizations like Hamas have no tanks at all. The IDF therefore had less and less reason to get ready to fight other tanks. Following that the number of IDF's tanks was reduced, by taking out of service old tanks like the M-60 Patton. The IDF continues to produce and upgrade its Merkava tanks.

Hezbollah and Hamas have an anti-tank defense that relies on anti-tank measures, mostly missiles like Kornet that pose a threat to the IDF's most protected tanks, the Merkava Mark 4. The Israeli armor has been dealing with anti-tank fire since 1948. This challenge included missiles, since the 1960s. Yet only in the 1973 war, when those missiles were used quite effectively by Arab infantry, did the IDF understand the full scale of this problem. Its answer was a combination of firepower, maneuver, and protection that has been relevant also in confronting nonstate organizations.

The IDF learned how to use artillery, infantry, and tanks in suppressing anti-tank positions. The 2014 war proved the effectiveness of advanced ammunition against infantry, such as the 120 mm APAM-MP-T Cartridges, which were fired by Israeli tanks. In that war Israeli tanks fired 14,500 shells; most of them were not that suited to a fight in residential areas.³ Only 500 of those tank shells were capable of exploding inside a facility and by that they harmed those who were inside it.⁴ It was needed since Hamas's gunmen tended to hide inside houses.

Since the 1950s Israeli tank crews were trained to maneuver their tank in such a way that will help them to avoid getting hit by tanks and anti-tank weapons that were in service in Arab militaries. Israeli armor corps had to adjust those tactics, to fit the fight against a hybrid force. As to protection, in the 1982 war, for the first time, the IDF sent into combat tanks with reactive armor. Since 2009 Israel's best tank, Merkava Mark 4, has armored shield protective-active, which detects and destroys incoming anti-tank projectiles. It had proven itself in combat in the 2014 war.

Moshe Bar-Kochva, who was a highly known armor officer, argued that in the 1956 war, tanks were the dominant factor in conquering the Gaza Strip.⁵ In 1967, in the city of Khan Yunis, in the south of the Gaza Strip, anti-tank fire, mines, and all kinds of barriers delayed and caused casualties to the IDF's 7th armor brigade.⁶ In confronting Palestinian fighters in urban areas in 1982, 2008–2009, and 2014 the Israeli armor often faced tough resistance. Tanks contributed their share, but they were not necessarily the decisive corps.

Israel's armor corps gained a lot of prestige in the 1967 war,⁷ following its achievements in defeating three Arab militaries. Some battles in that war showed the weakness of the tank. Yet many Israeli officers, particularly in the armor corps, relied on the tank as a solution to almost every problem in the battlefield. This approach cost the IDF dearly in the

1973 war. Israeli tank crews were well trained but not against the kind of anti-tank defense they ran into.

Since 1982 Israeli armor units had to deal with hybrid forces that have anti-tank defense, which was sometimes quite good, such as in the 2006 war. In the 1973 war Israeli tanks were exposed in the open desert of Sinai, while in 2006 they were vulnerable in the rugged terrain of Lebanon, where it is difficult for tanks to maneuver. It was particularly a problem in 2006, since Israeli armor crews were not well prepared for this kind of combat. Their main challenge in that war was anti-tank missiles. Huge mines and IED managed to inflict casualties too.

Many Israeli armor crews went to war in 1956, 1967, and 1973, without having much combat experience, if any. Yet they conducted exercises prior to the war. In those drills, the IDF implemented lessons from previous battles, including those that were learned by other militaries in World War II. This knowledge gave Israeli tank crews an edge in combat. This was also the right way to train Israeli armor crews in regard to handling hybrid forces with anti-tank weapons. Sophisticated simulators, which did not exist when the IDF's main enemy was an Arab tank, helped in this matter as well.

THE INFANTRY

Since 1948 IDF's infantry has gone into combat with armored vehicles like the M-3 half-track. Those vehicles did not give much protection from indirect fire like artillery and mortars. The M-3 also lack firepower, and in terrain like the dunes of Sinai it moved slowly and sometimes got stuck. Since the early 1970s the IDF has had the M-113, which became its main APC (Armor Personal Carrier). It has quite a light armor that gives some protection from shrapnel. Its caterpillar tracks allow traveling outside paved roads, like in dunes. The IDF used it against hybrid foes not only in bringing troops to the front line but also in storming objectives.

IDF's infantry has two heavy and well-protected APCs: the Achzarit, which has been in service since the 1990s, and the Namer, which became operational in 2008. Both of them are based on tanks. They are only several hundred Achzarit and Namer and several thousand M-113, so the IDF has to continue to depend on the M-113 in spite of its known vulnerability. This was demonstrated in a famous battle that took place during the war of 2014, when seven Israeli troops were killed in their M-113. It brought the IDF to try not to use the M-113 in combat and to replace the latter with new armored vehicles, a process that will take several years.⁸ Until then, for lack of a better option, the M-113 can still serve for charging the target, if the Israeli force uses surprise like arriving from an unexpected direction and/or under the cover of night/thick smoke. Of course the M-113 can also bring the troops to a point from which they will walk

by foot. The M-113 could also help the artillery, logistical, maintenance, and medical corps.

In 2016 the Israeli military industry revealed the Eitan, an APC that is supposed to replace the M-113. The Eitan is an eight-wheeled vehicle, which means it could travel on roads faster and without damaging them like the M-113, Achzarit, and Namer do. The Eitan is aimed particularly at urban combat.

In the 1973 war the Israeli infantry did not have enough anti-tank weapons.⁹ Since then Israeli infantry assimilated anti-tank missiles like Tow and Spike. In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars those missiles were not needed against tanks because the IDF fought only nonstate organizations which don't have tanks. Yet anti-tank missiles served to crack fortified positions.

In the 2014 war, Israeli troops wore protective glasses, which reduced injuries to the eyes by about 50 percent, compared with the 2006 war.¹⁰ The IDF has also several kinds of body armor against shrapnel or certain bullets.¹¹ The latter is needed for the infantry when it gets out of its armored vehicle or when that vehicle is not well protected. The heavy weight of the body armor is a burden, particularly when carrying it for a long time in hot weather and/or in rugged terrain.

In spite of all the obvious advantages of vehicles, troops need high physical fitness, for tasks such as walking a long distance in tough terrain. Walking of course takes more time than driving in a vehicle but it is quieter and therefore a way to arrive at the objective without been noticed.

THE ARTILLERY

On the first day of the 1967 war, on June 5, the IDF conducted a vast ground offensive against the Egyptian post in Aum-Catef. The Israeli artillery took part in the offensive by launching an effective and accurate shelling on the objective.¹² It was a traditional task of the artillery, which was needed against hybrid forces as well, particularly when they hid in a well-protected post.

In the 1950s the IDF had prepared to use artillery in suppressing Arab anti-tank guns.¹³ In the 1973 war Israeli artillery helped in the fight against Arab anti-tank defense such as by spreading smokescreens, which disrupted the fire of anti-tank missiles. Those tactics were also relevant in suppressing anti-tank defense of hybrid forces.

Israeli artillery assisted in stopping large-scale armor attacks in 1973, a scenario that was not relevant in fighting Hamas and Hezbollah because they have no tanks. Even by foot Arab groups did not attack en masse. Yet there were cases when IDF's artillery was required to deal with an attack by a hybrid force. During the 2014 war, in a battle at the neighbor-

hood of Shejaiya in the Gaza Strip, Israeli artillery fired 600 shells around an infantry force that ran into troubles due to a Palestinian counterattack. The Israeli troops were ordered to remain inside their heavily protected armored vehicles, while artillery shells fell about 100 meters from them. The minimum distance for artillery fire in residential areas is 250 meters.¹⁴

The Israeli artillery corps fired 7,000 shells in the 1956 war, 70,000 shells in the 1967 war, 350,000 shells in the 1973 war, 8,000 shells in the 2008–2009 war and 34,000 shells in the 2014 war. Those numbers give a perspective on how much the artillery was involved in those wars. There is therefore a clear gap between the high-intensity wars of 1967 and 1973 and a limited high-intensity war, in 1956, and hybrid wars in 2008–2009 and 2014. It is due to the difference in the strength of the foe Israel faced in each war. Furthermore, using artillery in urban areas of the Gaza Strip in 2008–2009 and 2014 was much more complicated than in open fields, where many of the battles in 1967 and 1973 took place.

The IDF started to assimilate self-propelled guns in the mid 1950s.¹⁵ Since the 1970s the IDF has had hundreds of those pieces, mostly M-109 155 mm. During the era of high-intensity wars Arab artillery corps were much bigger but less mobile than their Israeli counterparts. It meant that the IDF's artillery batteries were able to move fast to another position and by that to escape Arab artillery fire. Hezbollah in 2006 and Hamas in 2008–2009 and 2014 did not have artillery guns, only rockets and mortars, which are not that effective in hitting Israeli artillery, in compared with Arab artillery corps. Therefore, for the IDF's artillery, speed was less important in avoiding enemy fire by redeploying as soon as possible to another site. Furthermore, in high-intensity wars like in 1967, the Israeli artillery corps had to be fast enough to keep up with the Israeli armor that stormed deep into Arab territory. In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, the front line did not change much, particularly in the campaigns in the Gaza Strip. In those circumstances the Israeli artillery did not have to rush since the Israeli armor and infantry did not advance much. The mobility of the guns did help in quickly concentrating fire of several batteries on a certain objective.

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CORPS

It was difficult to coordinate between Israeli armor and infantry during high-intensity wars such as those that occurred in 1956¹⁶ and 1967.¹⁷ The IDF had the same problem in fighting Hezbollah in 2006. In the 2008–2009 and 2014 wars, there was better coordination between those two corps.

In the 2014 war, Israel's 401st armor brigade had commenced an offensive after softening its foe in the following order: launching bombard-

ments from land and sea artillery, conducting air strikes, and then firing from tanks. The next stage saw infantry going in with D-9 bulldozers to clear paths of IEDs. Every house suspected to be booby-trapped received a shell from a tank. Many of those places exploded when they were hit that way, which indicated they had stored explosives. The 401st Brigade was organized in brigade battle groups, an IDF standard fighting formation. Each one includes one tank battalion, two infantry battalions, one battalion of combat engineers, and artillery.¹⁸ This combined arms was meant to achieve maximum effect by exploiting the advantage of each corps.

In wars like in 1956 and 1967 the IDF passed hundreds of kilometers, which required logistical columns to follow the combat units, in order to supply them with fuel, ammunition, food, and water. In the 2008–2009 and 2014 wars, the IDF advanced only a few kilometers, which made it much easier to supply its troops.

In the 1973 war Israeli supply convoys ran into ambushes. In the war of 2006 entering Lebanon was considered to be too dangerous for logistical echelons. The latter is composed of soldiers who are not well trained for battle and their vehicles are highly flammable due to their cargo like fuel and ammunition and lack of protection. Therefore they were much more vulnerable than armor and infantry units, which had to allocate some troops to escort the logistical convoys.

In the start of the 1973 war, due to pressure following the Egyptian–Syrian offensive, the IDF rushed to send armored vehicles toward the front line. For lack of tank transporters, some drove on their caterpillar tracks for more than 100 kilometers. This wore down both the vehicles and their crews. In wars since 2006 the IDF sometimes had to bring to the battlefield armored vehicles from far away. However, compared to the 1973 war, it was much less urgent to send vehicles to the front since there was no invasion into Israel. Furthermore in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, the IDF did not mobilize all its forces, as in 1973, only part of them. This made it easier to allocate tank transporters because there was less demand for them.

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SEVEN

Operational Factors

The IDF had to take into consideration several operational factors that had to do with airborne attacks, sea combat, intelligence, deception, and close combat.

AIRBORNE ATTACKS

Airborne assault allowed the IDF to send a force by air in order to accomplish a mission on the ground. The IDF did it numerous times, by using helicopters. Israeli airborne troops parachuted only twice, during the 1956 war. The IDF conducted in recent years drills in which the 35th Paratroopers' Brigade carried out parachuting on quite a vast scale. However the IDF has been relying in its training much more on the helicopter. In contrast to the plane, the helicopter can land a force almost anywhere, including by hovering very close to the ground so the soldiers can jump or slip down a rope.

In the 1956 war, on October 30, the IDF's 202nd Paratroopers' Brigade, after advancing on the ground, reached one of its battalions that landed a day before near the Mitla Pass, deep inside Sinai.¹ The 202nd Paratroopers' Brigade did not run into much resistance although it passed about 150 kilometers inside Egyptian territory.

Landing from the air might not have depended so much on how far the objective was but on the opposition the relief force had to handle on its way there. It had to be done quickly, before the airborne troops would have been overwhelmed by Egypt's military. One isolated battalion could not have held its ground for long against an Egyptian armor assault, which fortunately for the IDF never came. The Israeli gamble paid off. Since then the IDF did not carry out a similar move to send an airborne force deep into Arab territory and then to reach it by land. Such an

approach could have helped, including in fighting a hybrid force, in the 1982 war. PLO headquarters were in Beirut, about 90 kilometers north of the Israeli border. In that war the IDF avoided a vertical flanking in the Beirut area, before arriving there with its land units.

In the 1956 war the IAF parachuted jeep vehicles into the Israeli airhead in Sinai.² In late July 2013, for the first time in fourteen years, the 35th Paratroopers' Brigade practiced dropping from a plane a light vehicle that lacked armor and weapons like a cannon. Its mission was to carry a few troops, ammunition, and supplies. Yet without armored vehicles, the airborne units are quite inferior, particularly if they are attacked by enemy tanks. It was not of a problem in fighting Arab nonstate organizations, which don't have many armored vehicles, if any.

In the 1956 war the 890th Paratroop Battalion was taken to its objective by sixteen transport planes. The Egyptian air force might have intercepted them.³ Israel did not try to prevent this danger by attacking Egyptian airfields, not even those that were close to the drop zone, due to constraints following Israel's alliance with France and Britain against Egypt. The IAF also had shortcomings that made it quite difficult to gain air superiority, an essential condition in securing an airborne assault. The IAF therefore took a risk and eventually it did not lose any planes. During a vertical flanking against nonstate organizations, Israeli airborne troops are less exposed to detection and interception since their foe does not have radars or jet fighters. However Hezbollah has anti-aircraft batteries, and any Arab group could both spot transport aircraft when they approach their target and then to try to shoot them down, even with small arms, at a very low altitude.

Air superiority over the bridgehead is important not only during the parachuting itself. Later on the Israeli bridgehead requires air support, including at the logistical level. It is essential until a ground force reaches the airborne troops and establishes a route, which provides supply on a regular basis. All of that is less urgent in fighting a nonstate organization because then the danger to the bridgehead is not as high as in confronting an Arab military. Therefore also the consuming of ammunition and with it the need of resupply is lower; airborne troops could last more time even with limited resources.

During the 1967 war, on June 5, two battalions from the IDF's 80th Paratroopers' brigade landed from helicopters inside Sinai. Then they stormed Egyptian artillery in Aum Cataf. The Israeli troops also returned by helicopters.⁴ On March 21, 1968, an elite unit from the 35th paratroopers' brigade, landed near the town of Karameh in Jordan, which served as a PLO stronghold. In both cases the airborne assaults were part of a ground offensive.

At the end of the 1967 war, on June 9, an Israeli airborne force landed from helicopters and captured Ras-Sedr in West Sinai, on the shores of the Suez Bay. The IDF's 520th Armor Brigade joined the airborne force

before the cease-fire.⁵ It was an example of how to seize a vital spot, with vertical flanking, in the last minute of a war, before a cease-fire is declared. In a way the IDF tried to do that in the 2006 war.

During the war of attrition in 1967–1970 the IDF conducted several airborne raids, with helicopters, inside Syria and Egypt. Some of those attacks were against civilian targets, such as transformer stations.⁶ Another famous raid was in Shadwan, a tiny Egyptian island in the Suez Bay that was taken by the IDF following an airborne assault, on January 22, 1970. The Israeli troops left that island the next day. Therefore the IDF gained in that period a lot of experience in airborne assaults, and not only against Arab militaries but against Arab groups as well. At the time the IDF used helicopters also to land troops during a pursuit after armed Palestinians who infiltrated into the West Bank from Jordan, on their way to attack Israelis.

Since 1969 the IAF has had the CH-53 heavy transport helicopters that can carry up to fifty-five troops. The IDF possesses also the C-130, a plane that can take up to ninety-two soldiers, and it has much longer range than the CH-53. Those qualities were needed on July 3, 1976, when the IDF launched a vertical flanking, about 4,000 kilometers from Israel, aiming at rescuing 102 Jewish hostages who were held by terrorists in Entebbe, Uganda. The raid was an amazing success.

SEA COMBAT

Since Israel was established, following its conflict with the Arabs, the only way for Israel to have a contact with friendly states such as those in Europe and Asia was by air and by sea. The Mediterranean and Red Seas have been for Israel the main way to reach markets and to receive materials, since compared with ships air transportation has been much more limited in its capacities. In the 1973 war Egypt strove to impose a naval blockade on Israel, in the Mediterranean Sea. Yet from October 6 to October 20, 115 merchant ships arrived in Israel, many of them carrying war material.⁷

In the recent decade Israel has been busy defending its natural gas rigs in the Mediterranean Sea. On one hand the rigs are relatively close to Israel, which makes it easier for the Israeli navy to patrol and reinforce its deployment there. On the other hand, since the rigs do not move, each of them is a sitting target for missiles and rockets that could be fired at them from Hezbollah in Lebanon and/or Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Against this threat the Israeli navy has the Barak 1 missile, aimed against anti-ship missiles. The Barak 8 is an upgraded version that has been replacing the older one. There is also the C-dome, a maritime version of the Iron Dome.

In the 1973 war Egyptian minefields in the Red Sea prevented Israeli tankers from travelling there.⁸ Egypt, by using war ships, also blocked

the southern gates to the Red Sea, the Bab El Mandeb Straits, which is about 2,000 kilometers south of Israel, near Yemen. By doing so Egypt stopped the import of oil from Iran to Israel⁹ and actually closed Israel's shortest sea route to most of Africa and Asia. The Israeli navy could not have done much in this matter. In the 1990s Israel assimilated the Sa'ar-5 corvettes that have a range of more than 6,000 kilometers. The IAF has also significantly upgraded its long-range capabilities since 1973. The IAF has KC-707 and KC-130 tankers for aerial refueling, in case Israel needs to sink Arab ships far away from Israel. In recent years, following the war in Yemen, there were several cases when ships that sailed near the Bab El Mandeb Straits were under fire.

The Suez Canal connects the Red and the Mediterranean seas. Israeli ships were not allowed to enter the Suez Canal from 1948 until the late 1970s, when Israel signed a peace treaty with Egypt. Therefore for three decades Israel had to figure out how to send vessels from the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea, where Israel has one harbor, in Eilat. The IDF transferred there, by land, small vessels. Another method was to bypass all of Africa, which was done several times. In recent decades Egypt allowed Israeli missile boats to cross the Suez Canal such as on October 2012 and in July 2017. Yet Israel could not know if in the future it could send vessels through the Suez Canal due to the instability in Egypt, which might end up as a failed state. Furthermore getting out of Eilat requires passing the Tiran Straits, which might be blocked by a hostile Egyptian regime or by terror and guerrilla groups if there is chaos in Egypt.

In the 1956 and 1967 wars Arab navies, mostly the Egyptian one, were bigger than their Israeli counterpart. Yet Arab navies did not play a major role in those wars. In the 1973 war the Israeli navy defeated both the Syrian and the Egyptian navies by sinking many of their ships. In 2016 the primary challenge of the Israeli navy was not to confront the Syrian navy since Israel's "enemy has transitioned from the sea to the land" in the form of Hezbollah and its anti-ship missiles.¹⁰ In the 2006 war Hezbollah fired such a missile that hit an Israeli missile boat, killing four troops and causing some damage.

Since the 1970s the Israeli navy has been based on missile boats, which carry anti-ship missiles, mostly the AGM-84 Harpoon. Hezbollah and Hamas, unlike Arab navies, don't have missile boats or frigates. Those nonstate organizations possess small boats that could storm Israeli shores or natural gas rigs. Hezbollah and particularly Hamas in the Gaza Strip are also positioned near the sea. The Israeli navy has therefore to adjust itself according to that such as by having guns powerful enough to sink boats and hit land targets.

Israel has conventional submarines that might possess cruise missiles with a nuclear warhead. The purpose is to give Israel second-strike capability¹¹ in case Iran produces a nuclear weapon and attacks Israel first. In

such an era at least one Israeli submarine will be kept, around the clock, in high alert. The rest of the submarines will be in training, maintenance, and fulfilling other missions, including those that have to do with the struggle against nonstate organizations, such as reconnaissance, gathering intelligence, and sending naval commandos.

In previous wars the IAF did not participate much in sea combat by striking vessels. The Israeli navy does not have its own air force, only helicopters that could be launched from ships such as the Sa'ar-5. In a future war, if the IAF has air superiority and the situation on the ground is in Israel's favor, it will be easier to allocate planes to carry out missions at sea. Another option for the IDF is to concentrate sea and airpower in the beginning of a future war in an effort to neutralize the threat, such as destroying Hezbollah's anti-ship missiles.

ATTACKS ON THE SHORELINES

In the 1948–1949 war, on June 2, 1948, two Egyptian ships shelled the town of Caesarea in the center of Israel.¹² In the 1956 war Lt. Gen. Moshe Dayan, IDF's Chief of Staff, relied on the navies of Britain and France to pin down their Egyptian counterpart to its bases.¹³ Yet an Egyptian destroyer managed to reach Israel and to shell the harbor in Haifa. After a few hours that ship was captured by the Israeli navy.¹⁴ In the 1967 war submarines, maybe Egyptian ones, approached the Israeli coast, without attacking any objective. Overall Israel did not face a major attack on its shoreline, which was quite important since most of its population and civilian infrastructure is located there.

Egypt's naval commandos raided the port of Eilat during the war of attrition, in 1967–1970. For example in the night between November 15 and 16, 1969 two Israeli merchant ships were sabotaged. In the 2014 war Hamas launched frogmen to attack Israel from the sea. Awareness and quick response by Israeli troops foiled this attempt to surprise Israel by outflanking its land border with the Gaza Strip. It was not the first time when armed Palestinians from nonstate organizations attacked from the sea. The peak was actually in the second half of the 1970s. At that time the Israeli navy struggled to reduce the number of those assaults by looking for technological solutions such as radars that could detect boats before they reach the Israeli coast. Still, several times Palestinians managed to land there and to harm Israelis. The most deadly strike happened on March 11, 1978, which cost the lives of thirty-five Israelis.¹⁵

In the 1948–1949 war, in late December 1948, the Israeli navy bombed Gaza and Rafah.¹⁶ In the 1956 war the Israeli navy was forbidden from striking Egyptian ports.¹⁷ In the 1967 war an Israeli submarine penetrated into the port of Alexandria, where it launched naval commandos and got involved in a skirmish. It absorbed damages yet managed to escape.¹⁸ In

the 1973 war the Israeli navy conducted a few raids against objectives in the Syrian shores. Those attacks coerced the Syrian military to allocate some of its ground forces to those areas, instead of deploying them in the main front line in the Golan Heights. In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars the Israeli navy assisted by gathering information and firing at targets that were on or in proximity to the coast of Lebanon/the Gaza Strip.

Prior to the 1973 war the IDF planned a major landing at the west bank of the Suez Bay, which was eventually cancelled. It could have threatened the rear of Egypt's military and/or its cities.¹⁹ In 1982 the IDF carried out its biggest amphibious operation ever, in Lebanon.²⁰ It was against the PLO, not a conventional military target, so there was much less of a risk to the Israeli bridgehead in absorbing heavy bombardments or major counterattack. Running an amphibious operation is a complicated task, which requires tight cooperation between sea, ground, and air forces, a field in which the IDF did not have a lot of combat experience. It was a major reason why the IDF hesitated in conducting them. Yet when the foe is a nonstate organization and quite weak, then the task is easier. However in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars the IDF gave up the option to surprise its foe by landing from the sea. It was a missed opportunity since in Lebanon in 2006 and in the Gaza Strip in 2008–2009 and 2014 the IDF could have bypassed its foe and struck them hard in their rear.

INTELLIGENT ASPECTS

The Israeli intelligence community and particularly the directorate of IDF intelligence has been responsible for finding out if Arab militaries are about to attack, a critical issue due to Israel's constraints such as the need for time to call in the reserves. The 1973 war is remembered as the biggest failure of the directorate of IDF intelligence in this matter.²¹ Following the 2014 war there was a fierce debate between Israel's Shin Bet security service and the directorate of IDF intelligence on whether Hamas sought a war or not. It might be more of a challenge to know what a nonstate organization is thinking, in compared with a state, because the decision-making process in a group is less clear and more sporadic. Either way the danger was much greater in the era of the high-intensity wars. If then, as in 1973, the directorate of IDF intelligence had failed in providing an alert about a massive Arab offensive, then Israel might have paid a huge price in blood and treasure. Furthermore Israel might have lost lands and in the worst case the entire state would have crumbled, with all its ramifications for the safety of the Jews there. If a hybrid foe had managed to surprise Israel at most the latter had absorbed heavy casualties, but much less than in a high-intensity war, and without losing any land let alone risking the survival of the state.

The directorate of IDF intelligence has been also responsible for gathering data on the foe's military capabilities. In this subject meticulous work by IDF intelligence before the 1967 war contributed significantly to the swift Israeli victory.

Prior to the 2006 war many in the IDF had an "illusion of the availability of perfect information of anything that happens on the battlefield. This, in turn, has increased the danger that once such information will not be available the troops will become almost blind."²² In that war there were problems like that. There were also difficulties in locating Hezbollah's rocket launchers due to lack of coordination between the directorate of IDF intelligence, the IAF, and IDF's northern command.²³ During the war of 2014 Israel's Shin Bet and the directorate of IDF intelligence provided Israeli troops with high-quality data.²⁴ It followed one of the main lessons from the 2006 war.

Col. Nati Cohen, as the head of the Planning Department at the IDF's C4i Teleprocessing Branch, said that during the 2014 war, "fighter jet pilots received data on a digital map showing location of enemy targets from tank commanders and live images of the target. The same image was available to artillery gunners and navy ship missile station operators. All of them could coordinate their firepower to hit the same targets."²⁵ It was part of a significant upgrading of IDF's capability in collecting data in real time and in distributing it among the troops. Yet the IDF has to be careful of overdependence on those computerized systems in case they fail. Israeli troops must know how to gather information by themselves and not to totally rely on others/advanced systems.

Prior to the 1956 war the proximity of Egyptian posts to the border helped the Israeli combat engineers to know exactly the size and location of the Egyptian minefields.²⁶ The Gaza strip has a border with Israel so the latter, as it did in the past, can examine Hamas's military preparations. The Gaza Strip is also quite small and narrow, which assists in collecting information about that area. Lebanon, where Hezbollah is located, is similar in that sense but that country is still bigger than the Gaza Strip, and Hezbollah's positions have been spread over dozens of kilometers north of the Israeli border, in contrast to Hamas in the Gaza Strip. This makes it more of a challenge to gather data on Hezbollah.

"IDF Strategy" from 2015 argued that "maintaining intelligence superiority enabling sufficient early warning about the enemy's capabilities and intentions." It has to do with states and groups.²⁷ Yet there has been always the same dilemma: how to make the priorities? The IDF does not want to neglect a state/group, which might become very important in a very short time. This constraint requires ongoing evaluation so the IDF does not invest too many resources in one area at the expense of the others. Another difficulty, a domestic one, is to recruit the best people since the Israeli intelligence community has to compete with the private sector that gives higher salaries.

DECEPTION

Prior to the Israeli offensive against Egypt in 1956, Israel wished to gain surprise by creating a deception in which the IDF allegedly was about to confront Jordan.²⁸ At the time there was a border war between Israel and Jordan, which helped to make the impression that Israel might attack Jordan. It could be the same in the future. There could be skirmishes between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, but it could be for Israel just a smokescreen since eventually Israel will strike another group on another front like Hezbollah.

In the crisis prior to the 1967 war, the IDF deployed in the Negev a dummy unit, the 49th Division. The goal was to convince the Egyptian military to wrongly assume that the Israeli center of gravity would be near Contila.²⁹ It was not clear if and how much this deception was successful. Yet Israel could do it again in order to encourage its foe, including a hybrid one, to reinforce an area where the IDF would not launch a major attack, if any. In 1967 the IDF did that trick while relying on a relatively small force, because the IDF did not want to invest in this effort too many men and weapons systems, which were required where the actual attack took place. To begin with, the IDF had fewer troops and weapons systems than its Egyptian counterpart so the IDF wished to allocate as few forces as possible for the deception. In contrast the IDF enjoys superiority over hybrid foes such as in the number of troops, which allows the IDF to assign to that task enough personnel so the deception will be more reliable.

In the 1973 war Egypt turned an exercise into a full-scale offensive that caught the IDF quite unprepared. Since then the IDF has had to watch closely so it will not fall into the same trap again. The IDF could implement such a move as well: conduct a drill near a border, which will develop into an offensive before its foe could react properly. It might especially be effective against a nonstate organization that does not have the capability to regroup fast enough, before the IDF penetrates deep into Arab territory and/or hits many of its targets there.

In recent years the IDF has been transferring more and more of its bases to the Negev, which borders the Gaza Strip. In a time of preparation for a surprise attack against Hamas, the IDF could increase its strength near the Gaza Strip in relative secrecy by using its bases in the Negev. The IDF could add there more units, without putting them in the field near the Gaza Strip, a step that might catch Hamas' attention.

The IAF put dummy planes in its bases before the 1956 war.³⁰ It was a small example of how to bring the enemy to spend time and waste ammunition, if it attacks that base. Due to their low cost those kinds of bluffs might be worth the effort, as part of a fight against a nonstate organization. Using camouflage is also part of creating deception.

CYBER AND ELECTRONIC WARFARE

In the 1982 war one main reason for the Syrian defeat was that their command and control centers, with their radars, were shut down by the IDF.³¹ It was one of the known cases in the Arab–Israeli wars when electronic warfare had such an effect on the battlefield. In that sense the more sophisticated Israel’s hybrid foes become, the more they will be vulnerable to electronic and cyber warfare.

Cyber warfare allows Israel to strike without jeopardizing the lives of its citizens and soldiers, while gaining worldwide prestige, which could strengthen Israel’s deterrence.³² In some cases, like in disrupting Iran’s nuclear project with cyber warfare in 2011, Israel did not take responsibility but still the general assumption was that Israel was behind it. Israel therefore received the credit without absorbing an Iranian retaliation. This approach did not stop Iranian cyber-attacks on Israel but they could have occurred anyway, following the cold war between the two states. Mutual cyber-attacks have also been going on between Israel and Arab nonstate organizations.

During the 2014 war Israel absorbed about 900,000 cyber-attacks a day; most of them, according to Israel, came from Iran. The majority of the cyber-attacks were against civilian objectives.³³ The war was between Israel and Hamas, not Iran. Furthermore, at the time there was a rift between Hamas and its Iranian patron. Nevertheless the latter tried to assist Hamas, while trying to avoid an open collision between it and Israel, by using cyber warfare.

In 2015 “the introduction of cyber warfare has pushed the IDF to employ it before having the chance to become fully acquainted with its theoretical and doctrinal aspects.”³⁴ On January 2017 the IDF decided not to build a cyber command, after hesitating about whether to do that or not.³⁵ Those hardships show the difficulties Israel faces in this new field. Although Israel has to fix its cyber problems it is not that urgent in regard to its conflict with nonstate organizations because the threat from the latter in this regard is not that big.

IDENTIFICATION FROM THE GROUND AND THE AIR

In the 1967 war, on June 6, forces from the Israeli 31st and 38th divisions shot at each other by mistake, near Gabal Abirik, in Sinai. Although there were attempts to stop this friendly fire, by using the emergency channel, it continued. Eventually it cost the lives of four Israeli soldiers. In the 1982 war twenty-four Israeli soldiers were killed by mistake after the IAF bombed them. The IAF assumed that their vehicles were Syrian ones. In the 2014 war five Israeli troops were killed by friendly fire. Over the years blunders like that caused the lives of hundreds of Israeli troops. It hap-

pened due to command, control, and communication problems, fog of war, lack of visibility, human errors such as wrong judgment, and poor training in this matter. It was a serious challenge, particularly when hundreds of vehicles from both sides clashed with each other. In addition land units did not hold electronic recognition measures such as those that exist in aircraft and anti-aircraft batteries. Ground troops have to rely for that purpose on their sight, with or without binoculars. Friendly fire incidents could occur again, in spite of the IDF's advanced command-and-control systems, if they malfunctioned or jammed. This problem will become more difficult if there is a collision between the IDF and the Egyptian military, because both sides possess similar weapons systems such as M-113, M-109, AH-64, and F-16. Hybrid foes don't have weapons systems like aircraft or APC. This saves the IDF time in trying to recognize its foe, since all the vehicles in the battlefield belong to the IDF, which reduces the risk to Israeli troops in this matter. Israeli land units still ran into situations when they had a very short time, sometimes only a second or two, to decide if an approaching person is friendly or not and whether to open fire, particularly in close combat like urban warfare.

CLOSE COMBAT

The IDF dealt with close combat in various conditions like in urban warfare. The IDF acquired experience in this field in high-intensity wars like in 1948–1949 in cities such as Beersheba, in 1967 in cities like Jerusalem, and in 1973 in the city of Suez. Urban warfare was a major part of the low-intensity war in 2000–2005, such as during a vast Israeli operation in the West Bank in 2002. It also played a key role in fighting hybrid foes in Lebanon, such as in the city of Sidon in 1982 and in the town of Bint Kbeil in 2006. In the 2008–2009 and 2014 wars the IDF fought on the outskirts of Gaza City.

Until 1982 the main enemies of the IDF in urban warfare were Arab soldiers that had tanks and artillery. However the fight was mostly with Arab infantry, as it was when the IDF confronted nonstate organizations that did not possess weapons systems like tanks. The IDF used the IAF, tanks, and artillery in urban warfare but they were not always available. In other times they were not effective enough because of the difficulty in finding and hitting targets and also due to problems in the IDF's buildup, such as lack of coordination between Israelis units. It was quite a challenge to combine armor, artillery, combat engineers, gunships, and infantry, including in urban warfare.

Israeli infantry has APCs that give some protection, but they were penetrated, particularly after absorbing a hit at short range, when Arab fighters exploited the urban terrain to get very close to the Israeli vehicles. The M-113, IDF's main APC since the 1970s, has been known to be

very vulnerable. The firepower of Israeli APCs, including the M-113, was not always enough to deter/strike the enemy before it attacks, and their mobility in the streets, particularly the narrow ones, was quite limited. Sometimes vehicles could not have even entered the street. It was one of the cases in which Israeli infantry preferred or were forced to leave their vehicles, which made it easier to maneuver, find cover, and use their light arms. However, the troops had to watch every window and door for IEDs, booby traps, and snipers. For example, in the 2014 war, there was a widespread use of IEDs, which had better quality, compared with past collisions. They were on roads and in buildings that the IDF was expected to capture.³⁶

Close combat received a priority in IDF's training in recent years. The IDF has bases such as Elyaqim and Lachish, where there are facilities that look like villages in Lebanon. Israeli troops have been learning how to avoid booby traps and use ropes and small robots.³⁷ The IDF has similar facilities that simulate the Gaza Strip.

DEALING WITH ARAB POPULATIONS DURING A WAR

In the 1982 war in Lebanon the IDF struggled to discern between Palestinian fighters, including children armed with RPG anti-tank rockets, and noncombatants.³⁸ In cities in south Lebanon such as Tyre and Sidon the population was exposed to danger because it was mixed with PLO gunmen.³⁹ Psychological warfare was called into play, to try to convince the Palestinian gunmen to turn themselves in, by promising them that they will not be harmed.⁴⁰ The IDF also tried to separate between PLO fighters and civilians by encouraging the latter to leave their homes temporarily, so only combatants will be left there.

In the 2014 war, the IDF again encouraged Palestinian civilians, this time in the Gaza Strip, to evacuate. Many of them decided anyway to flee, when it was clear their neighborhood was about to turn into a battlefield. Yet there were those who refused to abandon their homes, in spite of the danger, or were forced to stay there to be used by gunmen as human shields. Hamas, like some in the PLO in the 1982 war, considered their own communities as kind of fighters. According to this concept, unarmed people must pay their share in supporting the war effort and to risk their lives by giving cover to those who actually hold weapons. Those Arab groups also sought to exploit the casualties and suffering of Arab civilians to influence world public opinion.

Overall during the 2014 war up to half a million Palestinians fled from their homes. About 250,000 of them looked for cover in schools and facilities of UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East). The IDF claimed that Hamas's gunmen used those places to hide, after firing at Israel. Therefore sometimes Pal-

estinian civilians were killed there. It was possible to reduce the collateral damage by evacuating a large part of the population outside Gaza City, to areas which are available even in a small territory like the Gaza Strip. There the population would have been better protected.

In two major operations in Lebanon, in 1993 and in 1996, the IDF, after giving a warning, fired at residential areas in south Lebanon. The immediate aim was to push the population out of there, temporarily. The overall Israeli plan was to urge those civilians to create pressure on their government to restrain Hezbollah. The results of this approach were quite limited since Hezbollah continued to confront Israel, which also put Lebanese population in harm's way.

In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars Israeli air strikes were carried out with caution, in order to avoid civilian casualties. In 2014 one of the methods was hitting a building with a tiny air bomb so the people living there could escape, before a much bigger bombardment started against a military target that was in that location. Furthermore the IDF warned certain neighborhoods in the Gaza Strip that they are about to be attacked, urging the residents there to flee. Yet by that the IDF gave Hamas time, up to several days, to get better ready for combat in those neighborhoods. There were claims that the IDF attacked the Palestinian population without warning and/or used excessive firepower. Israel did strive to reduce collateral damage as much as possible but it still killed hundreds of Palestinian noncombatants, while Hamas wanted to kill Israeli civilians but almost did not manage to do that. This tragic gap between the goals and the outcome played into the hands of those who were quick to blame Israel for war crimes.

In early July 2015, a senior Israeli officer assumed that in the next war with Hezbollah up to 1.5 million people might be forced to leave their homes in south Lebanon, as a result of a massive Israeli offensive there.⁴¹ In January 2016 the IDF ran a vast exercise, aimed against Islamic groups like Hezbollah. GOC Northern Command, Maj. Gen. Aviv Kochavi, claimed that in a future war the IDF will attack thousands of targets, including in residential areas.⁴² On June 21, 2017, Maj. Gen. Amir Eshel, the commander of the IAF, said that in the next war Israel will launch a massive air bombardment in residential areas in Lebanon, where Hezbollah has its rockets. He recommended the people of Lebanon leave their homes as soon as the war starts, in order not to be harmed.⁴³ Those announcements were meant to deter Hezbollah and to prepare world public opinion so it understands, in advance, the negative ramifications of another war with Hezbollah. The Israeli message is that Lebanese population might pay dearly because their towns and villages were turned by Hezbollah into a base to attack Israel, including its population.

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EIGHT

Offense vs. Defense

The IDF gained vast experience in running operations, mostly offensive ones. The IDF strove to concentrate its forces in one sector and then to break through while using surprise.

CHOOSING DEFENSE OR OFFENSE?

In the beginning of the 1948–1949 and the 1973 wars the Arabs held the initiative, while in 1956, 1967, and 1982 Israel launched the first strike of the war. In 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 it was less clear which side started the war, following the escalation that occurred before the confrontation began. In the operational and tactical levels during all the wars the IDF was in all kinds of defensive and mostly offensive situations.

In the 1956 and 1967 wars Israel attacked Egypt while staying in defensive position in the Jordanian and the Syrian fronts. In the 1982 war, Israel attacked Syrian forces in Lebanon while remaining in defensive deployment in the Golan Heights. In the 2008–2008 and 2014 wars, Israel attacked Hamas in the Gaza Strip while keeping a defensive approach in front of Hezbollah in Lebanon. In the 2006 war it was the opposite.

In high-intensity wars the Egyptian military was known to be quite good in defensive warfare.¹ Its Syrian counterpart was also like that although both militaries did not excel in mobile warfare, including not as part of defense. They were better in static defense. As long as their troops had a clear and a simple task, mostly protecting a post, they often did it well. Yet when their lines were breached, then Arab forces found it difficult to respond quickly and effectively, which was a major reason why the IDF relied on offense. Arab nonstate organizations, following their huge military inferiority, had to limit their operations in both offense and defense to tiny infantry raids and mostly to firing mortars, rockets, and

anti-tank missiles. Those groups sometimes managed to put up fierce resistance in defensive situations such as in 2006 and 2014.

Prior to the 1973 war the IDF relied heavily on the attack, not on conducting defensive operations.² In the first hours of the 1973 war, Israeli tank crews, according to their training, rushed to the Suez Canal to block the Egyptian offensive. Although the Israeli tanks tried to reach their defensive positions across the Suez Canal, their maneuver was actually a counterattack. The Egyptian military expected that and was ready. Its troops managed to push back the Israeli attacks while destroying dozens of Israeli tanks.

Israel seized the Golan Heights in 1967. Since then Syria tried only one time, in 1973, to retake that area by force. Syria failed but until around 2000 the IDF had to be ready to curb a massive surprise offensive in the Golan Heights. In several cases Israel had to increase its deployment in the Golan Heights, when there were higher chances of a Syrian attack, which never came.

Syria could have also tried to capture a village or a post near the border, in the Golan Heights, to be used to urge the international community to pressure Israel to give up the Golan Heights. For Israel it was difficult to know in advance about such an attack, due to its very limited scale. Without a clear warning Israel might not have risked launching a preemptive strike. Instead Israel would have conducted an immediate counterattack in order to recapture the ground it lost, before international intervention.

Since 2011, following the civil war in Syria, armed groups took over most of the border between Israel and Syria. One of those outfits could raid an Israeli village on the border. As with a possible Syrian attack in the past, if the IDF does not receive any alert, it might not be able to stop the assault in time. The IDF will respond by retaking the territory while defeating the invaders. The difference between those two scenarios, in regard to the Syrian military/armed groups, is that the risk with the former was much greater since a clash inside the Golan Heights might have escalated into a war with the entire Syrian military, when it was quite strong, before the Syrian civil war. Israel might have paid a heavy price. Compared to that, Arab armed groups near the Israeli border are enormously smaller and weaker than the Syrian military, when it was in full strength, so a collision with them is much less danger to Israel.

Arab nonstate organizations like Hezbollah and Hamas seek to seize all of Israel, but they can't conquer even a tiny piece of Israeli land due to their military inferiority. They could have tried to seize a spot inside Israeli territory, on the border, for several hours and at most for a few days, until the IDF would have driven them out. The closest situation to that occurred mostly in the 1970s, before Hamas and Hezbollah were created. At the time Palestinian gunmen penetrated into Israel. Then they took hostages in a house or a bus for several hours, until Israeli security

forces stormed them. The IDF, actually since 1948, has to be ready around the clock, in case a detail or a single Arab gunman tries to infiltrate into Israel. Sometimes the IDF managed to prevent that by using deterrence or an actual attack but in many cases those tiny Arab penetrations were carried out. It was not easy blocking them. The result was that sometimes Israelis—civilians and/or troops—were harmed by those symbolic invasions.

The 1991 war, when Iraq faced an international coalition, was a unique case in which Israel was involved without actually participating. Israel absorbed several dozen missiles that were launched from Iraq. Israel restrained itself mostly because of a political reason, avoiding undermining the international coalition against Iraq. Israel had also a military reason; the IDF could not have done much against such a remote state. The IAF did not possess long-range bombers that could have inflicted a blow big enough to deter Iraq from provoking Israel. Therefore, for lack of a better choice, Israel was stuck with passive defense.

In mid-November 2012, for about a week, there was a relatively minor collision between Hamas and Israel. The latter attacked the Gaza Strip mostly from the air, without conducting a ground offensive. Hamas meanwhile fired rockets. Against that Israel's active defense had cutting-edge technology, the Iron Dome. Israel also used old-fashioned passive defense: sending civilians to shelters. In addition Israeli troops, from their positions on the border, protected the villages around the Gaza Strip against possible incursions. The Israeli approach was a compromise between offense and defense. Israel lost six people in that round.

In the next round Israel could implement a pure defense—focused strategy³—by not attacking at all while allowing Hamas to strike Israel. Yet first of all some Israelis don't have shelters, and the Iron Dome might run out of missiles. Second, the IDF might not be able to prevent all the infiltrations by tunnels and/or sea. Those attacks might inflict heavy casualties among Israelis. This will bring a public outcry, and Israel's deterrence might crumble. Arabs will think Israel is a paper tiger, about to be cracked. In addition world public opinion may not have a sense of urgency in helping to end the war. This is particularly true if at the time there is some major crisis elsewhere, such as in East Asia, which will attract most of the international attention.

According to "IDF Strategy" from 2015 "The IDF's fundamental priorities shall continue to be the development of offensive capabilities before defensive capabilities, despite the centrality of defense and the increased threats to the home front." Also "offense had substantial advantages; it instilled among Palestinian guerrillas, and terrorists in particular, a strong sense of danger, thereby limiting their freedom of action and forcing them to hide."⁴ The IDF therefore continued to emphasize the importance of the offensive approach in fighting nonstate organizations.

FORCE CONCENTRATION

Since it was established in 1948 Israel's worst-case scenario was to be attacked by several Arab militaries on a couple of fronts.⁵ In such a situation the IDF would have had to split its forces between the different fronts, which would have made it almost impossible for it to create a center of gravity on one front. In 1956 and 1967 Syria and Jordan had an alliance with Egypt. However, in both wars, especially in 1956, Egypt was left alone to deal with most of the IDF. In the 1973 war Israel faced two powerful Arab militaries, each one on its own front. The IDF suffered from a shortage of troops since it had to divide its forces between two fronts, across the entire war. This constraint made it difficult for the IDF to concentrate its forces on one front. On each front the IDF had fewer troops than its foe. Israel will not have the same problem if Hamas and Hezbollah build a coalition against Israel, since those groups still will be outnumbered on each front.

In the 1982, 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, the IDF had one front solely, so the IDF could have concentrated its forces there. Furthermore while in the 1982 war the IDF faced forces from an Arab state, Syria, and a nonstate organization, the PLO, in 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 it had only one opponent, a nonstate organization. This allowed the IDF, particularly in 2008–2009 and in 2014, to rely on its best troops—the regulars—since many of its reserves were not well trained. The reserves, in spite of their drawbacks, will be called during a war against a more powerful foe because then the IDF will require many of the reserves, even those who are not well prepared for combat.

In the low-intensity wars in 1987–1993 and 2000–2005, the IDF confronted Palestinians on two fronts, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. However, the Palestinians were not able to create enough opposition on both fronts, in the same time, that would have required the IDF to mobilize a large part of its reserves. The exception was in 2002, during a major operation in the West Bank. Even then most of the IDF was not called into action.

In past wars Israel transferred its troops from one front to another by using internal lines,⁶ which expedited their arrival to the front line. In the 1948–49 war, before a major offensive in the Negev area, in the south of Israel, the IDF sent its 9th Infantry brigade from the north of the country to the Negev. In the 1967 war the IDF again used internal lines, in the other direction, when reinforcements were dispatched from Sinai to the Jordanian and to the Syrian fronts. In the 1973 war the IDF was pinned down to two fronts, which prevented almost entirely the transferring of units from one front to another.

In the 2014 war IDF's Chief of General Staff, Binyamin Gantz, assumed there would not be a second front in Lebanon.⁷ Indeed Hezbollah was busy enough in its own front, in Syria, and did not want to have

another front. Therefore as in the 2006 and 2008–2009 wars, in the 2014 war Israel did not have to rush troops from one front to another. Furthermore, in the 1973 war, the two fronts were more than 400 kilometers from each other, while the distance between the Gaza Strip and Lebanon is about 250 kilometers. Therefore even if in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars the IDF had to send forces to another front it would have been faster compared to the 1973 war.

In the 1956 war, the IDF experienced for the first time the use of a division in combat. The 1982 war was the only time when the IDF deployed a corps in the battlefield. Those formations were needed in order to deal with Arab divisions and armies. In low-intensity wars the IDF at most gathered several brigades together. Even that was in rare cases like in late May 2004, when four Israeli brigades, under the control of a division headquarter, participated in a major operation at Rafah, in the Gaza Strip. In the 2006 war, the IDF sent five divisions against Hezbollah.⁸ In the 2008–2009 war in the Gaza Strip, five Israeli brigades were involved in the battles. In the 2014 war, units from about ten Israeli brigades participated in the battles. Therefore in fighting a hybrid force there is a place for using brigades and even divisions. In the future a corps too might be needed.

In the 1967 war, the IDF faced a strong line of defense in both Sinai and the Golan Heights, which demanded the IDF gather its forces in certain sectors in order to break through. This was not the case in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars. Penetrating into Lebanon/the Gaza Strip did not require the IDF to concentrate a substantial force in a specific sector, since it fought a relatively weak foe, a nonstate organization that was not able to create a formidable line of defense.

In January 2016, the IDF's five-year plan "Gideon" was "designed to augment the IDF's capacity to fight in multiple theaters, with sufficient war stocks to allow for protracted combat along its northern border with Lebanon and Syria—which is considered two fronts of the same theater—and at least one other theater, whether that be Gaza, the West Bank or Iran."⁹ The IDF still seeks that the next war will be only on one front, so it could concentrate its forces there. Yet the IDF has to be ready to fight on two and maybe even on three fronts at the same time.

OFFENSIVE ON A NARROW/WIDE FRONT

The IDF invaded Sinai in 1956 and 1967 on a wide front, which enabled the IDF to threaten several objectives at the same time while confusing the Egyptian military about the location of the IDF's center of gravity. The Egyptian military therefore had to divide its forces between several sectors. There were gaps between the Israeli forces in both wars since some of them advanced faster and deeper than the others, which exposed

their flanks to counterattacks. Yet the Egyptian military did not manage to conduct such attacks so the Israeli penetration into the peninsula was not stopped until victory was achieved.

In 1982 the IDF penetrated into Lebanon on a wide front, pushing back both Syrian forces and the PLO, all the way to Beirut. In the 2014 war the IDF attacked on a relatively wide front that forced Hamas to split its efforts between several sectors, without knowing where Israel's center of gravity was. Yet the Israeli advance was limited to a few kilometers due to hesitations regarding absorbing casualties and seizing Arab land.

SURPRISE

Israel carried out successful surprise attacks in 1956 and 1967. Furthermore, prior to the 1967 war, there was a major crisis, so the Egyptian military was getting ready to fight. However the IDF caught its Egyptian counterpart off guard. Before the 2006 war, Hezbollah, after it took into captivity two Israeli troops, knew that Israel would respond. Yet Israel shocked Hezbollah by destroying, in one massive strike, the group's long-range rockets. On the eve of the 2008–2009 war, there was tension between Israel and Hamas, but the former still was able to shock the group with a huge first strike that cost Hamas heavy casualties.

On April 14, 2016, a senior IDF officer said that Hamas fears an Israeli surprise attack.¹⁰ Such a move could help the IDF in capturing a hybrid foe like Hamas off guard. The latter does not have to deploy weapons systems such as tanks, only to call in small infantry units, which makes its job much easier. Yet some of Hamas' men might be shocked by the Israeli surprise offensive and not report for duty. Others might be confused and make mistakes, not knowing whether the IDF had already penetrated deep into the Gaza Strip. After all Hamas' men usually receive only basic training. They are not professional soldiers who are more capable of handling a dicey situation such as when they are suddenly under attack.

"IDF Strategy" from 2015 explained the importance of the "willingness to take high risks, and the use of force at high and ongoing intensity to achieve victory."¹¹ If the IDF starts a surprise attack, its hybrid foe could immediately launch its rockets at Israel. Yet a fast and powerful Israeli offensive will allow the IDF to seize and/or destroy many rockets before they could be used. Hamas/Hezbollah might manage to deploy their men before the war begins. However the IDF, as it did in 1967, could still gain surprise by attacking in a time and in a way its Arab foe does not expect. As part of reducing the probability of alerting its foe, the IDF could limit the scale of the attacking force by relying on elite units. The better and also the smaller the Israeli force is the higher the chances of shocking its rivals. It means relying mostly on regulars, since calling in

tens of thousands of reserves might warn Israel's enemy that the IDF is about to attack.

The chances of success are bigger if the Israeli surprise offensive strikes several objectives at the same time, with a strong force. In that way Israel could hope to inflict a major blow, while reducing the casualties among both Israeli and Arab noncombatants. Some of the latter will be harmed since they will not receive a warning with enough time to flee the battlefield, due to Israel's need to keep the element of surprise. However the losses among Arab civilians might be less than if the war starts when Israel's enemy is ready for combat, since hybrid forces deploy their men inside their own population.

A surprise attack might bring international criticism that could undermine Israel's legitimacy to conduct military operations. Israel was always aware that outside pressure could possibly coerce Israel to stop its military actions. Nevertheless in the right circumstances, like following Palestinian provocations or assaults against Israel, the latter might be able to present a sound argument why it has no choice but to attack.

A sudden Israeli attack will catch the Israeli population by surprise. The latter experienced that in the past but it still has to know what to do. The main problem might be that Israeli civilians will not be ready to find a shelter if they absorb rocket attacks, following the Israeli offensive. It is particularly relevant to those who live close to the front line, where they are more exposed than other Israelis. Some also might have to be evacuated to safer places, which should be done without disrupting the Israeli offensive.

In 1967 the IDF surprised the Egyptian military by penetrating Sinai from a different sector than the one the IDF used in its previous invasion to the peninsula, in 1956. Furthermore in 1967 the IDF's 31st Division passed areas in Sinai that were considered by the Egyptian military as impossible to move through.¹² This phenomenon repeated itself in similar cases during past wars, which helped the IDF to shock its rival.

There were times when the IDF ignored the need to gain surprise. For example in the 2014 war the IDF's 1st infantry brigade reached the neighborhood of Shejaiya, in the Gaza Strip, head-on, without much surprise. The IDF, in spite of its overwhelming advantages in regard to nonstate organization, has to exploit any possible surprise tactic. It has to do also with preparations prior to the battle such as hiding Israel's intentions by using camouflage.

Over the years the IDF learned from its foes about all kinds of tactics. In regard to hybrid forces, those lessons included infiltrations, camouflage, laying down ambushes, and IEDs. Sometimes the IDF implemented those patterns in order to surprise its enemy. For example in the mid-1990s the IDF created a special infantry unit, Egoz, to confront Hezbollah by using the latter's own methods.

PENETRATING DEEP INTO ARAB TERRITORY

Israel's military doctrine was based on transferring the fight quickly into Arab territory.¹³ After breaking through or outflanking Arabs' defense lines, the IDF stormed deep into Arab land.¹⁴ This maneuver was done in wars like in 1956 and in 1967, when Israeli units charged about 200 kilometers inside Sinai, in less than a week, rushing from its eastern border with Israel to its western border, the Suez Canal. In the 1973 war the IDF did not penetrate as deep as in previous wars but it did get closer to two Arab capital cities, Cairo and Damascus. The IDF also seized about 1,600 square kilometers in the west bank of the Suez Canal and 500 square kilometers inside Syria.

In the 1982 war, in about a week, the IDF advanced 90 kilometers inside Lebanon, as part of the fight against both the PLO and Syrian forces. In the 2006 war the IDF, compared to 1982, penetrated much less into Lebanon and even that took several weeks, until Israel finally decided to launch a vast ground offensive. In the 2008–2009 and 2014 wars, the IDF penetrated only two kilometers into the Gaza Strip. The width of the Gaza Strip is about 12 kilometers. However, there is a huge gap between the high-intensity wars in 1956 and 1967 and the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, in the length of the penetrations into Arab land. It shows how Israel hesitated, during a confrontation against non-state organizations. Israel did not want to pay the price of advancing deep into Arab territory, since Israel did not seek to seize more land.

During past wars, like in 1982, the IDF sometimes bypassed areas where it faced stiff opposition, since they did not risk that much the IDF's lines of communication. The IDF could have therefore pushed forward. The IDF could ignore pockets of resistance in the next wars, as long as those zones are not that vital: they will not serve for launching of rockets at Israel or to threaten Israeli ground units. After wiping out the rockets in other areas, the IDF could take care of less important zones that until then will be isolated. That way the IDF could reduce casualties among both its troops and Arab noncombatants.

"IDF Strategy" from 2015 called to maneuver "to the depth: offensive ground actions shall be carried out in a focused manner against centers of gravity, while striving to reach final maneuver lines as quickly as possible."¹⁵ The goal is both to hit the foe hard, by striking its centers of power, and at the same time to rush to where the IDF wants to be deployed in the end of the campaign. In Lebanon those two missions should be carried out together, since Hezbollah's headquarters is deep inside Lebanon. Usually hitting the centers of gravity is more important than reaching as far as possible, especially since Israel does not want to seize more territory. Furthermore, in some cases it could be counterproductive to strive to gain too many objectives.

ENCIRCLEMENT

The IDF used to encircle Arab forces in order to destroy them. Sometimes those situations turned into a siege. In the 1948–1949 war an Egyptian force was trapped for several months in the Negev, in the “Fallujah pocket.” In the 1973 war, the IDF surrounded for several weeks the 3rd Egyptian Army, on the east bank of the Suez Canal. In the 1982 war the IDF encircled a Syrian force and PLO fighters in Beirut for about two months. In all those three sieges the IDF could have attacked and defeated its foes, but the cost, including the political one, was not worth it. Instead the IDF kept the pressure on the besieged and tried to cut them off from the outside world. Eventually the sieges ended with an agreement that allowed the Arab combatants to leave/stay free where they were, with their weapons.

For the IDF in 1948–1949, the siege on the “Fallujah pocket” was a major part of the campaign but not the main mission, while in 1973 and particularly in 1982 it was a top priority. In 1982 the battlefield was inside an Arab capital city, not in the open desert as in 1948–1949 and 1973. In each of the sieges the IDF had to allocate resources and troops, which were needed to enforce the siege, such as to prevent the delivery of men and supply into the besieged area.

Israeli troops were under siege in Jerusalem in the 1948–1949 war. Part of them, in the old quarter of the city, eventually had to surrender to the Jordanian military, after attempts to rescue them failed. In the 1973 war, Israeli garrisons, in a series of posts on the east bank of the Suez Canal, were surrounded by Egyptian troops. Almost all of those posts were captured by the Egyptian military, at most after several days.

During the low-intensity wars in 1987–1993 and in 2000–2005 sometimes Israeli troops in posts in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were in a tough spot, literally. Those posts were isolated in a hostile area and often under fire. In one of them, which was located on the border between the Gaza Strip and Sinai, in a certain period every night hundreds of hand grenades were thrown at it. Although the IDF kept contact with all of those posts, they were under a kind of a siege. In none of those cases did Palestinians manage to seize a post.

COUNTERATTACKS

In the beginning of the 1948–1949 war, Israeli forces failed to push back the Egyptian military that advanced toward Tel Aviv.¹⁶ At a certain point the Egyptian military, not necessarily because of the Israeli opposition, stopped its offensive, which gave the IDF much-needed time to regroup.

At the start of the 1973 war, following the Syrian–Egyptian offensive, the IDF desperately tried to stop it. Yet there were not enough Israeli

forces on the front line and some of those who were there were not well prepared to handle such an offensive, like knowing how to conduct counterattacks. Reinforcements that were rushed to the Golan Heights helped the IDF to regain the land it lost there. In Sinai, the Israeli counterattacks failed in the start of the war.

Over the years, since 1948, the IDF has had to deal with infiltrations into Israel, mostly by ground. Those penetrations, in compared to Arab attacks in high-intensity wars, were very tiny, usually based on a few combatants or even one combatant. Yet there were thousands of those assaults, and they occurred all the time, more or less, in various sectors. The IDF always had to be on the alert, so it could respond as soon as possible. However, sometimes the IDF failed in preventing infiltrations and acted only after Israeli civilians were harmed/taken as hostages by Arab gunmen. Those minor Israeli counterattacks killed or captured the Arab gunmen, but they did not always save the lives of all the hostages.

Arab militaries launched counterattacks during high-intensity wars like those the Egyptian military did in early January 1949¹⁷ or during the 1973 war. In the 1956 and 1967 wars Arab militaries cracked under pressure and did not carry out almost any counterattacks. In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, the IDF ran into some tiny counterattacks, when one or several Arab combatants stormed Israeli troops. One famous Palestinian assault was in the neighborhood of Shejaiya in the Gaza Strip. On July 20, 2014, a force from the IDF's 1st brigade ran into a tough fight after it was attacked by Hamas' gunmen.

Almost all of the Arab assaults in 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 occurred during the Israeli presence inside Arab territory. In 2014, in some rare cases, Hamas managed to send a few details into Israel, which were not supposed to deal with the Israeli offensive directly. Their goal was to inflict casualties inside Israel and to undermine Israeli morale. Most of those incursions, which came out of tunnels and the sea, failed.

In both hybrid and high-intensity wars sometimes Israeli units were cut off or faced such a threat, as part of their offensive. It required Israeli units to watch their flanks and rear. In hybrid wars the danger was less severe, since Israel's foes did not have an air force or weapons systems like tanks. Their artillery was often light, mostly mortars. Hybrid forces have rockets too, but they are usually not mobile, so they could not be redeployed to strike an advancing Israeli force. Rockets could be launched from their current positions by adjusting them to fire at a new target. Yet originally those rockets are meant to be fired at Israel, not into Arab land, where the IDF penetrates. Furthermore, trying to locate and hit Israeli soldiers, particularly when they are on the move, is quite a challenge. Hybrid forces therefore have to rely mostly on anti-tank missiles and light arms in conducting counterattacks. With such firepower they are able to inflict casualties while trying to disrupt the Israeli offensive. In some cases an ambush could capture and destroy a small Israeli

force like a platoon. A series of successful and effective assaults, even minor ones, might not stop the Israeli offensive, but it could affect Israeli morale to such a degree that it will make the IDF slow down its advance in order to better secure its troops.

NOTES

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NINE

The Dilemma between Defense in Depth and Forward Defense

Forward defense means taking a static position and at most conducting a very limited maneuver in the frontline. The goal is to hold the land, whatever the cost is. Defense in depth allows the defender to withdraw and to maneuver in a much larger area that could extend to dozens and even hundreds of kilometers. In defense in depth it is possible to give up ground in order to save strength while buying time until reinforcements arrive and/or there is an opportunity to launch a major counterattack. The IDF implemented both forward defense and defense in depth in high-intensity and hybrid wars.

ARAB FORWARD DEFENSE VS. DEFENSE IN DEPTH

For Egypt, Sinai has been not only part of its country but also a vital defense area. In case of a war with Israel, Sinai is supposed to protect the heart of Egypt. In the 1956 war the Egyptian military had a “forward defense zone in the Gaza Strip” and a “main defense zone” that covered parts of the northeast and the center of Sinai.¹ Some claimed that the Egyptian defense had no depth.² During the war, on November 1, Egyptian forces were supposed to create a defense line in the area of Bir-Gifgafa,³ which is about 100 kilometers southwest of the border with Israel. Egypt could have also gathered its troops at the passes of the Mitla and Gidi in West Sinai. If Egypt had managed to hold on there, the IDF’s lines of communication would have been stretched and those of Egypt would have been much shorter, and the latter would have enjoyed a natural barrier. Yet the Egyptian armed forces were not able to do that, as part of defense in depth, due to the rapid Israeli advance.

In 1960 IDF's Armor Headquarters was aware that an Arab defense in depth would slow down an Israeli offensive.⁴ In the 1967 war Egypt stuck to forward defense because of prestige.⁵ Egypt also had only one defense line ready for combat, not defense in depth.⁶ Therefore Egypt did not have much of a choice. The crisis then lasted for about three weeks, before the IDF attacked, which did not give Egypt much time to add more defense lines in Sinai.

During the 1967 war, Egyptian troops sometimes managed to run delaying actions but this did not stop the IDF from pouring into Sinai. The IDF breached one of the sectors in northern Sinai, near the Mediterranean Sea. Yet the IDF did not depend on that solely, assuming Egypt's military might block the Israeli advance in that sector. Therefore the IDF stormed into Sinai in another sector in northern Sinai, in Um Cataf. There was a fierce fight there, but in less than a day it was over. Egypt's forward defense in all of northern Sinai had been crushed and as a result the entire Egyptian resistance basically collapsed.

In the 1956 and the 1967 wars Jordan and Syria did not assist Egypt. The latter, especially in 1967, after its Arab allies failed it in 1956, had to foresee this scenario. In such circumstances Egypt's military had to save its strength in Sinai according to the roles of defense in depth. This meant letting the IDF seize land in return for gaining time to regroup and waiting for the best opportunity to launch a counterattack. Yet the Egyptian forces were not skilled in maneuver warfare. This constraint, together with national pride, prevented Egypt from giving up any part of Sinai. Egypt therefore relied on forward defense, which led to losing the entire peninsula.

Syria implemented forward defense in 1967, assuming the IDF might not be able to climb up to the Golan Heights, in rugged terrain, and under heavy fire. Yet the IDF overcame the terrain. Its troops absorbed a lot of fire, but the IAF gained air superiority that both prevented Syrian air attacks and helped in suppressing Syrian artillery fire. Israeli troops seized key Syrian posts, sometimes after a tough fight. The Syrian forward line was breached, which brought the meltdown of the Syrian military presence in the Golan Heights.

In the 2006 war, the IDF assumed that Hezbollah relied on forward defense, near the border, but actually it was defense in depth.⁷ Yet Hezbollah did not have enough firepower, fortifications, and manpower. Hezbollah could not have carried out, for example, an armor counterattack. The group slowed down the Israeli advance, but considering the full potential of the IDF it was only a matter of time before it penetrated deeper into Lebanon. Israel's mistakes and hesitations in 2006 in launching a major ground offensive don't mean Hezbollah's defense should receive more credit than it actually deserves.

ISRAEL'S FORWARD DEFENSE

Prior to the 1967 war, the Israeli concept, in the Egyptian front, was based on forward defense with some elements of defense in depth.⁸ It was a compromise. In some sectors near the Egyptian border the IDF had preferred forward defense, since there Israel could not have afforded any Egyptian penetration. Egypt, for example, could have tried to cut off the Negev area from the rest of Israel by reaching to the West Bank from the Gaza Strip, at the narrowest point, which was only several dozen kilometers. In other sectors, where Israel had some depth, it could have given land for time. Adapting forward defense everywhere might have caused the collapse of the entire front and then all of the south of Israel might have fallen into the hands of the Egyptian military.

In the 1973 war, Israel implemented forward defense in the Suez Canal. Israel was concerned about the political ramifications if the Egyptian military gained a foothold in the east bank of the Suez Canal.⁹ The IDF had a series of posts across the Suez Canal, but they were used mostly for surveillance and observation. They were not supposed to be a formidable defense line. For that purpose the IDF had there an armor division. At the start of the 1973 war, IDF's southern command was caught off guard. It also stuck to forward defense, which cost it dearly in losing land, manpower, and tanks. Later on IDF's southern command often left an area and then recaptured it in order to gain time without losing ground, but this approach wore down Israeli troops.¹⁰ It was an improvised and ineffective defense. On October 14, 1973, the Egyptian military launched another major offensive, but this time the IDF was ready and it repelled the offensive by implementing forward defense.

In the 1973 war Syria planned to recapture all the Golan Heights. While the front line in Sinai was more than 200 kilometers from Israel's population centers, the battles in the Golan Heights took place much closer to Israeli villages and towns, which made it more urgent to stop the Syrian attack than the Egyptian one. The IDF could still have adopted defense in depth, and by that both lure the Syrian military into a trap and buy time until reinforcements arrived. Yet, the Israeli troops were forced to apply forward defense.¹¹

In 1973, the IDF had near the Syrian border several posts inside knolls that served for gathering information and keeping a permanent presence on the border. The main burden of the fight fell on two armor brigades. In the beginning of the war the Israeli tank crews had to stand firm and to hold their ground under heavy shelling while facing superior numbers. In the north of the Golan Heights the 7th armor brigade kept its ground, paying a high price for that, under continuing Syrian pressure. The results of the battle depended sometimes on a few Israeli tanks that were deployed in key positions, or when they appeared seemingly out of nowhere. The bravery and resourcefulness of Israeli soldiers won the day

for the IDF in the northern sector of the Golan Heights. However, in the southern sector of the Golan Heights, in spite of fierce Israeli resistance, the Syrians broke through the line. The basic conditions there tended too much in favor of the Syrians, such as the terrain.¹² Israel's hopes that forward defense would be sufficient were shattered.

During the 1980s and 1990s sometimes up to six Syrian divisions faced the IDF in the Golan Heights.¹³ They could have attacked, including by sending Syrian airborne commandos to seize key sites in the Golan Heights, until the Syrian armor joined them.¹⁴ If this had been part of a surprise attack, the best way to handle it was defense in depth, in order to gain time until the Israeli reserves were called in to repel the offensive.

Syria, since the 1970s, acquired long-range surface-to-surface missiles that could have bypassed the Golan Heights. Therefore this area could not have defended Israel from this kind of threat. Arab nonstate organizations actually did it with their rockets, when Hamas fired over the Negev into the rest of Israel. Hezbollah did the same in regard to the Galilee, in the north of Israel. Yet those groups could not have seized any land inside Israel while the Syrian military could have done it, as part of a ground offensive. The Syrian long-range missiles could have disrupted the mobilization of the Israeli reserves, which would have given the Syrian forces more time to capture areas in the Golan Heights. In that sense, defense in depth might not have been enough to keep the Golan Heights in Israeli hands, until the Israeli reserves had managed to recover and then to attack in the Golan Heights.

In the 1982 war, the IDF occupied a large part of Lebanon. In 1985 the IDF withdrew to south Lebanon and stayed there until 2000. In south Lebanon Israel had a local Arab ally, the ASL (Army of South Lebanon) but the latter could not have handled Hezbollah, without a significant Israeli support. Therefore Israel built in south Lebanon small bases, to serve the IDF in conducting operations and carrying out surveillance. Unlike posts that were in the Golan Heights and in Sinai in 1973 those in Lebanon in the 1980s and in the 1990s had to deal with Hezbollah, not with an Arab military. The IDF implemented in south Lebanon a kind of forward defense. The Israeli bases were strong enough to push back attacks. Yet they did not create an actual defense line since there were gaps between them, so Hezbollah fighters moved between those posts. The IDF had maneuvered there too by running patrols and laying down ambushes in order to disrupt Hezbollah's activity. The IDF was aware it could not stop its foe's operations completely.

Hezbollah could have tried to infiltrate into Israel, but instead Hezbollah strove to kick the IDF out of Lebanon. In that sense Israel's defense concept worked, protecting Israel by deploying the IDF in south Lebanon. Yet during the 1990s Hezbollah occasionally fired rockets into Israel. Israel also absorbed international criticism because of its grip in south Lebanon. Furthermore, in certain periods the IDF focused mostly on se-

curing its own forces in both their Lebanese bases and in the roads that led to them, not in offensive actions against Hezbollah. Those factors made Israel's forward defense and actually its entire presence in Lebanon quite useless and counterproductive.

During the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars Israel adopted forward defense. In 2006 Hezbollah did not try to infiltrate Israel. The group only launched rockets into Israel. The same was the case with Hamas in 2008–2009. In 2014 Hamas managed to penetrate Israel in a few cases. Israel's forward defense sometimes proved to be effective when Hamas gunmen ran into Israeli troops, before the former could have reached and harmed Israeli civilians. The IDF also had a kind of defense in depth since it had tens of thousands of troops near the Gaza Strip who could have been called to confront Hamas combatants if the latter had managed to penetrate deeper into Israel. The massive Israeli presence strengthened both the forward defense and the defense in depth. The IDF had troops around the Gaza Strip all year long, but it was necessary to reinforce them in a time of war, when there were higher chances of attacks from the Gaza Strip. Between the wars, the cost of an extended and vast Israeli deployment near the border was too high to maintain, in spite of the ongoing risk to the population there if Hamas launched a surprise attack.

ISRAEL'S DEFENSE IN DEPTH THAT WENT ON FOR YEARS

Israel, as part of a long process of negotiations and eventually a peace treaty, left Sinai step by step, during 1974–1982. Israel also gradually withdrew from Lebanon during 1983–2000, without reaching a peace accord. In the mid-1980s there were some talks between Israel and Lebanese officials but they led to a dead end. In both cases Israel's retreat was a kind of defense in depth, one that took many years to accomplish.

In 1974–1982 Israel returned areas in Sinai, as long as Israel's interests were kept, such as keeping the quiet on the border. Each time Israel tested Egypt by evaluating the situation in order to decide if and how to continue with the withdrawals. During those years, the two sides were aware that they might clash again in the battlefield, but they did not, including not after Israel returned all of Sinai. A similar process could have happened in the 1990s in the West Bank, following the Oslo Accords. Yet the collisions between the two sides brought Israel to stop the handing over of lands to the Palestinians. In 2002 Israel even took back, temporarily, territory that was given to the PA, because of terror and guerrilla attacks against Israelis. In Lebanon in 1983–2000 the skirmishes there actually pushed Israel to retreat.

By leaving Sinai in 1974–1982 Israel took a calculated risk because of several strategic reasons. Above all there was the hope to prevent another

war. In 1983–2000, each time Israel pulled back its troops in Lebanon, Israel hoped too to end and at least to reduce the low-intensity war against it. This was accomplished only when Israel got entirely out of Lebanon, in 2000.

Israel left Sinai, striving to turn a sworn Arab enemy into an ally. In the upcoming decades Egypt was sometimes a partner of Israel, in the attempt to reach peace between Israel and the Palestinians. The peace with Egypt also opened the door to have more peace accords, with other Arab states, which eventually happened with only one state, Jordan. There was also certain cooperation between Israel and Egypt at the economic and cultural levels but at quite a minor scale. Furthermore there was tension between Israel and Egypt since the latter acted against Israel, such as in the UN.

In Lebanon in 1983–2000, Israel did not want to antagonize the Lebanese population. But the Israeli presence there brought some of the Lebanese people to support groups that confronted Israel. By retreating from areas in Lebanon, Israel strove to limit its friction with the local residents and to reduce the opposition against Israel. Yet many in the Shiite community continued to endorse Hezbollah, including after Israel was completely out of Lebanon.

Israel lost strategic depth, by giving up Sinai in 1974–1982 and large parts of Lebanon in 1983–2000. Yet Israel also shortened its defense lines and saved costs by not deploying its troops in Lebanon/Sinai. It is essential particularly to the IDF, which depends on reserves. It is expensive to mobilize large numbers of them for active duty. This constraint was especially important in 1985, following Israel's severe economic problems at the time.

In Sinai in 1974–1982 and in Lebanon in 1983–2000, at every stage of the withdrawal, Israeli troops had to redeploy and therefore to adjust to a new place. Israeli troops preferred to be where their permanent lines are. Some wanted to speed up the return to Israel. Others sought to slow down the process and even to stop it for all kinds of reasons, including political and ideological ones. Meanwhile Israeli soldiers had to hold their ground until they were told to leave it and return the land to those who were their foes, which did not boost their morale.

Israel invested in building infrastructure in Lebanon in the 1980s and in the 1990s and particularly in Sinai in the late 1960s and during the 1970s. Following the withdrawal from those areas, facilities were dismantled and removed or destroyed. In the same time new bases had to be built like in 1979–1982, when two new airfields were constructed in the Negev, to replace those that the IAF left in Sinai.

NOTES

1. On 1956, see: IDF Archives, file number 58/776/8.
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3. IDF Archives, file number 84/804/26.
4. IDF Archives, file number 62/122/92.
5. Tom Donnelly, *Clash of Chariots—The Great Tank Battles* (New York: Berkley Books, 1996), p. 215.
6. IDF Archives, file number 77/717/86.
7. Jonathan D. Zagdanski. "Round 2 in Lebanon: How the IDF Focused on Coin and Lost the Ability to Fight Maneuver War," *Infantry* (September–October 2007), p. 35.
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9. Danny Asher, *Breaking the Concept* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 2003), pp. 65–69.
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11. Danny Asher, *The Syrians on the Borders* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 2008). Ariel Levite, *Offense and Defense* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad 1988), pp. 108–9.
12. Chaim Herzog, *The War of Atonement* (Jerusalem: Edanim 1975), pp. 87–12.
13. On the Syrian deployment, see: Moshe Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel: From War to Peace-Making* (Tel Aviv: Ma'ariv Book Guild, 1996), p. 232.
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TEN

Infrastructure

Israel's infrastructure, military and civilian, has been a basic part of Israel's war effort in both high-intensity and hybrid wars. It has to do with infrastructure that is on the rear and on the front line as well.

INFRASTRUCTURE ON THE FRONT LINE

In the early 1950s Israel did not have a reliable border fence and sometimes there was no border fence at all. Israel, as a poor state, preferred to invest its modest resources in other projects that were more urgent. Palestinians exploited that to infiltrate from neighboring Arab states. Palestinians could have reached quite quickly almost everywhere in Israel, particularly where the latter lacked strategic depth, like in the center of the country. Palestinians penetrated mostly for economic reasons but some of them attacked Israelis. In the 2000–2005 war Palestinians infiltrated from the West Bank. Almost all of them came only to work, but a few of them sought to harm Israelis. Palestinian suicide bombers committed the most deadly attacks, which occurred across Israel. Therefore the latter built a barrier. Most of it is a fence, the rest is a wall. It more or less separates between the West Bank and Israel. Israel did not complete the barrier around the West Bank, due mostly to political reasons. Yet the barrier has been helping in dramatically reducing the amount of infiltrations from the West Bank. This outcome is also due to Israeli operations in the West Bank. However if the goal was to protect Israelis who are behind and protected by the barrier maybe there would have been less need to run military activity deep inside the West Bank. This follows the lessons from the Gaza Strip. Around the entire Gaza Strip there has been a fence that proves itself. During the 2000–2005 war and since then there were almost no suicide bombers who came out of there. Israelis, troops

and civilians, who were inside the Gaza Strip until 2005, were exposed much more to attacks.

Israel in the 1950s lacked not only strategic depth but it also had no natural obstacles on its border, to help the IDF to deal with an Arab offensive. As a replacement for that Israel could have built strong fortifications and artificial obstacles along its borders. But doing so, certainly considering the fact that the borders stretched along several hundred kilometers, was too costly, particularly to a relatively poor state like Israel. Therefore Israel's territorial defense was based on civilian sites (towns, villages, and kibbutz lands).¹ This concept came out of the 1948–1949 war, when those civilian sites sometimes managed to stop or at least to slow down the Arab offensive. This was an improvised solution and not a very effective one. It was quite doubtful if a civilian place could survive when facing Arab militaries that possess bombers and heavy artillery. Their firepower would have destroyed any civilian site that would have dared to resist them in a high-intensity war. Even in the border wars in the 1950s, which started as a low-intensity war between Israel and Palestinian insurgents, civilian sites were not much of a stronghold. They had poor fortifications, if any. Many of their residents had no military experience, particularly new immigrants. The Israelis managed to hold on, yet many of them, especially those who lived in isolated places in the frontier, feared for their safety.

In the 1948–1949 war sometimes Israeli troops absorbed heavy casualties from shelling, after they captured sites that had no fortifications to shield the soldiers.² The latter had the same problem in the next wars. In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars they found cover inside buildings and houses, which did not offer protection as fortifications do. Furthermore, in some cases those places became a target of Arab fire.

Prior to the 1956 war Israel created fortifications in the south of the country.³ It was not a huge project and certainly not a formidable defense line. The aim was to improve the static defense in case the Egyptian military attacked. The latter started in late 1955 an enormous buildup, following its arms deal with the Soviet Union that provided Egypt with hundreds of aircraft and tanks. The Israeli effort was never put to a test since in 1956 Israel was the one that attacked Egypt. One of the reasons for the war was that Israel did not possess a strong defense lines so it relied on the offensive approach.

In the late 1950s Israel considered to lay land mines and to build fortifications in a relatively small part of the border with Egypt, north of Nizana, the easiest path to invade from Sinai.⁴ Yet it was not done. The 1956 war proved the value of the tank and the aircraft in launching an offensive. Those weapons systems were effective in defensive situations too. Fortifications could be a jumping-off point for an attack, but they are meant for defense. For Israel it was better to rely on versatile weapons systems rather than on fortifications. It was not only an economic consid-

eration. If the IDF had stayed in its defense lines it would have encouraged Arabs to provoke Israel, knowing the latter has a limited attack capability. Furthermore, Arab militaries could have invested most of their resources in carrying out an attack, a strategy which would have increased the risk to Israel. To begin with, Arabs had huge advantages in the number of troops and weapons. In this sense Arab nonstate organizations are inferior to the IDF. However, if the IDF spends most of its budget on defensive measures, including active ones such as systems that intercept rockets and missiles, it will allow Arab nonstate organizations to focus on how to attack and not on defending themselves from an Israeli offensive.

On the eve of the 1967 war there was a need to build new strongholds in the Negev, with communication trenches and anti-tank ditches.⁵ It showed the lack of readiness, on the defensive level, where Israel faced its most powerful rival. In spite of the IDF's effort to create fortifications, in the atmosphere of that period it looked like Israel did not have enough time to establish a solid defense line. Israel could have tried to buy more time, in order to improve its defensive positions. Yet as in 1956 the IDF had much better chances to win by attacking its foe and even then the stakes were high, particularly in 1967, when it seemed that the Arab coalition was stronger than the one in 1956. The events on the battlefield showed it was not true. Still, Israel gambled and won. In fighting hybrid forces Israel took calculated risks, but the danger to Israel was much less. Even a pact between Hezbollah and Hamas could not have defeated Israel, in contrast to an Arab alliance in the era of high-intensity wars. Therefore, as part of its conflict with a hybrid force, Israel does not have to invest that much in defense lines since Israel could depend on the offensive approach. In the worst case the IDF will be pushed back from Arab territory to its border, knowing its hybrid enemies don't have the capability to return the favor by invading Israel.

On the first day of the 1967 war, on June 5, the IAF attacked the Egyptian airfield in El-Arish, in north Sinai, but without damaging the runway there. This base was taken that day by Israel's land units,⁶ which allowed the IAF to use it. Arab hybrid forces use roads and bridges. The IDF, during a war, has to avoid destroying those routes so it could move there later on, as part of its attack inside Arab territory.

In 1967–1973 Israel invested in the infrastructure of Sinai, including the civilian infrastructure, such as water pipes,⁷ which served military needs. On the east bank of the Suez Canal, the IDF faced an attrition war, a low-intensity war, in 1967–1970. The IDF created there field fortifications, but they did not give sufficient protection from massive Egyptian fire, so Israel built thirty-one posts. There was a fierce debate in the IDF on the role, necessity, and effectiveness of those posts. At the start of the 1973 war, only sixteen of them were manned. All except one were seized by the Egyptian military.⁸

During the low-intensity war on the Jordanian front in 1967–70, between the PLO and the IDF, the latter built infrastructure like posts and fences.⁹ In addition, major training bases were transferred from the center of Israel to the West Bank, as part of the preparation to stop a possible Arab offensive in the Jordanian front.¹⁰ The posts on the Egyptian and on the Jordanian fronts had to be ready to deal with both high- and low-intensity war. On the Jordanian front Israel had to handle an Arab military and mostly a nonstate organization while in the Egyptian front Israel's enemy was only an Arab military but the latter was more powerful than Israel's foes on the Jordanian front. Therefore the fortifications on the Egyptian front had to be stronger than those on the Jordanian front.

Prior to the 1973 war, the Egyptian military put quite an effort into training its troops to conquer the Israeli posts on the east bank of the Suez Canal. It paid off during the war, when those posts were seized. It happened also because of the overwhelming superiority the Egyptian military had in the first days of the war, until the Israeli reserves arrived and got organized. Before the 2014 war, Hamas trained its men in penetrating Israel. One of its details managed, during the war, to surprise a tiny Israeli post, to kill all the five troops who were there, and then to retreat back to the Gaza Strip. This was Hamas' biggest success in this regard, and even that was just a raid, not a conquest.

In 1985–2000, when the IDF was deployed in south Lebanon, it had posts there. The main threat to them was not a direct attack but when Hezbollah opened fire at them, mostly with mortars. As in posts that were on the east bank of the Suez Canal in 1967–1970 in Lebanon too Israeli troops had to be on alert all the time, in case a bombardment hit their camp. Yet in the Suez Canal the Arab artillery fire was more powerful. In both cases, reaching those spots required taking a risk, as part of sending supply, evacuating wounded, and replacing the garrison.

In 1977, during the negotiations with Egypt, the IAF had ten airfields in Sinai, some of them only for emergency.¹¹ Following the peace treaty the IAF left all of them while destroying some facilities there. Since then there has been peace with Egypt, so the IAF did not require bases in Sinai, to confront Egypt. Keeping them, and other bases in Sinai, would have helped Israel to deter Egypt, but the Israeli presence in Sinai might have led to another war with Egypt. The IAF could also use airfields in Sinai to operate in the Red Sea and in states near it like Sudan. This was the route Iran used to deliver weapons to Hamas and Hezbollah. Yet Israel did not have to launch sorties there all the time and since the 1979 peace treaty the IAF assimilated aircraft with a longer range than those it had before. The IAF also have KC-707 and KC-130 tankers for air refueling. Therefore the IAF could have managed without having bases in Sinai.

One of Israel's lessons from the 1973 war was the need to improve its territorial defense.¹² By 2004 Israel strengthened its territorial defense by

building “multilayered systems (including electronic fences, high-technology sensors, special rules of engagement, security buffer zones, and various delaying obstacles).”¹³ The IDF upgraded for example its posts in the Golan Heights over the years.¹⁴ Following the Syrian civil war Israel built a new fence in the Golan Heights, 15 feet high, and added intelligence and observation systems. Those measures are supposed to help in stopping hostile infiltrations and also illegal immigrants. Israel took similar steps on its southern border, with Egypt. There the fence is meant to stop illegal immigration, gunmen, and also human trafficking. Putting a fence there sometimes required overcoming natural obstacles due to the rugged terrain.

During the wars, when the IDF launched an offensive inside Arab territory, Israeli units had to stop somewhere from time to time. It was required for refueling, rearming, fixing vehicles, and also to allow the troops to eat and sleep. They also had to secure themselves against a possible ground attack and/or a bombardment. If Israeli troops did not have at that spot any natural or artificial protection, they had to build field fortifications. Yet the IDF tended not to spend time on that, like on digging rifle pits, even when it was relatively easy to create them like in the sand of Sinai. This neglect occurred because of other priorities, assumption that there is no point to invest time and energy in a spot where the Israeli force will not stay for long, fatigue, laziness, and lack of awareness and because Arab counter attacks were quite rare. Therefore Israeli soldiers just relied on their armored vehicles for protection although armored vehicles like M-113 let alone M-3 were very vulnerable to enemy fire. Some units did not even have that since they had only tracks. In high-intensity wars the probability of an Arab attack was low, but the ramifications might have been severe due to the firepower of Arab militaries, with their tanks and artillery. In fighting a hybrid force, the IDF absorbed more attacks than in high-intensity wars but they were less dangerous since they were carried out usually by a few or many fighters, armed at most with anti-tank missiles.

In the 2008–2009 war the IDF moved its assembly areas away from the border with the Gaza Strip. It was a lesson from the 2006 war, when twelve of its troops, who were on the border with Lebanon, were killed by a bombardment.¹⁵ In the 2014 war, before the ground campaign, Israeli troops were kept out of areas that were targeted by short-range fire from the Gaza Strip. But as the battles went on some units stayed very close to the border, inside Israeli territory.¹⁶ There, on two occasions, mortar shells killed nine Israeli soldiers. Some of the troops were not briefed properly on how to defend themselves. There were fortifications at that area, but they were not close and big enough. Instead the troops could have dug foxholes, as an easy, fast, simple, and effective solution.

SITES IN THE REAR

In the crisis that occurred prior to the 1967 war Israel was concerned about an Arab attack, like an Egyptian air strike against the nuclear reactor in Dimona, which is in the Negev. Israel had to defend this site not only because of its enormous strategic value but also since hitting it might have caused huge collateral damage, due to the possible spread of radioactive radiation. This reactor was attacked only in 1991, when Iraq launched surface-to-surface missiles at it, without any success. In the wars with Hamas the latter could have tried to bomb the reactor with rockets. Hezbollah too has this capability. Those groups could aim at other sensitive civilian and military sites in Israel, as Arab militaries could have done, with aircraft and sometimes with artillery, during the high-intensity wars.

In the 2014 war, most of the shelters in Israel were not properly maintained and prepared for war.¹⁷ Some Israelis did not have a shelter at all and/or they received very short warning, sometimes just a few seconds, to find proper cover. The home-front command, together with civilian authorities organized and helped the population in implementing passive defense procedures.

The "IDF Strategy" from 2015 argued that Israel's priorities during a war are first of all to make sure the IDF can carry out actions in both defense and offense, second: protect "vital national infrastructure and government institutions" and third: protect population centers.¹⁸ For the IDF the highest priority is to shield military sites like airfields and headquarters in order to allow the IDF to fight back. Other places that serve the population come second, while the population itself comes last. This is since the IDF can't prevent hundreds and maybe even more than a thousand rockets from hitting Israel every day during a war with Hezbollah. The IDF can't intercept all the rockets, or destroy them on the ground before they will be fired. Therefore the IDF wants first of all to make sure it could do its job, by focusing on defending its sites, even if it will be at the expense of the population. It means that anti-rocket and anti-missile batteries like Iron Dome and the Arrow will be deployed near military sites and the main effort of the IDF will be devoted to bomb rockets that could strike IDF's bases. When this mission is accomplished the IDF could turn to destroy rockets that threaten other places in Israel. This might be the best approach since if the IDF is crippled, due to rocket attacks, then the entire country, with its population, will be exposed.

In recent years giant camps that were near the Tel Aviv area were transferred to the Negev. Other bases are supposed to follow them. The biggest project in this matter is the new city of training bases in the Negev, which could accommodate up to 10,000 troops. It has military schools for logistics, telecommunications, medicine, military police, and ordnance and education corps. This Infrastructure could be under threat

from rockets but it can still serve as a springboard to penetrating the Gaza Strip and/or to support forces that will be called to deploy near the Gaza Strip.

ARAB INFRASTRUCTURE

In 1960 the IDF assumed that in case of another war against Egypt Israeli forces would have to deal with a stronger defense than the one they ran into in the 1956 war.¹⁹ Israel's hybrid foes also learned from each round such as how to upgrade their positions.

During the 1960s, Egypt, while undergoing a massive military build-up, created fortifications in Sinai. This allowed Egypt strategic flexibility, since it could have maneuvered in Sinai or leaned on its strongholds.²⁰ In contrast to Arab militaries, hybrid forces don't have the capability to confront the IDF in the open field, so they invested a large part of their resources in fortifications. Those groups don't require huge and expensive facilities to maintain and to train their manpower since their tactical formations is based on tiny units of light infantry, not on armor divisions. Hamas and Hezbollah also don't have an air force, which needs camps like airfields. Those groups are armed with rockets that don't have to be produced in big factories. For that task, smaller places, including houses, could be sufficient.

Since the early 1960s the IDF strove to prevent the Egyptian units from entering their fortified camps in Sinai.²¹ In the eve of the 1967 war the IDF did not manage to do that. Furthermore the Egyptian military received time to improve its defenses in Sinai, as long as the crisis continued.²² However the Egyptian military required up to half a year to be ready with proper defense lines.²³ During the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, Israel gave its hybrid rivals up to a few weeks to get organized in their positions. The IDF did carry some surprise attacks in those wars but not on a scale that could have captured its hybrid foes before they could hold their lines. Furthermore in the first stages of those three wars, the IDF relied on airpower. In spite of the might of the IAF it was not enough to prevent Hamas and Hezbollah from deploying their men.

Prior to the 1967 war Israeli troops trained how to overcome Egyptian strongholds.²⁴ In the 1967 war the IDF conquered very quickly well-fortified Egyptian objectives such as in Aum-Cataf.²⁵ With all the advantages that military infrastructure gives, it was not enough to stop the Israeli attack. In the 2008–2009 and 2014 wars, it took the IDF much longer to advance inside fortified areas in the Gaza Strip, compared with cracking Egyptian strongholds in 1967.

Two days after the start of the 1973 war, Lt. Gen. David Elazar, IDF's Chief of Staff, wanted to attack the Egyptian forces in Sinai, before the latter improved its position by bringing tractors.²⁶ The latter were needed

to build field fortifications such as sand barriers. The IDF had to do the same against its hybrid foes in 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014. Since the IAF controlled the air, it could have destroyed any tractor, but its foes could have upgraded their positions in places where it was difficult to monitor them: in rugged terrain, inside houses, and underground.

In November–December 1956, when the IDF had to prepare to leave Sinai, its troops carried out systematic destruction of infrastructure like airfields, including about 400 kilometers of roads.²⁷ When the IDF withdrew from Lebanon in 2000 and the Gaza Strip in 2005 it did not destroy civilian infrastructure like roads. In 1956, 2000, and 2005 the retreat was done without an agreement with the Arabs. The IDF left areas that returned to be a base against Israel. Yet in 2000 and 2005 Israel did not implement a scorched-earth policy.

Following the 1979 peace treaty, Israel left Sinai while destroying and evacuating military infrastructure. Until 1982 Israel dismantled 3,000 facilities and blew up bunkers like in airfields. Roads and water pipes were not demolished.²⁸ The same was the case when the IDF left areas in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1994, as part of the Oslo Accords.

Doron Almog argued in 2005 that as part of the fight against guerrilla warfare and terror, it is important to conduct “infrastructure operations, such as demolishing the homes of terrorists’ families; destroying the terrorists’ weapon factories, storage facilities, and tunnels; and eliminating the terrorists’ financial networks.”²⁹ Israel did those kinds of actions over the years.

HAMAS TUNNELS

Prior to the 2014 war Hamas dug about 200 kilometers under the Gaza Strip that served various purposes such as cover from Israeli fire and underground paths to transfer people and supply. Israel’s Ministry of Defense considered more than 700 projects regarding discovering and/or destroying tunnels, yet it did not manage to find an adequate solution to this challenge. During the war the IDF was focused on destroying rockets and other infrastructure, until an assault from a tunnel brought the IDF to concentrate on the tunnels. Locating and destroying the tunnels was not an easy task for the IDF. During the war thirty-two tunnels were destroyed by the IDF but the latter was not well prepared for this challenge due to other priorities.

In the 2014 war, Israel was mostly concerned about tunnels that allowed Hamas to penetrate into Israeli territory by bypassing its troops that were stationed on the border. Some tunnels led to Israeli villages, whereby a Palestinian attack might have ended in a massacre and/or taking hostages. During the 2014 confrontation, Hamas launched several attacks through the tunnels, which in some cases inflicted several casual-

ties on the IDF. It might have been much worse for Israel if Hamas had managed to conduct a relatively massive attack. Hundreds of gunmen, by using several tunnels, could have stormed into Israel in the same time, when the IDF is not ready for that. In response Israel would have probably conquered the Gaza Strip and toppled Hamas, so a success of the latter's giant raid inside Israel would have cost Hamas a very high price.

In recent years there were reports that Hezbollah might have dug tunnels in south Lebanon, to be used as an underground route into the north of Israel. Yet for Israel the main problem in this issue has to do with the Gaza Strip. In 2016 the IDF's Gaza Division's top priority was to develop measures to detect and destroy tunnels.³⁰ The IDF trains its troops to fight inside tunnels.³¹ Furthermore in 2017 Israel started an expensive and ambitious project, which might eventually cost almost a billion dollars: building an underground wall to stop the tunnels once and for all. Hamas might try to bypass the wall from below it or to break through it. Such action is supposed to be detected by Israel's warning system that will be part of that barrier. Israel also improved its ability to detect tunnels, as was seen in 2017 and early 2018, when the IDF destroyed several border-crossing tunnels that penetrated into Israel.

The tunnels in the Gaza Strip, which lead into Israel, stretch for only a few kilometers. They pose a danger mostly to villages and camps around the Gaza Strip. Yet those who might emerge out of the tunnels, inside Israeli territory, can also move and harm Israelis all over the state, until they are stopped. Therefore Israel can create a second barrier around the Gaza Strip, with a fence and patrols. It will be located several kilometers northeast of the first one, far enough to contain any tunnel that will come out of the Gaza Strip. Palestinians could dig a very long tunnel that will bypass the second barrier, too, but it will take a lot of time and effort, which will increase the chances that it will be discovered. Meanwhile Israelis—troops and civilians—who are between the two barriers will be at risk but at least the rest of the state, where 99.9 percent of the population resides, will be more secure.

Either way, in spite of the threat of the tunnels, Israel should not invest too much in this issue. Hamas already trained in bypassing the fence from above, which could be done with all kinds of air gliders and drones. Besides that, Israel has many other security challenges, not less important than blocking infiltrations from the Gaza Strip.

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ELEVEN

The Troops

The IDF's manpower could be examined in all kinds of aspects such as in its ability to adjust to changing circumstances. The reserves have been a major part of the manpower due to their numbers and experience.

FLEXIBILITY AND TAKING THE INITIATIVE

According to the "IDF Strategy" from 2015 in order "to identify changes and to adapt accordingly" during a war the IDF has to "strengthen independent commanders who are creative and initiative."¹ The IDF was known to exploit opportunities during combat.² The 2006 war proved that sometimes the IDF was not at its best in adjusting to changing situations.³ In spite its reputation in this field, even after a month of combat the IDF was struggling to adapt to the conditions of the battlefield in Lebanon. It happened after the IDF got used to confronting the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 2000–2005. In spite of the certain resemblance between the way both Hezbollah and Palestinians fought, there was still quite a difference between them. Hezbollah was better trained and equipped than the Palestinians, and the IDF was not ready for that.

Defensive deployment might lead Israeli troops to get accustomed to staying in the same place and not taking the initiative.⁴ In high-intensity wars the IDF was almost always on the offensive. In contrast, in the war of attrition with Egypt in 1967–1970 and during low-intensity wars in 1987–1993 and 2000–2005 in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, many Israeli troops spent a large part of their time carrying out defensive tasks: static ones like guarding a post or active ones such as going out for patrol and arresting suspects. This kind of activity, similar to what police does,

made it difficult for the IDF to fight a different kind of combat in 2006, when it confronted Hezbollah.

Prior to the 2014 war, Israeli troops learned how to spot and offer basic mental help to their brothers in arms, if they required it.⁵ This process was important especially to those in the IDF who had never seen combat before, and there were many of them. In 2014 none of those who were in regular service, which lasts for three years, had taken part in the previous war in the Gaza Strip, the one in 2008–2009. It was true also in Lebanon. In the 1980s and the 1990s, when the IDF was deployed in Lebanon, its troops learned how to operate there. By the 2006 war in Lebanon many Israeli troops who participated in it did not have this knowledge because they had never served in Lebanon before. This pattern goes back to high-intensity wars in 1956, 1967, and 1973, when the IDF confronted the same foes again and again on the same battlefields, mostly in Sinai. Each time there was a learning curve for those who were experiencing their first war.

The IDF was aware that Arab troops lack flexibility.⁶ In the 1967 war, one of the main reasons for Egypt's defeat was the poor ability of its soldiers to respond quickly and effectively to changing situations in the battlefield.⁷ Prior to the 1973 war, the Egyptian military tried to handle this problem, as part of its planning.⁸ However when the IDF crossed the Suez Canal, the Egyptian armed forces revealed their chronic weakness in reacting fast enough since they failed both in blocking the IDF from establishing a bridgehead and in stopping the IDF from breaking out of there. In contrast, Arab groups like Hezbollah proved to be more flexible than Arab militaries.

MORALE

During the Arab–Israeli wars, some battles, including those that occurred in complicated situations such as in urban areas, ended quickly like the one in the Palestinian city of Tulkarm, in the West Bank, in April 2002. In other clashes, the IDF had to show more determination when it ran into tough engagements, such as the battles in the Palestinian refugee camps in south Lebanon in 1982.

On the eve of the 1967 war Israeli troops understood that their state faces a clear and present danger, which increased their willingness to fight.⁹ It was the same in other high-intensity wars, mostly the one in 1973. During the 1982 war there were cracks in morale because some Israeli troops started to have doubts about the goals of the war and why they had to risk their lives.

In the 1956 and 1967 wars the IDF gained a swift victory, which boosted Israeli morale. Low-intensity wars in 1987–1993 and 2000–2005 were much longer, since the IDF was not able to win them. Israeli troops

felt like there is no end let alone a positive one, in spite of their efforts, with all the danger it involved. Israeli troops also had to deal with the Arab population, a factor that did not exist much in high-intensity wars. The ongoing frictions with noncombatants, such as the need to find the enemy without harming Arab civilians or risking Israeli casualties, was a major challenge. Those constraints exist and even got worse in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, which sometimes undermined IDF's motivation. The 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars were much shorter than Israel's low-intensity wars but the lack of decision in all of them frustrated some Israeli troops.

During low-intensity wars Israel understood that "as a Western democracy, its counterinsurgency efforts must be accompanied by a commitment to comply with high moral standards, particularly using force discriminately and proportionally and respecting civil liberties as much as allowed by the security needs and conditions. This commitment has been inspired by Jewish and liberal-democratic values, but was also affected by the acknowledgement that internal and external legitimacy was necessary."¹⁰ In the IDF "since the mid-1990s, military lawyers have become involved in operational matters. Their mission has been to ensure real time compliance with international law, but it has increased the danger of degenerating operational sophistication and freedom of action."¹¹ A UN commission that investigated the 2014 war published a report on June 22, 2015, that blamed both sides for harming civilians.¹² Both Israel and Hamas rejected accusations against them. Israel, in order to avoid undermining the motivation of its troops, struggles how not to risk them in combat because of constraints regarding its democracy, values, laws, and international legitimacy.

In 1967–1973 many in the IDF underestimated Arab militaries, including the Egyptian one, following the clear Israeli victory in the 1967 war.¹³ In the 1973 war Maj. Gen. Ariel Sharon claimed that Israeli troops were shocked that their Egyptians counterparts stood they ground and did not flee.¹⁴ At the start of the 2006 war some in the IDF looked down on Hezbollah, assuming it would be easy to defeat the group. The war proved they were wrong.

Prior to the 1973 war the IDF succeeded in operations against guerrilla and terror groups. This increased the Israeli morale and the belief in their military superiority, which cost Israel dearly in the 1973 war. The achievements in the 2000–2005 war boosted IDF's self-confidence that took a hit in the war of 2006. Therefore former accomplishments could be misleading and destructive if they give the wrong impression about the enemy in the next war.

RESERVES

The IDF depends on reserves so it could call in the maximum amount of soldiers.¹⁵ This was needed in high-intensity wars, particularly when Israel was outnumbered, in 1967 and 1973. Even with the reserves the IDF had fewer troops than Arab militaries. Yet Israel's reserves gave the IDF a chance to hold on and to win. Without them Israel would have been defeated for sure.

The IDF mobilized around 36,000 reserves in April 2002, during a vast operation in the West Bank.¹⁶ In the 2014 war about 82,000 Israelis were mobilized.¹⁷ The IDF's reserves system is supposed to have several hundreds of thousands of troops. Yet in 2002, 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014, the IDF fought only on one front against a foe that was much weaker than the IDF. Therefore, compared with high-intensity wars, the IDF required fewer forces, which allowed Israel to rely mostly on regular troops. Reserves that were called were sometimes involved in the battles, while others replaced regulars in more quiet sectors.

Ending the war quickly meant that regulars could have gone back to do other tasks such as training and running day-to-day security missions. However, regulars are at disposal all year long. It was much more urgent to discharge reserves as soon as possible, since they are citizen soldiers who had to return to their civilian jobs or else Israel's economy might have been at risk. High-intensity wars were short, while the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars lasted from one to almost two months. The low-intensity wars in 1987–1993 and 2000–2005 were obviously much longer. Yet since in hybrid and low-intensity wars the IDF did not need to call in most of its reserves there was not a threat to the Israeli economy.

Calling the reserves required early notice¹⁸ of at least a few days, in order to allow them to organize and get their weapons, equipment, and vehicles. Prior to the 1967 war, the reserves received a few weeks to get set, a period which allowed also refreshing their skills.¹⁹ At the start of the 1973 war, following the Arab surprise offensive, there was almost no alert, so the reserves were mobilized in what was a hasty, confusing, and messy process. In the 1982, 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars Israel did not face a ground attack and its foe was relatively weak. Therefore there was not much urgency to call in the reserves as soon as possible, no matter what. In some of those wars there was a need to do it faster, like in 1982, when there was more time pressure. In 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 the first stage was based on air bombardments, so the reserves had days and sometimes weeks to get ready for combat.

Israel was attacked in 1948, before the reserve system was created. Later on, in all the wars, reserves were not under attack while they were getting mobilized, including in 1973. In that war Arab militaries stormed into Israeli territory but they were far away from camps where the Israeli reserves were getting organized. In the 2006 and 2014 wars Arab rockets

hit large parts of Israel. This threat did not disrupt the deployment of the reserves. However, if there is a war between Israel and Hezbollah, the latter could strike Israel with more than a thousand rockets a day, which could cause casualties and delays in organizing the Israeli reserves.

Usually reserves have more combat experience than regulars, due to the knowledge the former acquired over the years. Yet in contrast to regulars, the reserves have been less trained, many of them are married with children, and they tend to be less restrained, so they openly express criticism, including in political matters. Those aspects explain why Israel hesitated in using reserves and instead preferred to rely on regulars, when it was possible, such as in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars. In those confrontations, Israel also limited both its goals and the scale of its operations so there was less need to call in many of the reserves.

In the 1967 war the Israeli 99th Infantry Brigade carried out an exhausting 14 kilometer march in the dunes of Sinai, on their way to attack a vital Egyptian post.²⁰ They were reserve troops, not regulars, who are young men, aged eighteen to twenty-one. Still, the men of that 99th brigade were fit enough to walk this distance, in the deep sand. Overall, in that war, reserves received praise for their performance. In the previous war, in 1956, the first test of the reserves in a high-intensity war, and they absorbed criticism. In one case the 10th infantry brigade, a reserve unit, failed in quickly seizing a key post in northeast Sinai.

At the beginning of the 1973 war, following the massive and sudden Arab offensive on two fronts, IDF's reserves were caught off guard. This had to do also with the IAF, although the latter was better ready to combat, since in contrast to the ground forces the IAF does not rely so much on reserves. The same will be if a hybrid group conducts a surprise attack against Israel, by firing rockets at it.

THE HUMAN COST

Israel always sought to minimize its casualties.²¹ In the 1948–1949 war, out of 600,000 people, Israel lost 6,200.²² Over the years the Israeli population has been gradually growing while its casualties in wars went down significantly, compared with the 1948–1949 war. Even in the 1973 war, when about 2,300 Israeli troops were killed, the state had then more than three million people. This trend of fewer casualties as the population gets bigger was much more obvious in the wars that have occurred since 2006. However more Israeli civilians were killed, in compared to high-intensity wars in 1956, 1967 and 1973. In the 2006 war, forty-four Israeli civilians and 121 soldiers were killed since Hezbollah focused on hitting the Israeli rear. Hamas had the same approach, although it was much less successful in the 2014 war. Israel lost then sixty-seven troops and five civilians. Hamas and other Palestinian factions and groups were more lethal dur-

ing the low-intensity war in 2000–2005, when more than a thousand Israelis were killed, most of them civilians.

In 2000 there was an estimation that Israel might absorb between 2,500 and 4,000 dead, a third of them in the rear, during a high-intensity war with Syria.²³ It demonstrated the cost of such a war, compared to the price Israel paid in fighting hybrid foes.

In the 1967 war the IDF's 7th Armored Brigade had sixty-one dead during the capturing of the strongholds of Rafah, a key sector in northern Sinai.²⁴ In the 1973 war Egypt strove to inflict heavy casualties on the IDF.²⁵ When the IDF crossed the Suez Canal it cost the lives of about 300 Israeli soldiers in only one night. The IDF therefore sometimes paid dearly in major battles in high-intensity wars. In contrast, in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars there was not one major fight that had a significant impact on the outcome of the war. The Israeli casualties occurred across the campaign. In some isolated cases the IDF took heavy casualties, yet they were much smaller compared to main battles in high-intensity wars.

In the 1967 war, the IDF lost at least sixty troops during the seizing of the Gaza Strip, a battle that lasted a few days.²⁶ In the 2014 war almost the same amount of Israeli soldiers were killed during fifty days of combat. Yet in 2014, the IDF seized only a tiny part of the Gaza Strip. Taking the entire Gaza Strip would have significantly increased the Israeli casualties.

In the late 1960s the IDF clashed on the Jordanian front with both the PLO and the Jordanian military. The peak was on March 21, 1968, when the IDF conducted a vast raid inside the Hashemite kingdom, in the town of Karameh. Israeli troops ran into stiff resistance. Thirty-three Israeli soldiers were killed.²⁷ This was an example of the cost of attacking an Arab group that is located inside an Arab state. The Jordanian military confronted the IDF not so much because of its support of the PLO but because the IDF invaded Jordanian land. In other cases the local Arab military was much less effective, as it was during Israeli raids in Lebanon since the 1970s, which reduced the number of Israeli casualties.

The IDF had 368 dead during the 1982 war in Lebanon, which lasted about four months, including the siege on Beirut.²⁸ In the 2006 war in Lebanon, which lasted thirty-four days, 121 Israeli troops were killed. If the battles in 2006 had continued, even without reaching Beirut, Israel would have paid a higher cost, maybe as same as in 1982.

During the 2014 war, on August 1, as part of an effort to bring back an Israeli second lieutenant who was captured by Hamas, IDF pounded areas in the Gaza Strip, killing dozens of civilians.²⁹ There was a debate in Israel how far should it go in such a case, like if it should use massive firepower. Israel wanted to avoid public pressure on its government to release a thousand Palestinian prisoners in return for one Israeli soldier as it was with Gilad Shalit in 2011. Israel was not able to teach its people

to accept that if one or more Israeli soldiers are captured then they might be prisoners for a long time if the cost Israel has to pay for their freedom is too high.

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Conclusion

Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, the IDF has focused on preparing for a war against Arab militaries. Over the years, Israel dealt also with guerrilla and terror groups, mostly Palestinian ones. Since 2006 nonstate organizations took center stage, as was seen in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars. This shift occurred due to the rise of hybrid outfits such as Hezbollah and Hamas and the decline of Arab militaries like the Syrian one.

ISRAEL, ARABS, AND IRAN

The Syrian civil war destroyed Syria. Assad has been at a low point, which means that he does not pose much of a threat to Israel. Assad depends on his partners, Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah. Israel exploited Assad's weakness to strike inside Syria. Yet Israel limited its bombardments to hitting deliveries of advanced weapons, before they were sent from Syria to Hezbollah in Lebanon. There were also tiny skirmishes along the border in the Golan Heights that did not cause an escalation between Israel and Assad/Hezbollah.

Hezbollah has been Iran's fire base in Lebanon, ready to launch thousands of rockets at Israel, if Iran orders that, particularly if Israel attacks Iran's nuclear sites. There could be also an escalation, which will not serve either side. Israel does not seek war, and Hezbollah has been occupied with the Syrian civil war. Even if Hezbollah could take its forces out of Syria, the group will require time to recover from its huge losses and the tough fight there. Hezbollah might be careful not to be dragged into a war with Israel, worrying about the high cost Lebanon will pay in such a collision, especially if Hezbollah is blamed for that.

Israel has fought the PLO since the 1960s. In the 1990s the PLO, by ruling the PA, became a partner of Israel, although the tension between them remained, which led to the 2000–2005 war. In the last decade the security cooperation between them, in the West Bank, has been vital for both sides. It also prevented growing friction between the PA and Israel that could have ended in a major Israeli operation and maybe even in the collapse of the PA. In spite of that, all the attempts to bring the two sides to reach an overall agreement, to end the conflict, have failed. Israel and the Palestinians should engage in a process of reconciliation with each

other, but at the same time they should also do it between the different factions in their own camps. Without this, there is not much hope for the future.

The international community, mostly the US and the EU, should assist as brokers. The defeat of ISIS, as an entity that controlled large areas in Syria and Iraq, could allow world powers to focus on helping to resolve the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. Arab states, which have their 2002 peace initiative, should also be involved in this process, in order to help and as part of ending their conflict with Israel as well. It could also contribute in building a coalition against Iran.

This Gaza Strip has been in the hands of Hamas, the enemy of both Israel and the PA. The latter could not retake the Gaza Strip and maybe not even to control it if this area is given back to the PA. Israel tolerates Hamas rule in the Gaza Strip for lack of a better option, while suppressing the group in the West Bank.

Egypt has been at peace with Israel since 1979, after a series of high- and low-intensity wars that went on for twenty-five years. The peace survived, although it has been a cold one. There was not much cooperation in the economic level, and sometimes there was friction between the two states, mostly because of the Palestinians. In recent years Israel allowed Egypt to reinforce its position in Sinai in order to fight ISIS, which undermines the demilitarization of the peninsula, a key factor in the 1979 peace treaty.

Egypt must overcome its huge economic problems, which does not stop Egypt from continuing to invest heavily in its armed forces not because of ISIS but due to its view of Israel as a possible enemy. Although Israel has no hostile intentions toward Egypt, the latter keeps pouring money into its military on the expense of urgent needs at home. Egypt might eventually lose its most important war, the internal one.

ISRAEL'S NATIONAL DEFENSE POLICY

Arab states have overwhelming superiority over Israel in the size of their population, land, and natural resources, mostly oil and natural gas. This balance of power did not change after 1948, even after the discovery of natural gas fields near Israel in the 1990s. Israel's biggest fear was losing a high-intensity war, which could have put its survival at risk, with all its ramifications for the fate of the Jews there. Since 1982 Israel had only hybrid and low-intensity wars, which sometimes cost Israel dearly but none of them jeopardized its existence. Arab nonstate organizations are not strong enough to defeat the IDF and/or conquer any Israeli land.

Hezbollah and Hamas could hope to wear Israel down in the long run, a goal Arab states have failed to accomplish since 1948. Arab states that encircle Israel wanted to isolate it, in order to bring its decline. Yet

Israel managed to handle the Arab boycott on economic ties with Israel and to build its economy like its famous high-tech industry. Israel also, due to its leverage in the West Bank, could help the PA to develop its economy, according to how much Israel wants the PA to be independent, with or without turning eventually into a state.

Israel's peace agreements with Egypt in 1979 signaled a shift, in which Israel became less worried about Arab states and more concerned with guerrilla and terror groups. Since the 1980s the chances of a war with an Arab states gradually declined. A possible Arab attack was based on Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan. The latter and Egypt kept their peace, although a cold one, with Israel. Iraq absorbed a substantial defeat in 1991 and was conquered in 2003. Since then Iraq did not manage to recover and actually struggles to survive as a state. As to Syria, the civil war there caused Assad's military huge losses, which basically ruled out the possibility of a major confrontation between Israel and Assad.

In the 1973 war, when Egypt and Syria joined forces, they gained important achievements, mostly in the beginning of that showdown. Later on, there were deep divisions between them, which prevented them from exploiting the full potential of an Arab coalition. A similar move against Israel in the last decade has been unlikely. The same goes for an alliance between Arab nonstate organizations. Even if they form some kind of a pact it will not be formidable enough to pose a major threat to Israel. Arab groups, however, can learn from how Arab states fought as a coalition, such as how to coordinate an attack on more than one front.

Israel, particularly in the last two decades, has been very concerned about Iran's nuclear project. Arab nonstate organizations that serve as Iranian protégés might be encouraged to confront Israel, if their patron produces a nuclear weapon, assuming this new situation will limit IDF's operations. Yet Iran might restrain its partners, warning them not to challenge Israel, in order not to entangle Iran in a nuclear showdown.

Meanwhile Arab groups can gain CWs and launch them with rockets, missiles, and UAVs. Those groups might have fewer constraints in using CWs compared to Arab states because Arab groups are less vulnerable to retaliation than Arab states that have centers of government and infrastructure.

The United States might have a disagreement with Israel regarding a war between the latter and a nonstate organization. Israel needed US support more during high-intensity wars, when the Soviet Union supported the Arabs, than in wars against Hamas/Hezbollah that have only Iran as their patron. This is because Iran is much weaker than the Soviet Union. In the military dimensions the United States could reduce, delay, or stop shipment of weapons, ammunition, and spare parts to Israel or to threaten to do that before, during, or after a war between Israel and the Arabs. Israel could run a war with the weapons systems and ammunition it already has. Israel does need to refill its stockpiles and replace weapons

systems that are destroyed in combat. Yet hybrid forces don't have a strong air defense. Therefore the IAF might lose only a few aircraft, in contrast to high-intensity wars like in 1973, when the IAF lost more than 100 aircraft. This difference will reduce the pressure on Israel in asking the United States for new aircraft, in return for Israeli concessions. As to ammunition, the IDF can consume less of it since hybrid forces are much smaller and weaker than major Arab militaries.

Israel failed in enforcing regime change in Lebanon in 1982. Therefore Israel was careful not to do it again, such as in Syria in recent years. Israel also tolerates the dominance of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas rule in the Gaza Strip, for lack of a better choice.

DOCTRINE AND BUILDUP

Israel did not try to coerce Arab nonstate organizations to recognize Israel's right to exist. Instead, Israel strove to deter them from confronting Israel and at least to delay the next round with them as much as possible. For that purpose Israel conducted preemptive and retaliation missions like air, ground, and sea attacks.

The 2006 war started because Israel did not deter Hezbollah from conducting a raid on the border but Hezbollah did not seek war to begin with. In that sense, Israel's deterrence worked. Still, Israel got entangled in an unnecessary war. Since then Israel claims that Hezbollah is deterred from confronting Israel, which is true, because of the cost Hezbollah paid in 2006. Yet if Israel had attacked Iran, Hezbollah would have probably opened fire at Israel, regardless of the outcome of the 2006 war. It is also possible that the IDF's poor performance in 2006 was one of the reasons for the willingness of Hamas to confront Israel in 2008–2009.

Israel strives for a fast victory. However, the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars ended more or less in a draw. Furthermore those wars were prolonged due to difficulties the IDF had in locating and striking targets. The outcome of those wars was not necessarily connected to how long they were. Since the 2014 war, which lasted fifty days, there have been three years of relative quiet, while after the 2008–2009 war that went on for twenty-two days the firing of rockets at Israel resumed much faster. Furthermore, in the 2006 and the 2014 wars, a relatively small part of the Israeli population was exposed to the majority of the rockets that were launched at Israel. This factor reduced the pressure on the Israeli government to end the war fast. A short war also was required to discharge the reserves as soon as possible but in 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars only a small part of them was called in to begin with, so there was less of a problem in this matter. In addition the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars were longer than the high-intensity wars. It gave the IDF days and sometimes weeks to train its troops during the war. It was possible since there

was much less pressure. There was no threat of invasion by a powerful Arab military, and the battles took place on only one front.

In 1982 Israel launched a preventive war against the PLO in Lebanon, which ended in kicking the PLO out of that country. In the 2014 war, Israel launched a kind of a preemptive strike when it destroyed tunnels in the Gaza Strip that led into Israel, before they were used to attack it on a massive scale. In other cases, Israel avoided starting a war against its rival, as it did with Syria since 1982, although the latter was the biggest threat to Israel due to the powerful Syrian military. Eventually the Syrian civil war brought a meltdown of the Syrian armed forces, with no cost to Israel. The Israeli restraint paid off. Sometimes patience is a virtue. Maybe a similar decline could happen to those that are currently Israel's greatest security concerns, Iran and Hezbollah.

In the 1982, 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars the tactical formations of the PLO, Hezbollah, and Hamas were based on details and even one fighter. Facing such a tiny force, the IDF did not have to break it but to focus on inflicting casualties. This task was not an easy one, in spite of the IDF's overwhelming superiority, since its hybrid foes used terrain such as urban areas to hide and maneuver. Sometimes Hamas/Hezbollah fighters were forced to come out of their cover and to be exposed, following the Israeli advance into Arab territory. In 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014, the main battles were with those who tried to delay the IDF from reaching tunnels or rockets.

In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars the IDF was not sent to capture Arab land but to destroy military infrastructure such as rockets and tunnels. The IDF seized small areas in the Gaza Strip/Lebanon and left all of them when the war was over or even before that. Holding Arab land would not have ended the war but actually it would have prolonged the fight. Therefore the Israeli offensives were like a long raid. This approach allowed Israel's foes to recover and to argue that they pushed back the Israeli troops.

In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars the IDF relied on its firepower, sometimes more and sometimes less. This firepower inflicted severe casualties and caused substantial damage to the infrastructure of Israel's foes, but there was also collateral damage. The IDF tried to prevent that, but it was a tall order since its rivals hid behind Arab populations, often while attacking Israeli citizens or troops. The Israeli ground offensives in those wars were not effective in many ways, but it was clear that the IDF could not depend on firepower solely.

Israel's hybrid foes attacked inside Israel by relying on firepower, mostly rockets. This arsenal had to be developed, secured, and launched before the IDF can hit it. Yet some of the rockets were never fired, to be kept for an escalation or the next round. Having tens of thousands of them allowed losing some of them to Israeli attacks or malfunctions. Furthermore many of the rockets were intercepted, missed their targets,

or caused minor damage due to their small warhead. Yet it was enough that only part of them found their target, particularly if they inflicted casualties, to achieve the effect that Arab groups returned a favor in spite of Israel's military might.

Since the late 1980s the IDF had hybrid and low-intensity wars, often in urban areas, which made the Israeli infantry more important than other corps, like the armor, which played a secondary role. Ground units such as infantry, armor, and combat engineers require heavy investments, but this is essential, for example, when airpower can't do the job alone.

Israeli fighter-bombers and tanks have to be adjusted to confronting hybrid foes, which means less emphasis on their ability to defeat their counterparts, since hybrid foes don't hold tanks or aircraft. There is a need to put the attention on issues like protecting IDF's tanks against huge IEDs and anti-tank missiles. The IAF also requires aircraft such as the AH-64 and A-10, as part of supporting ground units against hybrid forces.

The IDF have the 36th and the 162nd divisions that are supposed to fight on each of Israel's fronts and have to be flexible enough to deal with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and other groups as well. Other Israeli units are assigned to only a certain front, such as the 210th division in the Golan Heights, which prepares to handle Syrian groups like ISIS and Hezbollah.

THE ISRAELI AIR, LAND, AND SEA FORCES

The IAF had to learn how to find and destroy rockets, a different challenge compared to its traditional mission: attacking Arab air forces. For hybrid forces the rockets are their air arm. Although Israeli airfields were not primary targets of those rockets in previous wars, many drills were carried out in those bases in recent years, so the troops there can function even under a massive rocket barrage.

Israeli ground troops must protect themselves against rockets and mortars as well, as by digging foxholes. Depending on systems such as the Arrow and Iron Dome is not sufficient since they don't cover every spot. Israeli civilians are more exposed than troops, since the former have no armored vehicles or body armor. Some of the Israeli population does not even have a shelter in their home or nearby. Some shelters are also not properly maintained. Therefore up to several hundreds of thousands of civilians have fled their home during past wars, and the same could happen in a future war.

The IAF attacked thousands of targets in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars. In none of the wars have the bombardments created a critical mass forcing Israel's foes to give up. Yet in the 2014 war the continuing

air attacks on the Gaza Strip, and eventually hitting high-rise buildings, might have been one of the factors that convinced Hamas to end that round.

Close air support was essential such as when Israeli ground troops were very near to their rivals, which happened quite often during urban warfare. The IDF's advanced command-and-control systems helped in this sense, including in preventing friendly fire. However, the IDF should not rely on them too much, and the same goes for airpower, since they might not always be available or work well. Furthermore sometimes air attacks were not successful because the target was tiny, elusive, and even invisible, when they were underground. Another challenge was to limit collateral damage.

The IAF transferred troops and supply by air, which was quicker than sending them by land. Yet it is clear that the IAF could not replace the thousands of trucks that serve the logistical needs of the ground units, even not in a fight against a hybrid foe, which is less demanding than a high-intensity war.

In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, IDF's infantry had to use the old and vulnerable M-113, since there were not enough well-protected APCs, the Achzarit and Namer. The M-113 should not be used to storm the foe but to serve the artillery, logistical, maintenance, and medical corps.

Israeli infantry needs fire support from the IAF, artillery, and tanks since the infantry has light arms. It is one of the many issues that require coordination between the different corps. The IDF managed to make some improvement in this matter in the 2008–2009 and 2014 wars.

The IDF conducted airborne attacks against Arab nonstate organizations. In a few cases it was part of a ground offensive, like on March 21, 1968, in the raid on Karameh, a town in Jordan. Arab groups had no radar, fighters, or advanced anti-aircraft batteries to intercept transport aircraft. Yet those hybrid forces could shoot down an aircraft at very low altitude, as Hezbollah did in the 2006 war, with an anti-tank missile.

The Israeli navy has been working on developing missiles to intercept missiles/rockets that could be launched by Hamas and particularly by Hezbollah at Israel's sea routes and natural gas rigs in the Mediterranean Sea. In the 2006 war, Hezbollah launched an anti-ship missile that hit and almost sank an Israeli missile boat.

The Israeli navy must also block sea incursions that are carried out with boats as the PLO did in the 1970s or by a frogman as Hamas did in the 2014 war. Another task of the Israeli navy is to assist ground units by gathering information and firing at objectives that are on the coast, as it did in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars.

In the 1982 war, the IDF conducted its biggest amphibious operation ever, in Lebanon. It was against the PLO, which fired at the Israeli bridgehead but did not do much more than that. Yet an amphibious operation is

a complicated task, which demands tight cooperation between sea, ground, and air forces, a field in which the IDF does not have much combat experience. No wonder why the IDF hesitated in conducting them, even against a weak foe like a nonstate organization. In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, the IDF therefore gave up the option to surprise and bypass its rival defense lines by landing from the sea.

OFFENSE AND DEFENSE

In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, it was not that clear which side actually started the war, following the escalation that occurred prior to the confrontation. Either way, Israel did not want to fight on two fronts at the same time. After the 2008–2009 and the 2014 wars began, Israel attacked Hamas in the Gaza Strip while staying in defensive positions in front of Hezbollah in Lebanon. In 2006 it was the opposite.

A completely defensive strategy such as allowing an Arab group to fire rockets at Israel without attacking back will not work for Israel because of several reasons. One, not all Israelis have shelters, and the Iron Dome might run out of missiles long before Israel's enemy fires its last rocket. Two, the IDF might fail in preventing all the infiltrations by tunnels and/or sea that might cause severe casualties among Israelis. Third, Arabs will assume that Israel is too afraid to fight and the international community might not rush to stop an Arab nonstate organization from pounding Israel. The IDF and large parts of the Israeli public will therefore strongly oppose a defensive approach.

In the 1982, 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, the IDF enjoyed a major advantage in fighting on only one front, which allowed it to concentrate its forces there. During wars against hybrid foes, the IDF sent several divisions, as in 1982 and in 2006, or several brigades, as in 2008–2009 and in 2014. In all those wars the IDF did not run into a formidable defense line. Israel's hybrid enemies also did not possess large and strong ground units like an armored one, which could launch a serious counterattack. Therefore, the IDF did not require concentrating substantial forces in a specific sector in order to break through.

Israel shocked its hybrid foes in 2006 and in 2008–2009 by launching a major air strike at the start of the war. Although its rivals were aware of Israel's powerful air force, they were caught off guard. In those two wars the IDF could have exploited that success to carry out a massive ground offensive against several objectives, but Israel avoided that.

In the 1982 and the 2014 wars the IDF attacked on a relatively wide front that forced its foe, which was much weaker than the IDF to begin with, to divide its efforts into several sectors. Yet while in 1982 the IDF advanced 90 kilometers inside Lebanon, in 2014, as in 2008–2009, the IDF penetrated only two kilometers into the Gaza Strip. Israel did not seek to

reoccupy that area, not even temporarily, due to the cost. In 2008–2009 and in 2014 the IDF also avoided, in contrast to 1982, bypassing pockets of resistance while pushing forward, aiming at inflicting a serious blow to its foe by hitting its centers of gravity.

In the 1982 war, the IDF encircled PLO fighters in Beirut for about two months, a siege that ended with an agreement that allowed PLO combatants to leave with their light arms. Israel preferred that to attacking and annihilating them since it might have cost the IDF dearly.

In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, the IDF, during its offensive inside Arab territory, dealt with tiny counterattacks, when one or several Arab combatants ambushed Israeli troops. The latter had to watch their flanks and rear at all times. The Palestinian counterattacks sometimes caused casualties and they also slowed down the Israeli advance.

In the 1982, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, the IDF, in order to reduce collateral damage, struggled to discern between Arab combatants and civilians. Arab populations were encouraged to evacuate their homes/neighborhoods, leaving only combatants there. Some civilians refused or were forced by gunmen to stay so they could serve as human shields. Meanwhile, by allowing the Arab population to get out, the IDF gave its foe time to get better ready for battle. On the other hand, there were cases when the IDF attacked the Arab population, including without warning and/or by using excessive firepower.

ISRAEL'S DEFENSE IN DEPTH/FORWARD DEFENSE

Israel gradually withdrew from Lebanon during 1983–2000. In each withdrawal Israel had to decide if, when, and where to redeploy its forces. Israel hoped each time to end and at least to reduce the resentment against it among the local population and by that to stop attacks against Israel/the IDF. Yet this goal was accomplished only when Israel left Lebanon entirely, in 2000. Furthermore since 1983, in every retreat in Lebanon, Israel lost strategic depth but it was also able to deploy fewer troops inside Lebanon, which reduced the cost Israel paid, including the economic one. Some in Israel supported the presence in Lebanon, for security reasons, while others wished to speed up the return to Israel. Meanwhile Israeli soldiers had to risk their lives in holding ground that they might not only have to leave sooner or later but also give to their foes.

In 1985–2000 the IDF was kept in south Lebanon, without conducting any farther withdrawals, until 2000. It was a kind of forward defense. The Israeli bases were strong enough to block attacks on them but they were not able to stop Hezbollah fighters from moving between those posts. The IDF ran patrols and laid ambushes that disrupted Hezbollah's activity, but it still continued. Furthermore Israel's posts did not prevent Hez-

bollah from firing rockets into Israel. Actually the Israeli presence in Lebanon gave Hezbollah an excuse to strike Israel.

During the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, Israel adopted forward defense. In 2006 Hezbollah did not try to infiltrate Israel. The group preferred instead to launch rockets into Israel. The same was the case with Hamas in 2008–2009. In 2014 Hamas tried and in some cases it succeeded in penetrating Israel. Yet Israel's forward defense proved to be effective when Hamas gunmen ran into Israeli troops, before the former were able to reach and harm the Israeli population.

In 2006 Hezbollah implemented defense in depth, with bunkers, tunnels, rockets, and anti-tank positions, but the group lacked firepower, troops, and fortifications. Hezbollah delayed the Israeli offensive, but it was just a matter of time until the IDF, with all its internal problems in that war, managed to overcome Hezbollah's defense.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Israel does not have to invest heavily in creating a powerful defense line on its borders. During a war the IDF, following the mobilization of its reserves, will be strong enough to prevent an invasion by an Arab group. Israel does need the barrier in the West Bank that helps in dramatically reducing the number of infiltrations from that area, as same as the fence around the Gaza Strip does there. Israel requires also the high fence and intelligence and observation measures that were installed on the border in the Golan Heights and in the Negev, aiming at stopping infiltrations by guerrillas, terrorists, and/or illegal immigrants.

During the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, Hamas and Hezbollah launched their rockets at various targets in Israel, mostly civilian ones. In the 2014 war, when IDF's assembly areas were too close to the front line, in the Gaza Strip, its troops absorbed casualties from mortar fire. Israeli soldiers have to dig foxholes in such situations and also when they are stopping, even for a few hours, inside hostile territory.

Hamas and Hezbollah have less money than Arab states but those groups depend on light infantry, so they don't require huge and expensive facilities for maintenance and training like a major Arab military does.

MANPOWER

The IDF got used to running police tasks like arresting suspects during the low-intensity wars in 1987–1993 and in 2000–2005 in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It caused a major problem in the 2006 war, when the IDF faced not the Palestinians but a foe that was better trained and armed, Hezbollah. The 2006 war showed that sometimes the IDF was not

so good at adjusting to changing circumstances, in spite of its reputation in this field. Furthermore IDF's achievements in the 2000–2005 war made some in the IDF overconfident. They were sure their accomplishments against the Palestinians will repeat themselves against Hezbollah, in the 2006 war, but this was not the case.

In the 1982 war, there were cracks in the morale of some Israeli troops who had doubts about why they risked their lives. In the low-intensity wars in 1987–1993 and in 2000–2005 there were also motivation problems because of several reasons: the fight went on for so long, the nature of the missions, and the friction with the Palestinian population. The IDF struggled, trying to both boost the motivation of its troops and to keep to the laws and values of the Israeli democracy and the norms of the international community.

Israeli reserves have more experience than the regulars, but the reserves have been less trained and many of them are married with children. Therefore the IDF preferred to rely mostly on the regulars in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars. In addition, both the goals and the scale of IDF's operations in those wars were limited, so the IDF would not have to mobilize more reserves.

CONCLUSION

In the last decade there was quite a low probability of a war between Israel and an Arab state, let alone against a coalition of Arab states. Israel does have to deal with a hostile state, Iran, but as long as Iran does not produce a nuclear weapon, it seems that Israel's main national security concern is how to handle nonstate organizations that have a hybrid capability.

The IDF can inflict heavy casualties and damages to a hybrid foe, but destroying the latter is a tall order. However, there is much less danger to Israel, let alone to its survival, since even an alliance between hybrid forces can't defeat the IDF and annihilate Israel.

Fighting a hybrid force is less demanding than running a high-intensity war. Therefore Israel does not rely that much on the United States in receiving weapons systems, ammunition, and spare parts. Furthermore Hamas and Hezbollah have Iran as their patron. Against the latter Israel does not require the United States as was the case in high-intensity wars when the Soviet Union was involved.

Israel has to strengthen its deterrence, which does not fail just because of one single raid against Israel, as the one in 2006 that entangled Israel in a war that could have been prevented.

Israel should strive for a short war, yet there are several factors that suggest it might not necessarily have to be always a top priority, following the wars that occurred since 2006. First of all, Israel's hybrid foes did

not receive much help from the outside; like from Iran, let alone a military one. This happened, although the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars were longer than high-intensity wars: there was time for Iran to intervene. Second, the outcome of the fifty-day war in 2014 was better than the results of the twenty-two-day war in 2008–2009. Third, in the 2006 and the 2014 wars a relatively minor part of the Israeli population was exposed to a majority of the rockets that were launched at Israel. This factor reduced the pressure on the Israeli government to end the war fast. Fourth, in the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, most of the reserves were not called in, so there was less urgency to end the war quickly, in order to discharge the reserves. Fifth, the length of the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars gave the IDF days and sometimes weeks to train its troops during the war. It was possible since there was no threat of invasion by a powerful Arab military, and the battles took place on only one front. Furthermore, the IDF could have often waited during the campaign, not risking the lives of its soldiers by attacking, whatever the circumstances, as part of striving for a quick victory.

Israel can launch a preemptive strike or a preventive war, aiming for example to destroy rockets and missiles in Lebanon. However, sometimes it is better for Israel just to wait and see if there is a drastic change in the other side that will weaken its military might, as was the case with Syria.

In the 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014 wars, the Israeli offensives were like a long raid, since the IDF did not seize land. The IDF conducted a limited maneuver, aiming at destroying infrastructure, mostly tunnels, and arsenal, like rockets. The IDF also sought to hit its enemy's manpower. In fighting a hybrid force, the goal was not to break its formations, since they operated in tiny details to begin with, but to harm their men. The challenge was therefore to find those men. It was quite a challenge, particularly in urban areas. Sometimes the attack itself pushed hybrid fighters to come out of their shelters, which put them at risk.

The IDF relied heavily on firepower, trying to create a critical mass/strike sensitive spots that might convince the foe to end the war. At the same time the IDF tried to prevent collateral damage, but it was a tall order since its rivals hid behind Arab populations, often while attacking Israeli citizens or troops.

Since the late 1980s Israel has fought only hybrid and low-intensity wars. Therefore IDF's infantry became more important than other corps like the armor. It is vital not to neglect the ground units, especially if there is a situation in which the IAF might not be able to carry out many of its tasks.

The IDF has to continue to improve and assimilate weapons systems that will be suitable to confront hybrid forces. It has to do also with their combat doctrine. Since Israel's main foe is a hybrid force, the IAF should not focus only on training for air-to-air combat and destroying a strong

air defense. The IAF will continue to fulfill its other traditional roles such as giving close air support and transferring troops and supply, although the IAF is not supposed to replace the logistical corps.

The Israeli navy will guard the Israeli coast against sea incursions and support ground units. Conducting an amphibious operation should be reconsidered in the next round.

The certain similarity between Israel's hybrid rivals makes it easier for the IDF to train its troops in certain patterns. The IDF also has been upgrading its active and passive defense although conducting an attack is still the only way to achieve the best outcome. The IDF will prefer to have one front solely, as in 1982, 2006, 2008–2009, and 2014, which allows the IDF to concentrate its forces there. An offensive should be based on the element of surprise such as launching a massive air strike in the start of the war, followed by a large-scale ground offensive. The attack will run on a wide front while bypassing pockets of resistance in order to reach and hit the enemy's centers of gravity. Hybrid forces will try to delay the attack but they have neither the manpower nor the weapons systems, such as tanks, to initiate major counterattacks.

The IDF should avoid getting into a situation of a siege on an Arab stronghold, particularly if Arab combatants will be trapped there together with civilians. Eventually, after a cease-fire, the IDF could gradually leave areas it seized, as long as the other side honors its commitments. Until the retreat the IDF could implement forward defense or defense in depth.

The IDF has to be careful not to be again too busy running police tasks at the expense of preparing to fight a hybrid force. Other top priorities are training the troops to adjust to changing circumstances, preventing cracks in morale and keeping the laws and values of the Israeli democracy and the international community.

All in all, compared with high-intensity wars, the demands and risks to Israel are much less in fighting a hybrid force. It means that sometimes striving for a short war, with all its constraints and cost, is not that urgent. Hybrid forces are much weaker than major Arab militaries and the IDF, which makes it easier for Israel, particularly when the latter fights on one front solely. However the IDF should not underestimate its hybrid foes. The IDF has to find the best combination between offense and defense, firepower, and maneuver.

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