

# Military and Strategic Affairs

Volume 2 | No. 1 | June 2010

## THE RESPONSE TO THE CHANGING THREAT CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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המכון למחקרי ביטחון לאומי

THE INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES

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## **Military and Strategic Affairs**

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### **The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)**

40 Haim Levanon • POB 39950 • Tel Aviv 61398 • Israel

Tel: +972-3-640-0400 • Fax: +972-3-744-7590 • E-mail: [info@inss.org.il](mailto:info@inss.org.il)

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# The Changing Threat

Gabriel Siboni

The purpose of this conference is to try to understand the changes in the threat against the State of Israel that have taken place in recent years, and to examine the components of the optimal response to the threat. Today's seminar is organized within the framework of the INSS Military and Strategic Affairs Program, which aims to enhance the public discourse on subjects relevant to this discipline through conferences and the *Military and Strategic Affairs* journal.

The Second Lebanon War brought a complex reality to light. Israel, well trained for confrontations with conventional armed forces, found itself confronting organizations employing terrorist tactics on a large scale, their main tool being high trajectory fire of growing quantity, intensity, and precision. The change in the threat places several challenges before Israel, including:

- a. The enemy's use of civilians in order to defend its capability to continue launching high trajectory fire at Israel.
- b. The enemy's attempt to assimilate into the civilian population, thereby – in its perspective – making it difficult for the IDF to operate efficiently in order to damage its launching and fighting capabilities.
- c. The enemy's growing use of the international court system in order to minimize the IDF's freedom of operation to the highest extent possible and to damage the political legitimacy of the State of Israel.

These are significant challenges, requiring an inclusive, interdisciplinary security response, in which the military component is only one of several coping mechanisms.

Col. (ret.) Dr. Gabriel Siboni, head of the INSS Military and Strategic Affairs Program

This threat developed in light of several trends, the first being the construction of a comprehensive response to the conventional political threat. The State of Israel succeeded in constructing a reasonable military response to the classical military threat, reflected in the use of large, maneuvering military frameworks. As a result, the enemy, which refuses to accept the existence of the State of Israel, began to seek alternative measures, one of which was the transition to a strategy designed to exhaust the citizenry and damage the state's political and legal legitimacy. Widespread use of high trajectory fire towards population centers in Israel has been the major tool for implementation of this strategy.

The second trend is the threat developed in light of the essential change in recent years in the State of Israel's security concept. Although Israel's security strategy is defensive, Israel over the years employed a military policy of offense to deny the development of the terrorist organizations' threat. This offensive approach kept the threat of terrorism under control. For example, when the fedayeen threat arose, the IDF developed an offensive approach based on retaliation, which precluded growth of the threat to major proportions. Similarly, when the terrorist organizations were expelled from Jordan in September 1970 and moved to Lebanon, the IDF developed a doctrine of offensive fighting. This was based on planned sequential operations against the terrorist organizations in Lebanon. These offensives succeeded in suppressing terrorism to a tolerable level and kept it from spiraling out of control.

While the offensive approach created a difficult reality for border settlements, its advantage lay in reducing the scope of the threat and maintaining it at a low level. The threat started to accelerate only once Israel abandoned the offensive approach and transitioned to a containment policy. Over the years this policy allowed the terrorist organizations to develop unhindered, and indeed, Hizbollah armed itself with many launching means. In the Second Lebanon War, Israel decided to abandon the policy of containment and was then forced to cope with a severe threat that had sprouted freely. By this point, not only were Israel's border settlements in the line of fire: the majority of the citizens of the state were exposed to the threat of high trajectory fire. Now that the new reality has been internalized, Israel must identify the optimal response to this threat. The essays in this volume deliberate the best ways of providing such a response.

Israel must currently tackle two types of threats: the physical and the legal/political. As for the physical threat, David Ben-Gurion laid the foundations for Israel's security concept on the assumption that Israel was not capable of ending the conflict using military means and therefore had to operate with a defensive strategy whose single objective was maintaining and fortifying the state's existence. Ben-Gurion found that the best way to implement this strategy was by deterring the enemy from using force against Israel. However, once deterrence failed and Israel was attacked, the IDF would have to achieve two main objectives.

The first and primary objective was to extend the periods between the rounds of confrontation. As long as the enemy refused to accept the existence of the State of Israel, every confrontation would be followed by another. Therefore, the supreme goal of the IDF was to create sufficient deterrence after every round of confrontation, which would enable postponement of the next round of fighting. The second (and secondary) objective was to reduce the length of each round of fighting and therefore, the damage caused. In other words, once a confrontation was forced on Israel, the IDF would have to find ways to minimize its duration and damages. This would allow the nation to return to its routine quickly and take better advantage of the period of calm to develop and fortify the state.

The question to be asked then is: what tools are available to the IDF to fulfill these objectives? Due to the large number of enemy launchers and the large amount of ammunition dispersed over wide areas, it is hard to see how the IDF could completely end enemy fire by attacking the launchers. Therefore, joint action containing four components – two offensive and two defensive – is necessary.

The first offensive component is destructive fire designed to render a severe blow to the enemy – both its military capabilities and its state or organizational infrastructure supporting its fighting effort. In the case of Lebanon, in addition to attacking Hizbollah, the state's infrastructures must also be attacked in order to leave the enemy with a clear, long memory of the damage it caused and postpone its next action by many years. Such a blow must leave the enemy with cumulative damages that require years of reconstruction. The second offensive component is the ground maneuver and the use of precision fire in order to reduce the scope of enemy fire against Israel. A decisive, rapid maneuver of major force would result in the conquest of territory from which the enemy

operates and thereby end the launchings and destroy the launchers and the combat infrastructure in these areas. Furthermore, the use of precision fire would damage launch capabilities before and after use.

The first defensive component is an active defense capability for intercepting launches. This is a supplementary component that can be operated to defend systems critical to the IDF's war effort and as defense of important national infrastructures whose survival is critical to the functioning of the state. One must not be under any illusions that this defensive component can supply a comprehensive defense against every enemy launch. The citizens must understand that launches will continue until the last day of the fighting and they will be required to defend themselves to the greatest extent possible against this sort of attack. Second, the state is required to develop capabilities to minimize as much as possible the damage to the quality of life on the civilian front during the time of a confrontation. Meir Elran of INSS has demonstrated the progress Israel has made in this area and has shown the need to continue to develop this critical component as a part of the overall response.

The second intifada and its aftermath, the Second Lebanon War, and Operation Cast Lead are all landmarks in the development of an appropriate response. Even if not all the layers of the response were implemented, the IDF has achieved cumulative success in the struggle against the resistance movement. The security response continues to develop, in terms of both its offensive and defensive components, and this development can enhance the cumulative success. In contrast, no systematic response to the legal/political threat has been formulated to date. There is a growing understanding that the physical and the legal/political threats are interwoven and together represent one integrated enemy effort.

The enemy's doctrine of war is to drag the IDF into fighting in the crowded civilian sphere in order to increase the number of civilian casualties. While the fighting is underway and even more so afterwards, the supporters can thereby act globally and invoke various legal means in order to accuse IDF soldiers of war crimes and thus continue the battle through alternative means. That is to say, the legal campaign must be viewed as an inherent, integral part of the military campaign, so that it is necessary to plan the legal campaign as part of the IDF's operational planning. The integration of legal consultants into the fighting force is



insufficient and cannot provide such a comprehensive response. It is the duty of the security establishment to develop a comprehensive doctrine of war to deal with this issue.

The legal/political threat cannot be the sole responsibility of the security establishment. It is necessary to enlist all the resources of the Jewish people and its friends in Israel and abroad in order to formulate the action that must be taken on the political front. Part of this action is the need to formulate and assimilate up-to-date analyses of the rules of war and to work systematically with decision makers all over the world who are familiar with enemy attacks in this field.



# The Range of Threats against Israel

Yaakov Amidror

This essay focuses primarily on the threats against the State of Israel and touches little on the responses to these threats. Over the last sixty years, the threats Israel has been forced to tackle have assumed different emphases, but the fundamental principle for understanding them has not changed, namely: the world around us, the Arab world, most of the Muslim world – not necessarily “most” in the numerical-statistical terms, but in terms of those determining the outlook of that world – does not consent to the existence of an independent, sovereign Jewish state in the heart of the Middle East and will do whatever it takes to destroy it.

This has nothing to do with the territories conquered in the 1967 war or any occupation; the dispute is not over territories but over the very existence of a Jewish state. This fundamental understanding is the key to understanding the threats and to the construction of the Jewish state’s military force. Those who fail to understand this, or those addicted to the pleasant illusion that the situation is not all that bad and that the world has changed, those who adopt the mindset of “we’re sick of winning” – their defeat on the battlefield is assured because they will not build the force correctly and they will not prepare for war correctly. This is indeed a pessimistic view, and I know that people prefer their illusions. But those who build the military force and examine the threats and do not have to worry about elections had better look at reality in the eye and not deceive themselves or us.

Anyone involved in military force buildup must look at the threats from the perspective of the worst case scenario rather than rely on some agreement or regime, which for the moment may seem to lie outside the range of threats. A regime change in the Middle East could

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Yaakov Amidror is vice president of the Lander Institute – Jerusalem Academic Center.

generate a change in outlook in that state and thus result in its joining the range of threats. Clearly when planning force buildup with a given budget, appropriate prioritizing is necessary and such issues are taken into consideration so that in practice investment is made on the basis of complex assessments of the questions: which threat is liable to be realized in the near future and which threat seems more distant? what threat probability are we facing? and so on. However, one must not ignore the worst case scenario; the nation's security concept cannot be built on easy starting assumptions.

I remember well discussions in the IDF that after the war in Iraq there is no longer any need to worry about an eastern front, that Iraq has disappeared from the map of threats against Israel. And I ask: is there anyone who can say what Iraq will look like twenty years from now? Do we not have to prepare today for worse developments from our point of view? Clearly, this is where prioritizing financial investment in actual force buildup comes into play because the budget is a finite given. We thus recognize that there are threats to which we have no response. Yet this way at least we are not deceiving ourselves by thinking we have done all we could to prepare for every possible disaster. We are aware that we are taking risks and that there are threats for which we are unprepared.

Around 1995, a question was asked about our relations with Turkey. We made the assessment that Turkey was undergoing a process of Islamization and that as a Muslim country it would distance itself from Israel. Our assessment was rejected and the relationship with Turkey grew closer; however, the process we identified then is indeed taking place. Similarly, we should remember the relationship Israel had with Iran, and how Israel assumed that Lebanon would be the second state to sign a peace agreement with Israel. These errors stemmed from the fact that we were – and are – unwilling to accept the notion that we have to construct our security concept around the worst case scenario, albeit obviously within the scope of reason.

With these methodological comments behind us, let us turn to the essence of the risks themselves. Israel exists in a fixed state of several immutable asymmetries, and these asymmetries rest on the understanding that the State of Israel is surrounded by elements that do not accept its existence. It is within this setting that Israel's force buildup must occur. Let me cite five leading asymmetries.

- a. *Asymmetry of territory.* Unlike its neighbors Israel has neither operative nor strategic depth, and thus under certain circumstances a tactical failure is liable to have fateful consequences for the state. By contrast, our enemies have both tremendous depth and great capacity to absorb tactical and even operational failures. Because of its small size, narrow configuration, and the fact that enemies, either in theory or in practice, surround it on all sides, all of Israel is a front. Its capacity to absorb blows is very limited because it does not have the capacity to disperse its infrastructures with sufficient redundancy – a matter of great importance in the era of high trajectory fire. Anyone who claims that in the era of high trajectory fire territory is of no consequence understands nothing of military matters. That claim is a political statement lacking any professional military foundation whatsoever. On the contrary, in the era of high trajectory fire there is tremendous importance to a nation's capacity to scatter its infrastructures. I am not even touching here on the problem of using nuclear weapons. Israel is in a difficult situation with regard to the various terrorist organizations because most of its land and population centers are within the range of Hizbollah and Hamas fire, and there is no warning time with regard to terrorists who may emerge from potential terrorist loci in the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria.
- b. *Population size.* We will always be the few against the many. Even if all the Jews in the world move here, Israel will still be surrounded by states approximately ten if not twenty times its size, depending on what states one includes in this context. Therefore, the military will always be smaller and the State of Israel will always have to extract from Israeli society its maximal potential.
- c. *Lack of significant international support.* The lack of support stems not only from any deed on Israel's part but from the fact that on the international arena there is a bloc of sixty countries that automatically vote against Israel. This amounts to severe limitations in terms of any international timetable should Israel want to act, i.e., Israel has very little time to demonstrate its military capabilities in action.
- d. *Decision.* Israel does not have the capacity to wrest a decision in a confrontation with its enemies and it cannot impose regime changes in the Arab world or even effect a change in this worldview. By contrast, a single victory on the part of the Arab world means the end

of Israel's existence. This asymmetry is one of the most influential factors in Israel's military force buildup, and the Israeli public and decision makers must understand this.

- e. *Means.* Israel is limited in terms of the means it can use. It cannot carpet bomb civilian areas. It cannot act like Russia did in Chechnya or like Hamas. Therefore, slogans such as "let's smash them" or "once we go out we can do whatever we want to them" are irresponsible and worthless proposals. We cannot deceive ourselves because in no scenario will we have the legitimacy to act as cruelly as the enemy or as the Russians did in Chechnya. Israel must maintain a necessary minimum standard of ethical rules if it wants to continue to be a democratic Jewish state.

These asymmetries all rest on the aforementioned understanding that the existence of the State of Israel in the Middle East is undesirable to its neighbors and that its existence is predicated on its ability to deter its enemies rather than change their worldview. Processes taking place in the Middle East are making the region more fundamentalist, less tolerant, and less democratic, as is evident from the most recent UN report on the Arab nations.

Three aspects common to the threats against Israel have emerged over the years. The first relates to the practical capability of the other side given what it has at its disposal, what it is willing to sacrifice, and its ability to prevent the fall of the regime. This was particularly poignant in Syria in the second half of the 1980s. Because of world events, including Egypt's exit from the cycle of war following its peace agreement with Israel, Hafez al-Asad understood clearly that he could not destroy the State of Israel.

The second element concerns limitations on acquiring weapons. With the exception of Iran, most of the Arab states do not have any substantial capability of manufacturing weapons. However, there are two exceptions to this statement: Egypt has a weapons industry, albeit a fairly unsophisticated one, and Syria has the capability of manufacturing a variety of rockets. The possibility of acquiring modern weapons from outside elements is one of the factors affecting the creation of threats on the part of enemy states and non-state entities.

The third aspect is the other side's understanding of how to achieve successes in war. The importance attributed in recent years to firepower

is based on the other side's understanding of what it can and cannot attain. This threat develops when Israeli victories change the nature of the threats, generating new ones as the result of the other side understanding that it cannot realize its aspirations on the battlefield. As such, the old threat loses potency because the enemy has come to realize its hopelessness. In this context, we must also look at the glass as being half full.

Let us now proceed to an historical survey of the development of the threats. The War of Independence started with clashes with local Arab irregular forces and forces from the outside. The threat against the state-in-the-making was its ability to survive as one entity. The threat focused on the axes and isolated settlements, first in order to prevent movement from one population center to another and then to attack every settlement individually. The Arabs failed to achieve this.

The *yishuv* forces succeeded in handling this stage of the fighting before it was supplied with weapons from abroad, because it was more organized than its enemies. This was not a few-versus-many situation; it was simply a matter of better organization. The declaration of statehood brought about a change. Forces from regular armies invaded the nascent State of Israel and Israel started to prepare for an army-versus-army confrontation. At that stage, two major asymmetries emerged: first, Israel had no depth. Egyptian forces attacked from one direction, reaching Ramat Rachel very near to Jerusalem and Ashdod in the south just 40 km from Tel Aviv. Second, the IDF was a small army because the Jewish community was small. These weaknesses remained with the independent Israel – these asymmetries and the threat of forces invading from the outside – until the Yom Kippur War. This threat required the enlistment of most Israeli resources: mandatory army service, a large reserve army, and manufacturing capabilities in the rear so that the rear could manage while the army was fighting on the borders.

A change began after a series of failures on the part of the Arab states in the War of Independence, in the Six Day War, and in the Yom Kippur War. In this sense, the Yom Kippur War was the most significant as it was initiated by Syrian-Egyptian coordination and managed to take Israel by surprise, both tactically and strategically. Even so, the war ended 100 km from Cairo and 35 km from Damascus. Therefore, this failure ended the thought of what is termed a "classical attack" on the state's borders, at

least for many years. How long? As long as the IDF is considered as strong as it seems today, the risk is low that Arab states will think of attacking using that type of war. It is well known that more than once Arab states have revisited the question whether it is right to go back to that approach. To my knowledge, when Bashar al-Asad raised this idea at the beginning of his career, President Mubarak told him something along the lines of: "Come visit me, my friend, and I will tell you all about war with Israel. Afterwards, we'll decide." It is therefore tremendously important to preserve the enemies' understanding of what such a war would entail. This generates a kind of internal contradiction: when the IDF continues to be strong there is no war; the longer that there is no war, the memory of what havoc war can wreak grows fainter, and therefore one must not completely rule out the possibility that war could return to us in all its fury. Therefore, from the perspective of the threats, the classical threat, which today seems very distant from being realized, is nonetheless a threat that cannot be ignored, and the IDF must be prepared for it at every given moment.

Without a doubt, Egypt's being in one camp or the other is of supreme importance insofar as the ability of Arab states to form a large enough classical military force against Israel is concerned. However, the international arena is also important, and Israel-United States relations are of extreme significance in deterring Arab nations from embarking on a classical war. Here, elements that are not involved in military force buildup come into play, but they are critical in constructing Israel's ability to make its enemies understand and internalize the significance of war with Israel.

As the threat of classical war receded, even though the Arab states continued to construct their conventional military force whose sole purpose is that type of war, Israel's enemies sought other means. After the Oslo accords, the PLO, assisted by neighboring states, succeeded in demonstrating that the solution perhaps lies in terrorism. The entrance of the PLO into the heart of the State of Israel as a result of the decision on the establishment of a Palestinian state – even before that particular term was used – meant that in reality we had what Faisal Husseini called a Trojan horse situation. In other words, in the heart of the State of Israel it was possible to put together a military force, which is not a classical army, whose skills lay in creating terrorism, and this force was biding its



time. As Faisal Husseini said in 2000, "We have climbed out of the Trojan horse."

Many in Israel thought that terrorism, which is by and large suicide terrorism, was the ultimate weapon Israel would be unable to handle. It seemed that the rallying cry "let the IDF win!" was an election slogan rather than a serious call. It seemed that there was nothing that could be done militarily against organizations and groups of hundreds of people who were willing to sacrifice their lives of their own free will, not in battle but by suicide. This pessimistic outlook proved itself false in a cruel but clear way. With Operation Defensive Shield it became apparent that a regular army can fight terrorism such that terrorism has almost no impact on the State of Israel, even though the other side's desire to engage in it has not ebbed.

Much of the public was afraid to travel by bus; many avoided sitting in cafés or going to hotels or shopping malls. This phenomenon ended only because the army in practice reoccupied the area, used its intelligence correctly, and skillfully combined intelligence with operational units. Thus, the security forces have managed to suppress terrorism almost completely. From time to time there is a fatality or two, no doubt a family tragedy, but not a phenomenon affecting the state as a whole. It has become obvious that terrorism is not an efficient weapon against a well-ordered state if the latter is willing to realize its control on the ground. While this eliminated the Oslo achievements from the Palestinians' perspective, it was still in my opinion the right price to stop the terrorism. So, if neither classical war nor terrorism will do the trick, what then is the way? The states around us and the terrorist organizations, which have become semi-military organizations and have acquired semi-military capabilities, understood that high trajectory fire and the firing of large quantities of munitions are the solution.

The Syrians have made enormous strides in this field, and I believe that in the next war the greatest problem for Israel and the IDF will be the massive fire at the civilian rear and the military rear. We have not yet encountered a war in which the military rear could not function because it was under fire and it was impossible to approach the munitions stores because of non-stop artillery fire, and where the mobilization centers find it hard to function effectively and headquarters cannot function because

of being under heavy fire. Israel has not yet experienced such a situation, but this is the scenario being prepared by Syria.

Artillery fire on the military rear would greatly impede the Northern Command's ability to function. There was more than a hint of this in the last operation in Lebanon and the last operation in the Gaza Strip. The amount of fire at northern Israel during one month is about equal to what one Syrian heavy artillery battalion can generate in six hours, more or less. The amount of Hamas fire during all the fighting with it in the Gaza Strip is equal to the amount that an artillery battalion can generate in approximately two hours. However, the ramifications of fire lie not only in quantity but also in the fact that the fire was directed regularly at civilians.

Most of the rockets that landed in Haifa were 122 mm Chinese-made rockets with a 40 km range. All these caused no fatalities. All those killed in the Haifa area were killed by rockets fired in much lower numbers, but were heavier, 220 mm and 302 mm Syrian-made rockets. This is what is in store for Israel: a large number of 220 mm or larger rockets fired at almost every part of the State of Israel. Therefore, we must assume there will be many casualties. In this regard, the semi-military enemies, Hizbollah and Hamas, present a difficult problem: their weapon systems are deployed among civilians, and their operators are in civilian garb and operate in civilian areas. As such, the question of who is a civilian arises. The complexity of the problem Israel faces is not just the large number of rockets but also the fact that they will be directed against civilians from civilian locations. Anyone operating against them will have to harm civilians, not out of choice but out of inevitability.

Internationally, Israel is accused of disproportionate use of force. To that I say, woe to Israel if it operates proportionally, because that would mean adopting the rules of the game convenient to the enemy. This may be compared to a situation in which someone wielding a knife runs after you. You shoot him with a gun. You are then on trial for having operated disproportionately. Look, they'll say, he only had a knife whereas you used a gun! What is proportionate about that? And this is precisely what the world is demanding of Israel.

This brings us to another problem: the world we are living in today is not the world of the past. It is enough to examine how nations in the world, even democracies like the United States and Great Britain, fought wars.

In the aerial bombings in World War II or Vietnam, was the presence of civilians ever an issue that came up for discussion? Today we live in a different world, different also for the United States and Great Britain but even more so for the State of Israel. This brings us back to the asymmetry I mentioned above. Israel finds itself facing parts of the world, and not just the Arab states, that are hostile to it irrespective of its deeds. I asked one of the editors of the British *Guardian* why the paper never apologized for having reported on a massacre in Jenin while the UN stated officially that there was no massacre. Answering me in impeccable English, he said, "We will not apologize because what you did was even worse than a massacre." Nothing was going to convince him, not even an official UN report. Therefore, anyone who thinks that it may have been possible to change Goldstone's opinion is, quite simply, mistaken. To get a sense of this, all one has to do is read Goldstone's footnotes and see from which organizations he got the "information." The world is distorted but it is the one in which Israel exists. Therefore, in future wars we will have no choice but to take into consideration not only what we do but also how we appear. How we appear is composed of a great many small details; in the end, Israel will face a world that will not accept its deeds and therefore the element of time is of supreme importance.

One of the important notions that the IDF has to internalize is that it has no time, not only because the UN will adopt a new resolution but also because in the interim international opposition will be created, resulting ultimately in phenomena such as the Goldstone report. The IDF must ask itself how to handle the problem not just along with creating less collateral damage but also how to act quickly. Again, I will not deal with solutions today, but it must be clear that the threat is complex, not just because it entails fire against civilians but also because it is necessary to take into consideration how the world around us reacts. We can no longer shrug the problem off, say "who cares about the UN," and pretend that world opinion does not matter.

I have not touched on the heavy means and non-conventional capabilities produced by Syria and Iran or the nuclear issue. That is a separate discussion requiring a different approach. Most of the answers to the heavy missiles and nuclear and non-conventional challenges lie not at the operative, tactical fighting level but in the realm of technology. That is where the solutions must be found, because in these scenarios military

forces can only do so much. Rather, they must operate technological capabilities and that is a different discussion not to be confused with the current one. However, an entire level of threat remains – that of heavy missiles and non-conventional weapons. Nonetheless, what this threat means for regular fighting is a question that must be asked. Under an umbrella of heavy missiles and non-conventional weapons, the same enemies threatening Israel at the lower level of high trajectory weapons will have greater freedom of action. By contrast, every time it has to respond, the State of Israel will have to ask itself if it is taking the next step that is liable to bring it closer to dealing with the threat of a higher level, that of the heavy missiles and non-conventional weapons. This is one of the questions that must be asked when one discusses attacking Syria as part of the war in Lebanon, because the significance of heavy missiles is clear. Although the current discussion should not be confused with the question of how the IDF grapples with heavy missiles and non-conventional weapons, it is necessary to discuss how “regular” war changes under the umbrella of these weapon systems, in the sense that the enemy has greater freedom of action and greater self-confidence while Israel becomes – and rightly so – more hesitant. Israel must in fact hesitate more because it is forced to confront more complex weapons. In this matter too, one of the answers is shortening the duration of the fighting. The shorter the war, the smaller are the chances for use of upper level long range missiles and non-conventional weapons.

The construction of missile and rocket capabilities invites the question of a preemptive strike. When should Israel go to war? The question is tactical rather than philosophical. Clearly the question of the opening is crucial in terms of Israel’s ability to neutralize some of the other side’s capabilities. Doing so in one situation means that it will look one way, whereas doing so in a different situation means that things will look otherwise. This is related to intelligence gathering capabilities, the ability to amass means, and the enemy’s capacity to deploy. The preemptive strike question is therefore difficult at the tactical level.

In conclusion, I will reiterate the threats. The IDF must continue to be prepared for a confrontation with regular armies liable to invade the State of Israel. Unless the army is ready for it, the chance of this threat being realized will grow significantly. Israel must be prepared for battling terrorism within; this is part of the routine, and only this battle has proven

successful in ensuring that the effect of terrorism is negligible. Also as part of the routine, it is constantly necessary to ask: in order to neutralize terrorism, does it make sense to conquer territory, or is the cost of such conquest and its maintenance so high that it is better to allow the enemy to grow stronger with IDF forces out of the way?

High trajectory fire has become a problem even in wars between regular armies, and thus the IDF will have to prepare differently. I believe that in the Yom Kippur War 30 percent of the casualties among IDF soldiers were caused by artillery fire. This type of fire will greatly increase in the next war and will be more lethal, also for the military rear.

The thousands of rockets and missiles launched from semi-military settings embedded in civilian surroundings constitute the other threat, and it is compounded by the threat hovering over the legitimacy of the State of Israel to defend itself. Beyond this stands the threat to the legitimacy of the very existence of a Jewish state in the heart of the Middle East. Israel is facing a world that is largely hostile, that does not accept its right to fight, or even its right to exist.



# The Terrorism Threat against Israel from al-Qaeda and Global Jihad

Yoram Schweitzer

This essay analyzes the current risks to Israel's interests in Israel and abroad (including Jewish interests abroad) from al-Qaeda and its affiliates. To illustrate the risks, it is useful to review the ideology of these groups and show how it translates into practical expression through a survey of the groups' activities in different arenas around the world.

The worldview of al-Qaeda and its global jihad affiliates was and remains anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli to its core, and in this is no different from other extremist Muslim groups that preceded them. In their mind, Jews are part of a worldwide conspiracy where they teamed up with "crusaders" (a code word for Christians) in a "Judeo-Christian plot"; over the years, they have been joined by Muslim "heretics," headed by the Shiites as well as "traitors" from the Sunni community. This entire camp is an enemy of Islam that needs to be fought to the last drop of blood.<sup>1</sup> According to this view, the State of Israel is the political incarnation of the plot and was deliberately planted in the region as a bone stuck in the throat of the Muslim world. It is therefore a duty to fight it, destroy it, and rid the region of any Jews. The way to achieve this is by means of painful acts of terrorism that they believe will lead to the weakening of the patrons of the Jewish state, first and foremost the United States, and prove to the masses of Muslims and their potential supporters that in the final analysis, Israel is a weak and temporary political entity, quite the opposite of its image as the invincible nation in the region.<sup>2</sup>

For a long time, the venomous rhetoric against Israel and the Jews was voiced virtually without any practical expression. Only a small number of attacks against Jews in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East

Yoram Schweitzer, head of the Terrorism and Low Intensity Conflict Program at INSS

were planned, especially by terrorist groups and networks supported by al-Qaeda, and almost all of them were foiled.<sup>3</sup> In late 1999 and early 2000, however, a new trend emerged, reflecting an organizational decision and notable improvement in al-Qaeda's operational capability, namely, an increase in its anti-Israel efforts. Even so, these targets were not a priority for al-Qaeda and its affiliates, but with the passage of time and as the involvement of al-Qaeda and its affiliates in terrorism around the world expanded and their self-confidence grew, efforts to attack Israel and targets identified with it also increased.<sup>4</sup> This gradual change stemmed from the understanding by al-Qaeda's leadership that a significant blow against Israel and targets identified with it may earn them support among those who might otherwise have reservations about indiscriminate acts of terrorism carried out by the organization against Arab and Western targets and certainly against its growing attacks against Muslims.

Increased activity against Israel and Jews began with the attempt by a Jordanian terrorist network identified with global jihad to carry out terrorist attacks against Israeli and American tourists and pilgrims in Jordan and at the Jordan-Israel border crossing as part of the "millennium attacks," and continued with attempts to attack Israeli targets in Australia during the Sydney Olympics (June 2000). The same year, an al-Qaeda operative, Richard Colvin Reid, a British subject whose father was an immigrant from Jamaica, was sent to Israel to gather information about targets. This was part of an effort to explore the possibility of staging attacks in Israel in general and against Israeli air traffic in particular. Later, Reid became known as the "shoe bomber" when he attempted a suicide attack on an American Airlines flight in December 2001 by means of explosives hidden in his shoes. Also in the first half of 2000, attempts were made to dispatch Palestinians (Saad Hindawi and Nabil Oukal) who had concluded their training in Afghanistan to establish terrorist networks in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip.<sup>5</sup> In addition, al-Qaeda considered sending a Saudi suicide pilot to bomb Eilat. All of these plans were either foiled or shelved.

The clearest evidence that al-Qaeda under Bin Laden hoped to render a crushing blow to Israel came in the form of the twin attacks in Mombasa against Israeli tourists vacationing in Kenya (November 2002). The terrorist cell dispatched to Kenya by al-Qaeda's command center, which made use of the local terrorist infrastructure, fired missiles at an



Arkia passenger plane during its takeoff but missed. At the same time, suicide bombers in an explosives-laden vehicle attacked a hotel popular with Israeli tourists, killing 15, including three Israelis – among them two brothers, aged 12 and 14. Al-Qaeda's apparatus for attacks abroad also carried out the suicide attack on the synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia (2002), killing 14 (though none was a member of the Jewish community there), as well as the suicide attacks on two synagogues in Istanbul (2003), which killed 27, of whom six were Jews.

In recent years, several attacks against Israeli targets abroad have been carried out not by al-Qaeda itself, but by its affiliates. In July 2004, the Uzbeki Islamic Jihad carried out a suicide attack against the Israeli embassy in Baku. Local guards were killed but there were no Israeli casualties. The organization, whose leaders had shared training camps with al-Qaeda operatives in Afghanistan, carried out the attack as part of its having adopted al-Qaeda objectives. In another attack, in February 2008, an al-Qaeda cell in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) opened fire on the Israeli embassy in Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania. The attack ended with the wounding of five local employees and citizens, without any Israeli casualties. AQIM, which in September 2007 announced its merger with al-Qaeda, publicly assumed responsibility for the attack.<sup>6</sup> Another attack on a target identified with Israel was carried out in Mumbai by Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT, "The Army of the Pure") as part of a broader attack against local Indian targets and tourists. One of the targets attacked was the Chabad House, famous as a Jewish locale that regularly hosts Israelis. The deadly attack left more than 160 dead, including some 30 foreigners, six of whom were Israelis and Jews. To date al-Qaeda's direct involvement in the coordinated attacks has not been proven, but it is well known that LeT maintains contact with al-Qaeda and that in the past its people provided logistical support for the person who attacked the synagogue in Tunisia. In addition, the organization has in recent years expanded its activities and redefined its targets in accord with the objectives of global jihad.<sup>7</sup>

The trend of local al-Qaeda affiliate organizations to expand the target lists to include Israel and Jews as a result of organizations forging closer relationships and adopting a global jihadist doctrine, even though previously such targets were not specifically defined for attack, is evident also in the Arabian Peninsula and in Africa. For example, Sa'id Ali Jabir

al-Khathim al-Shihri, the deputy commander of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP, a union of al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia and al-Qaeda in Yemen), called for attacking targets in Israel and among its supporters around the world, and especially blocking Israel's access to the Red Sea.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, the leader of the Somali al-Shabab announced on November 1, 2009 that his organization had established a special unit called the al-Quds Brigade, which would focus on attacking Israeli interests in Africa and also infiltrate Israeli territory and the Gaza Strip in order to help "free the Islamic holy places."<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, in recent years Bin Laden and his deputy and al-Qaeda's most prominent spokesman, Ayman Zawahari, made do with ever more strident verbal attacks on Israel and Jews. These attacks are generally made in the context of diatribes about the "Jewish-crusader alliance" against Muslims, with emphasis on Israel's aggressive policy towards the Palestinians.<sup>10</sup> Because in al-Qaeda's view Israel's existence depends entirely on the United States, the organization sees the weakening of the United States and its exit from the Middle East as moves that would of necessity lead to the disappearance of the Zionist entity from the world. This is another possible explanation for the relatively low rank Israel occupies in the priorities of terrorist acts carried out by the organization. At the same time, al-Qaeda understands full well that any terrorist act against Israel would earn much profitable, sought-after propaganda among the Arab and Muslim public. Such support is important to al-Qaeda, in particular as a result of the growing criticism it has incurred because of its indiscriminate attack on civilian targets, Western as well as Arab, and the growing number of Muslim victims in these actions.

### **Al-Qaeda Approaches Israel**

In recent years it seems that al-Qaeda, assisted by regional confederates, is stepping up its efforts to strike Israel in its borders in order to harm the Israeli public. It is also trying to harm Israelis visiting Arab countries with which Israel has diplomatic relations.<sup>11</sup> Several attacks against Israeli tourists some years ago in Jordan and Egypt, especially in the Sinai Peninsula, were attributed to global jihadists.

In addition, rockets have been fired at Israel from Jordan and Lebanon, and Lebanon is still a threat arena for global jihadists involved

in rocket fire at Israel. In 2008, some rockets attributed to the al-Ansar Formation, identified with global jihad, were fired at Israel.<sup>12</sup> During the IDF operation in the Gaza Strip (December 27, 2008-January 17, 2009), a number of rockets were fired from southern Lebanon at the north of Israel; some were discovered before they were launched.<sup>13</sup> This type of fire continued sporadically in 2009 and in 2010. At this stage, it is unclear if the attackers are global jihadists, but the risk of continuing rocket fire remains. Significantly, Bin Laden, who views Lebanon as a convenient springboard for al-Qaeda and its affiliates to attack Israel, has harshly denounced Hizbollah and Iran, as he suspects them of being partners in an Israeli-American plot to plan the Second Lebanon War. According to Bin Laden, this war was meant to prevent his organization and affiliates from approaching Israel via its border with Lebanon, as determined by the ceasefire agreement and by UN Security Council Resolution 1701.<sup>14</sup>

Gaza is another arena of activity by local elements identifying with global jihad. In the Strip, there are several groups such as the Army of Islam (based by and large on the Durmush clan), the Sword of Islam, and the Army of Believers—al-Qaeda in Palestine. These groups – estimated at several dozen operatives at the most – engage in sporadic rocket launches and abductions of foreign nationals, burning down schools, harassing internet cafés, and activity directed at maintaining morality.

Al-Qaeda's hope that Hamas's takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007 would allow its supporters convenient access to engage in anti-Israel activity has not been realized. Because of Hamas's desire to maintain its monopoly on force operation within and from the Gaza Strip, it prevented groups identifying with global jihad in Gaza from operating autonomously against Israel without permission, out of concern that this might embroil it in a confrontation with Israel at a time and place inconvenient from its perspective. While Hamas has allowed al-Qaeda operatives to enter the Gaza Strip<sup>15</sup> and has even allowed groups aligned with it to launch an occasional rocket against Israel, when any of these groups has tried to challenge Hamas's authority, Hamas has not hesitated to use force to suppress them. This is what happened to the Durmush clan (January 2007);<sup>16</sup> this was also the case in a violent incident in Rafah in August 2009 when as the result of a fiery, anti-Hamas sermon given by the leader of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the imam of the mosque in Rafah, Hamas security forces used violence against organization

members who had barricaded themselves in the mosque.<sup>17</sup> Twenty-four people were killed and more than 130 injured in this incident.

Despite the confrontations between Hamas and various global jihadist groups in the Gaza Strip, members of the Jaljalat (as the global jihadists in the Gaza Strip are known) continue trying to harm Israel. In June 2009, suicide operatives belonging to Jund Ansar Allah (Army of Allah Supporters) attacked, riding booby-trapped horses; they were hoping to abduct Israeli soldiers. The attempt was foiled without casualties to the Israeli side.<sup>18</sup> Individuals identified with global jihad in Judea and Samaria, as well as Israeli Arabs of Bedouin extraction, were named in 2008 as having tried to band together in order to commit terrorist attacks, but their plans were foiled.<sup>19</sup>

The difficulty encountered by al-Qaeda in its attempt to act against Israel from its borders stems in part from the fact that Israel's neighbors, first and foremost Jordan and Egypt, who are also fighting the increased threat coming from global jihadists against their regimes and in their sovereign territories, are acting decisively to stop their activity and defend their citizens and tourists. Syria and Lebanon are acting resolutely against global jihadists' intention to operate against Israel in or from their areas, as a result of concerns about becoming embroiled in a confrontation with Israel.

In conclusion, Israel and Jews will continue to serve as targets of al-Qaeda and global jihad. It is clear that their efforts to attack will not stop, and thus foiling activity is the primary defense against them. This necessitates increasing the capabilities of the intelligence services and the IDF to foil activity on Israel's borders and within its sovereign territory and increasing cooperation with the intelligence and security services of Israel's allies. The joint global interest to defeat the extremist, militant Islamic elements of global jihad, representing a threat to Israel's enemies as well, has so far helped to curb or dull the harm done to Israel. However, as demonstrated by the attack against the Israeli airplane in Mombasa, these efforts are not always sufficient and at times only luck has prevented a more painful blow. Therefore, Israel is required to maintain constant vigilance in the face of these dangers and lend active assistance to the international campaign against al-Qaeda and its affiliates. The success of this campaign will to a large extent determine the level of the future threat to Israel's interests at home and abroad.

## Notes

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# A Changed Threat? The Response on the Northern Arena

Gadi Eisenkot

In light of talk about the northern sector heating up and the possibility of a deterioration into war, the question of the change in the threat facing Israel – from the longstanding situation in which the state's reference scenario was a surprise attack for the purpose of conquering either limited or more extended territory to the new reality that includes extensive rocket and missile fire at Israeli population centers together with the use of terrorism and guerilla tactics – again rises to the surface.

What has changed? What is meant by “a changed threat”? Rocket fire is nothing new; such fire was directed at Israel from Lebanon more than forty years ago. Terrorist attacks also occurred over the years, even before the establishment of the state. To my mind, the change lies in the formulation of a strategic concept whereby the military and civilian rear is the weak point that offsets Israel's military superiority. The enemy channels its efforts according to a comprehensive, systemic approach of high trajectory fire at civilian areas, and in the Palestinian context, by the widespread use of terrorism inside the State of Israel; the enemy's assessment is that instilling fear and causing widespread damage will achieve political success. The change in the pattern of action is meant to damage Israel while minimizing the qualitative advantage of Israel's military. Therefore it is necessary to find the appropriate response to this change. Military commanders are supposed to be able to provide a response to a changing threat while at the same time continue to be prepared for the classical threat of enemy armies as well as for the non-conventional threats of chemical and biological warfare.

Maj. Gen. Gadi Eisenkot, GOC Northern Command

In the northern arena, three and a half years after the Second Lebanon War, the situation is complex. On the one hand, there is a sense of security and actual security that were absent for many years; on the other hand, we see evidence of the growing threat described by Maj. Gen. (ret.) Yaakov Amidror. Hizbollah has doubled its capabilities with regard to certain types of rockets and has improved the range and accuracy of their systems as a result of Iran's deepening involvement in Lebanon and as a lesson learned from the war. The Syrian front, however, has been calm for 36 years. It appears that the success of the Yom Kippur War made a deep impression on the Syrian leadership's view of Israel's military force.

On the Lebanese front, the picture is more complex. Since the Second Lebanon War, Hizbollah has not attempted as much as a single attack from the northern border. Since the war there have been six terrorist incidents in the north involving the firing of ten rockets, all attributed to global jihadists. The incidents are similar: a small cell of terrorists emerges from the refugee camps near Tyre and Sidon, equips itself with 1.5 m-long or even shorter rockets, travels towards the border vicinity, lays the rocket down in a fairly primitive fashion on some boards with a timer determining the time of the launch, and hurries away from the site. I am not belittling this pattern of action; in one case, a nursing home was damaged and one young woman was slightly injured. It certainly has the potential for a more serious event liable to kill many civilians. Lebanon is host to two branches of global jihad: one is the Abdullah Azzam Brigades and the other is Fatah al-Islam. Both are well known to the Lebanese authorities but receive little official attention.

With the experience of the Yom Kippur War and Second Lebanon War in mind, the test in the northern arena is one of capability rather than one of intention. The Syrian army is the only element in the region with the capability of conquering territory, firing into the depth of Israel, and operating chemical weapons. Hizbollah has considerable capacity to fire into the depth of Israel. Therefore, alongside the question of capability, the question of intention must be addressed through intelligence and smart risk management.

The threat of the Syrian army underpins the IDF's reference scenario and its training. It is a conventional army whose capability is fundamentally different from that of Hizbollah and Hamas. Syrian leaders state quite openly that returning the Golan Heights to Syrian



sovereignty is a Syrian interest of the highest order. They speak of returning the Golan Heights through peaceful means, but also about the possibility of “resistance” and, should it come to it, the possibility of war to recover the Golan Heights. How the IDF has constructed its defensive, intelligence, and offensive capabilities demonstrates that this message has been internalized. In addition, a central component of the Syrian *modus operandi* has long been the assistance extended to terrorist organizations in general and Hizbollah in particular. Today the assumption is that whatever is available in Syria’s arsenals makes its way to Hizbollah. This is a pattern that was true to an extent until the Second Lebanon War and has intensified since the war.

Hizbollah has changed since the Second Lebanon War. It has significantly increased its high trajectory fire capabilities, and the ability to fire at the depth of Israel from the heart of Lebanon has become a central pillar of the organization’s strategic concept. At the same time, the organization has constructed a defensive system subject to the constraints leveled by the war. If until the Second Lebanon War the organization was spread out along the border fence and was the uncontested omnipotent ruler of southern Lebanon, the territory is now host to the Lebanese army and UN forces. These two have reduced Hizbollah’s freedom of action in the south. The organization in turn has taken a significant step to concentrate its military means south of the Litani inside Shiite villages along with deploying personnel and means through Lebanon’s heartland.

South of the Litani there are 160 Shiite villages and towns. There the organization feels at home, completely protected; no other forces dare enter these areas. On the one hand, confronting an enemy hoarding its materiel inside populated built up areas represents an operative problem; on the other hand, this is the most significant restraining element for Hizbollah because the meta-goal of the organization is achieving Shiite hegemony in Lebanon, and its main center of gravity in Lebanon is the support of the Shiite population, the very group that experienced significant trauma three years ago. Hizbollah leaders would presumably think twice before opening fire from Shiite civilian areas, as they understand the meaning of another confrontation.

Furthermore, behind closed doors, the organization is asking itself many questions about its performance during the Second Lebanon War:

its battle readiness; how classified systems were attacked, namely, the medium and long range rocket batteries, even though their existence was known to only a very few; and other operations in the heart of Lebanon. The organization understands the meaning of these attacks, including the intelligence that enabled them. Hizbollah is therefore giving itself far fewer kudos than those it received from the Israeli public.

What has changed since the summer of 2006? It seems to me that the most important point stems from the very difficult experience the organization underwent then. Since its inception, it has absorbed scattered blows, but the forceful blow it sustained in the Second Lebanon War was entirely new to it.

In the background of the two familiar threats mentioned above, there is a very important factor capable of affecting what is happening in the northern arena, and that is the Iranian threat. This is a multi-dimensional threat: the two higher and visible dimensions are in the media in Israel virtually every day, but there is a third, extremely influential dimension that is more hidden. The first dimension is the nuclear threat. It is fairly familiar because it is in the news and on the public agenda. The second dimension lies in the conventional capabilities that Iran is careful to show off whenever it can: hundreds of Shehab missiles, with Israel well within range.

The third dimension, a hidden and very influential threat in the northern arena, is Iran's involvement by means of the Quds Force. This force was established after the revolution as the long arm of the Iranian regime, designed to export the vision of the revolution and to promote strategic concepts. One of its important ideas is exhausting the State of Israel to the point of destruction. The Quds Force, which is also called the Lebanon Corps and functions as a command, is not a corps command in the sense of an IDF corps command, rather a professional core of people who are supposed to disseminate the vision as well as translate it into practical terms. A similar concept and rationale also operates in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Yemen.

This has been an ongoing threat primarily in the northern arena, but it is also gathering strength in the south, together with the attempt to empower Palestinian resistance. In this context, Iran exerts several efforts:

- a. Financing, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars: this is Hizbollah's primary source of funding. The world's only Shiite state is ideologically motivated to finance the establishment of the second Shiite state. In Iran's view, the most appropriate candidate is Lebanon.
- b. Training, instruction, and guidance for Hizbollah's operative plans. This took place already before the Second Lebanon War, but has greatly increased since then.
- c. Ongoing supply of materiel and weapons from Iran to Syria. This phenomenon receives publicity only when there is an interception, such as the interception of the weapons ship in 2009.

Until the Second Lebanon War, we witnessed mostly Iranian training and assistance; since then we have seen much deeper involvement, all the way to command and control of operational processes in the organization and of what occurs in Lebanon. This development came about in light of the war, after Iranian authorities failed to anticipate that the systems they had built for a rainy day would be activated because of a tactical event. The assassination of Imad Mughniyeh two years ago also significantly increased Iran's involvement in Lebanon.

If the formulation of a strategic concept that identifies the military and civilian rear in Israel as the country's weakness and offsets Israel's military superiority constitutes the essence of the change in the threat against Israel, the following question arises: was the Palestinian intifada that began in September 2000 a part of a coherent strategic concept in which the Israeli rear is its Achilles' heel that should be targeted with shock and awe, or did the intifada erupt as a result of events that spiraled out of control? The answer to this question is still incomplete.

Hizbollah started to build its *modus operandi* of terrorism and guerilla fighting against IDF forces in the security zone in southern Lebanon alongside rocket fire against the civilian rear. Then, the rear was the strip of settlements along the northern border. It was careful not to fire directly into the settlements other than as a response to Israeli actions. For many years, debates raged in the Northern Command about Hizbollah's intention: did it want to reach the fence and carry out attacks, or did it want to attack IDF forces in the security zone? To the best of my recollection, most of the fire at Israeli settlements occurred in the wake of IDF activity that Hizbollah considered as having crossed the line. The

moment the IDF left the security zone, Hizbollah's fire capability grew tremendously as the organization deployed very close to the fence. There was talk then of some 18,000 short range and hundreds of medium range rockets. This was evident in the war.

Did Israel need the war in order to see the bitter truth about its capability to handle this threat? The war did indeed reveal deficiencies in the use of force and many other deficiencies that necessitated a profound self-examination, but in my opinion the war was not a failure. At the end of the day, the loser in the war was Hizbollah. I am convinced that the IDF learned the lessons required and that significant improvements in the IDF's capabilities have taken place since then.

From 2000 until 2006 the IDF concentrated primarily on fighting brutal terrorism that left 1,170 Israeli soldiers and civilians dead, while training for conventional warfare dropped significantly. This effort generated impressive results in fighting terrorism, but it came at a price. However, this was not the only reason for the difficulties encountered in the Second Lebanon War. In the final analysis and despite the deficiencies in operating the ground forces, Hizbollah fired 4,000 rockets at Israel in this confrontation, mostly short range 107-122 mm rockets and some medium range of 220-302 mm. The IDF fired some 200,000 rounds into Lebanon. This may be meaningless from the perspective of the Israeli citizen, but Hizbollah was counting. There were 7,800 aerial sorties by fighter planes attacking a range of targets, some of great value, others of less importance. All of these, together with the conquest of parts of southern Lebanon, inflicted real damage on the organization. In my understanding, this damage has greatly affected its conduct, its way of thinking, and together with what the organization's leader experienced, is expressed in the fact that the man who led Hizbollah with great pomp and fanfare has for the last three and a half years been in hiding like the most wanted man in Nablus.

The organization, steeped in jihad, has not carried out a single attack on the northern border in the last three and a half years. When I speak with my commanders and soldiers I always say that our working assumption is a strict assumption of the test of capability, and that we have been preparing for the situation, which is liable to blow up at any moment without warning, for three and a half years. I believe that we will act effectively when necessary. The weekly statement by Nasrallah

(who addresses his people over the TV screen and speaks of the historic victory) is sounding more and more like empty sloganeering.

When examining the last decade, we see that it began with guerilla fighting in Lebanon and with Hizbollah gaining tactical successes against us in southern Lebanon. At the end of the decade's first year, the Palestinian intifada broke out inspired by events in Lebanon, as the Palestinians understood that they could achieve aims by force. Many successes were achieved in the war on terrorism. We have yet to announce the end of the war even though Palestinian terrorism in Judea and Samaria was defeated about four years ago. This intifada cost Israel 1,170 dead, 138 alone in March of 2002, which formed the impetus for Operation Defensive Shield. There is a large difference in how terror is fought after the territory was recaptured in Defensive Shield over the previous situation. The second campaign of the last decade was the battle in Lebanon lasting 33 days, in which Hizbollah attempted to operate its system-wide concept of continuous fire into Israel's heartland. During Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip, Hamas tried to recreate Hizbollah's approach using high trajectory fire and sowing public panic, and continued launching rockets at the Israeli civilian front until the very last day of the operation.

In comparing these three campaigns, one wonders why high trajectory fire sounds so much more threatening than terrorism. As the result of tens of thousands of rockets, close to 80 Israelis were killed, among them civilians and soldiers, including the soldiers killed by high trajectory fire near Kfar Giladi; by contrast, the suicide bombing of a single terrorist on a bus might kill more than twenty. I am not ignoring the psychological impact caused by paralyzing a part of the country, nor the attack leveled by continuous IDF activity. Nonetheless, this comparison should put the enemy's desire to view the rear as Israel's weakness in its proper proportion, and it is towards that proportion that we must direct our efforts in order to achieve results.

Citing von Clausewitz, it is customary to say that an army is in one of either two situations: preparing for war or fighting a war. The last decade showed us that there is a third situation, which over the years we came to call "ongoing security." However, it is difficult to describe the past decade as "fighting ongoing security." Fighting Palestinians in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, the scope of the force used, and the stretching of

significant parts of our resources, especially the ground forces, opened up another dimension of warfare and posed the question: what attainment is required in each situation?

Preparing for war means building optimal readiness in order to achieve the tasks during the moment of truth, and fighting a war means aiming to attain the determined objectives. The third situation, which characterized the last decade, is a different battle; the term “ongoing security” is not particularly apt, and perhaps we need to find a more suitable label. The required achievement with regard to fighting terrorism is to minimize it as much as possible to the point that terrorism does not interfere with the freedom to live a fundamentally routine life, does not affect the national security of the State of Israel, and deters the enemy from using high trajectory fire. If so, what *modus operandi* should be developed on the basis of the last decade’s experience? In this regard, I would like to note three insights.

The primary insight I had as a commander in Judea and Samaria during that war on terrorism was that the most effective war on terrorism can only be achieved through control of the territory and the population. Without a responsible element controlling the area and the people, I do not see a way of fighting terrorism effectively. This is an operational lesson; there really is no other way of putting it. Even the strongest army in the world fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq in a truly impressive manner will find itself in dire straits after a while.

A second insight I had was the great difficulty in deterring organizations from amassing more power. It is very difficult to deter Hamas and Hizbollah from growing stronger. Israel has the ability to deter them from acting, but it is also necessary to deter and foil their attempts at force buildup. However, most of the energy should indeed be directed at deterring operations, not by boasting or verbal acrobatics but by action. For example, when the global jihadist organization Abdullah Azzam fires a few rockets, this should not be dismissed as a fly-by-night group operating contrary to Hizbollah and Lebanese interests. Such cases should be met with an immediate message delivered with blunt force.

Hizbollah and Hamas have forged a *modus operandi* of fighting from within dense population centers, obligating Israel to come up with a complex response while maintaining its moral core and, of course,

international rules of war. Before the Second Lebanon War, they had forged a *modus operandi* that served as the blueprint for abducting Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, Gilad Shalit, the teenager Eliyahu Asheri, two girls in Rehelim, a Jew in Nablus – all these events took place in the weeks leading up to the war, as well as an attempted abduction in Rajar. When the abduction up north occurred, an operational and ethical question arose: should we attack targets with “special gravity”? These were targets in a highly classified deployment of mid-range rocket capabilities in the homes of Hizbollah operatives. The idea was to topple walls or make an opening for surprise fire. An IDF performance study spoke of 200-500 civilian deaths as collateral damage of such an attack. The position of the army was: despite the direct, immediate threat from these houses against Israeli civilians, we recommended not attacking them at the first stage but only at the second stage, after we evacuated the population. We were willing to assume the risk in order to prevent harming civilian non-combatants. As we know, a different decision was reached, contrary to our position. In hindsight, it was the right decision. An important deployment, having the capacity to cause devastating damage, was thus eliminated. The same dilemma surfaced on the second day of fighting with regard to attacking two important targets in Beirut: Nasrallah’s office building and apartment building. It was possible to attack the two without giving any warning and with reasonable chances of hitting them. Nonetheless, all the residents in the area (“the security square”) were instructed by flyers to evacuate. We attacked the two buildings only 18 hours later. In my opinion, this is evidence of the IDF’s ethics. We also informed the entire population of the south, the neighborhood in Beirut, and neighborhoods in the Beqaa Valley in Hizbollah’s spheres of activity that they had to leave. This came at the expense of the effectiveness of the attack, yet we cannot live with a reality in which the enemy builds firing systems inside civilian environments to kill Israeli civilians and Israel is unable to do something to stop it.

In my position as GOC Northern Command, I gave only a single interview, a little over a year ago. In it, I talked about the possibility that were a war to breakout we would attack Hizbollah disproportionately. This interview found its way into the Goldstone report with an accompanying letter saying that Israel had preconceived disproportionate attacks against civilian populations in order to punish them. This was in spite



of the fact that I had been speaking about attacking in order to render a severe blow to Hizbollah, not to the civilians. The method of operation in Lebanon was that in the first stage we attacked the targets representing an immediate threat. In the second stage we turned to the civilians in order to protect them, and only after evacuating the population did we attack Hizbollah targets widely. I am convinced that this is a moral pattern and it was right to operate according to it; if we need to go to battle again, it will be proper to act on it again. Hizbollah is the one turning the hundreds of villages and the Shiite regions in Lebanon into battlefields. I hope that this understanding will make the organization reconsider before it opts to use more terrorism or fire against us or undertake another abduction. Understanding our method of action is not directed solely towards Hizbollah but to the entire environment in which we operate.

Four basic concepts cover the way Israel operates:

- a. *Deterrence*, with regard to organizations and states, and the difficulty this entails. In early 2000, the Palestinians understood that the State of Israel is strong and therefore they unleashed a wave of terrorism. When al-Qaeda carried out the 9/11 attacks it understood that it was engaging a global power in battle, yet it was not deterred. So too, Hizbollah: it harassed Israel and the IDF from 2000 until 2006, firing sporadically and attempting to incite terrorism in Judea and Samaria. Hamas too is aware of the gaps between it and Israel and nonetheless acted in the years following the withdrawal from Gaza. Attaining deterrence is complex and problematic but an examination of the reality in both the north and the south after Operation Cast Lead demonstrates that these organizations make rational considerations. Therefore, Israel must look for ways to deter them. I return to a formative speech many quote, but they only cite the end of the sentence. In 2000, Nasrallah announced in Bint Jbeil that Israel is a land of cobwebs. The full sentence was: "Despite its nuclear capabilities and despite the fact that it has the strongest air force in the world, Israel is a land of cobwebs." His assessment of Israel's capabilities stemmed not from its military prowess or the strengths attributed to it but from his understanding of the resiliency of Israeli society and Israel's willingness to engage in action.
- b. *Early warning*: We are witnessing a conceptual change from classical early warning that looked for signs that war was brewing on the other



side to the need to construct an appropriate intelligence concept in order to provide early warning about a tactical event liable to turn into a strategic one, such as the abduction of Gilad Shalit and the abductions of Goldwasser and Regev. Israel is required to engage with serious consideration in the updated contents necessary for this critical component in Israel's comprehensive security concept.

- c. *Decision*: The changing threat requires a reexamination of the concept of decision. We must understand that *modi operandi* have changed. Two hundred years ago, von Clausewitz formulated rules and principles, including: when an attacking force identifies weaknesses on the part of the defender and uses most of its force in the minimum amount of time, a phenomenon of neutralizing the enemy's desire to fight effectively or to continue fighting takes place. The great difficulty lies in identifying the centers of gravity against which one blow is enough to dismantle the desire to fight. This is not the enemy's *modus operandi* that we are up against. The IDF's major difficulty lies in expressing its ability in a series of short, crushing actions fast enough to achieve success. In my opinion, we may continue to use the decision concept, even though Clausewitz attributed it only to the tactical level, which has absolutely nothing to do with the strategic level. We may continue to use the decision concept on condition we understand that it has two components: one is meeting the objectives defined for the army and the other is improving the strategic situation of the State of Israel over time. Both of these must be questions posed at the end of wars following the current pattern of action.
- d. *Exit strategy*: Shortening the duration of the fighting is a most fundamental and important security principle because of the nature of Israel's army and society. After the Second Lebanon War, someone wrote that one should not undertake an action without first formulating the end scenario and exit strategy. This is simplistic thinking, because should it be acted upon it will spell the end of wars, and I do not see that happening. It is right to devote serious thinking to the end scenario, but the sweeping assertion above is of no value.

## Conclusion

The IDF is grappling with all the components of the threat: non-conventional, conventional, and sub-conventional. This last decade was

characterized by coping with three primary campaigns with the sub-conventional threat – the threat of terrorism and guerilla together with high trajectory fire as a main component. In this warfare, the IDF and the security services had many successes.

The primary challenge of the armed forces is to continue providing the Israeli public with security for many years while attaining deterrence and being prepared in every way to defend, attack, and meet all tasks defined for the IDF. The lesson for many years to come is the need to fight terrorism and guerilla with the fewest possible resources and to continue preparing for conventional wars. Such preparation is a more complex, problematic goal even though at the moment this scenario does not seem to be the preferred plan on the part of Israel's enemies. Conventional fighting requires skills such as using command centers, intelligence gathering, ground maneuvers, and system-wide fire. These skills also allow for fighting in other settings.

The need to minimize damage to life and property as much as possible is another important component. The threat of high trajectory fire is severe and I do not treat it lightly, but proper conduct, even passive, before engaging in all manner of sophisticated efforts, will result in a significant decrease in casualties and allow the army to operate more freely.

I hope that Israel's deterrence will last for years and create a comfortable, safe reality that will allow Israel to flourish and make the right decisions without being under the pressure of events, with an understanding in the IDF that a sudden reversal is liable to occur without warning. In the security discourse within the IDF there is a concept called "precious time," the time in which it is possible to prepare the forces before operating them. The environment in which we live has no "precious time." Time works in favor of those who use it well. This is the lesson for preparing the army for battle in the years to come.

# Terrorism under a Nuclear Umbrella: Threat and Response

Giora Segal

The central questions regarding military force for a democratic nation state are: can war be expected, does military force deter a war, and should a war erupt, can the state endure it and emerge victorious. Force buildup derives from the operational response to the threat. The problem that states and militaries face today is that there is no generic formula for force application and force buildup relevant to a threat that combines large scale – even global – terrorism and conventional capabilities, all under the threat of a nuclear umbrella.

The central questions can be divided into several sub-questions. What meta-strategy should the state adopt to build its military force? What war scenarios should it prepare for? What approach should the state and the military adopt with relation to the issue of deterrence, with particular emphasis on deterring terrorist organizations such as Hizbollah and Hamas and failed states such as Lebanon, and what are the ramifications for force application and force buildup? What are the ramifications of force buildup and operational readiness for the response to a threat that combines nuclear, conventional, and terrorist threats all at the same time? What is the dilemma in this context? Finally, in the case of a combined threat, should the state maintain and improve a large conventional force, or should it construct, maintain, and improve a force suited only to fight terrorism and guerilla? This would entail a qualitatively different program, for example, regarding large scale infantry and special forces.

Col. (ret.) Giora Segal is a research associate in the Military and Strategic Affairs Program at INSS.

## Threat

The threat of terrorism under the auspices of established or failed nation states undermines the historical rules and principles of the response. One of the results is a blurring of the lines separating the reference threat one needs to prepare for. A threat that combines conventional capabilities and terrorism is liable to be confusing. The example of Iran, a state developing a military nuclear capability while at the same time acting against Israel through a buildup and application of terrorism, is liable to complicate the understanding of such a joint threat and make preparation of the response even more difficult.

What has changed in the world of threats against nation states? The main thrust of the change lies in the combination between the threat of terrorism and the conventional threat. The difficulty in identifying unusual events, the limited ability to forecast, and the blindness inherent in random events bring the 9/11 attack and an expected or unexpected conventional attack against Israel to similar levels of uncertainty.

What has changed in the realm of force buildup and the response to the threat? The heart of the developing change is the difficulty in matching the required operational criteria of the response to the combined terrorist-conventional threat operating under nuclear protection. This difficulty is expressed in the doctrine of force buildup at various levels; in staff and command capabilities from tactics to strategy at the various levels of command; in matching the arsenal of weapons to the operational needs of the response; and in organizing the operational and professional system to the response. The response to the nuclear threat is familiar and may be found in the realm of the Cold War. The combination between a state operating terrorism on the one hand and nuclear capabilities serving as its defensive shield on the other is a new combination in the world of threats against nation states.

## The Development of the Response to a Changing World: Israel 1953-2006

In September 1953, on the eve of his resignation as prime minister and minister of defense, David Ben-Gurion decided he would take a break from politics. When he returned, he presented an overview of the era's current problems to the government. Ben-Gurion had examined the IDF and met with its commanders, after which he wrote a document

entitled "Army and State."<sup>1</sup> This strategy document, which defined a comprehensive response to the security problems of the State of Israel at that time and expressed Ben-Gurion's security philosophy, was accepted by the government on October 18, 1953.<sup>2</sup> "Security depends not only on the military," wrote Ben-Gurion. "Non-military elements are no less decisive than military ones: the nation's market and financial capabilities, the professionalism of craftsmen, industry, and agriculture." He went on to specify other civilian elements,<sup>3</sup> yet clearly Ben-Gurion began with the operational military capability as the basis for the response to the threat.

The War of Independence and the Yom Kippur War embedded the existential threat stemming from conventional weapons in the consciousness of Israel's military leadership as a top priority, hence driving the overall response. However, one year after the Six Day War marked the development of terrorism as a new threat in the region. The most significant development in this sense was Fatah's entrenchment in Jordan and the substantial growth of its operational military capabilities. The operational potential of Fatah was evident in the blood-drenched war in the Jordan Valley. These were the years of euphoria after the Six Day War and most of the people in Israel did not even know where in the Jordan Valley the battles were taking place.

Israel's warfare against terrorism involved a series of confrontations and operations before Operation Peace for the Galilee in 1982, when the IDF embarked on a war on terrorism against Israel from Lebanon. The scale of the operation, in terms of the use of ground and aerial forces, was that of a comprehensive war, and later in the war the IDF fought against the Syrian army in Lebanon. That is to say, the response to terrorism from Lebanon that was formulated in the years leading up to Operation Peace for the Galilee was a conventional response – a ground maneuver war.

Clearly, then, the ongoing threat of terrorism along Israel's borders did not upset the balance in priorities in the construction of the operational response, and the conventional reference threat still topped the list of priorities of the response. The first significant addition to Israel's traditional conventional reference threat emerged in full force from 1987 to 2002: a popular uprising ripened into a terrorist threat in 1996 in the Gaza Strip, and led to Operation Defensive Shield in Judea and Samaria in 2002.<sup>4</sup> This was the first time that the overall operational response

to the threat changed and the threat of terrorism became the IDF's top priority.

One of the correct conclusions reached by the IDF in this context was a major expansion of its infantry. The change in the operational response in those years was expressed in alterations in the IDF's training components, weapons development and equipment, and IDF organization – a change, in fact, in every component of force buildup. The IDF changed its priorities, in particular in the reserves deployment, while assuming risks with regard to the conventional threat. At the same time, in 2000-6, following the IDF withdrawal from southern Lebanon, the Hizbollah threat developed to an extent that the terrorist organization became a full military system, thanks to the direct investment by Iran in every force construction component of the organization.

In the Second Lebanon War, the IDF's conventional response was lacking, while its response to terrorism was quite proficient: the assumption was that the conventional threat had ebbed substantially and it was therefore possible to cut back on the IDF's conventional warfare capabilities. The error was in assuming that conventional capabilities would not be needed for an operational response to a terrorist threat. The IDF used conventional force against Hizbollah in the Second Lebanon War, and conventional force was ultimately responsible for the operational results. Increasing the number of infantry units proved essential, but when it became necessary to use conventional force, whose basic battle components are joint use of firepower and ground maneuvers requiring training, doctrine, command skills, and highly skilled staff work at the command centers, alongside high degree inter-branch integration, the IDF found itself far from the requisite basic level of performance.

After the Second Lebanon War, the term "missed opportunity" was used for the first time in IDF analyses. The missed opportunity referred to the potential use of force in the conventional operational response, i.e., the capability of using considerable force quickly and effectively. The necessary correction to the response came in the form of restoring the conventional capabilities to a high level, while at the same time maintaining the capabilities required to fight terrorism. My conclusion is that in order to allow a reasonable operational response to terrorism in the form of an organization such as Hizbollah or other groups, the

military must acquire quality conventional capabilities and add to them the special components required to respond to terrorism.

### **Grand Strategy and Force Buildup**

Israel's grand strategy must aim at continual maintaining and strengthening of the components of national security through effective deterrence. In the context of using the state's security force (military and other), this strategy defines an ongoing campaign against terrorist and nuclear threats in the periods between wars.

Should a direct war be forced on the State of Israel by a joint threat – terrorism and conventional under nuclear protection – Israel's strategy must aim at operating in two parallel campaigns towards the same objective: strengthening the national security of the State of Israel. One campaign is to attain the goals of the war in a short period of time (a few weeks) by concentrating and combining the military and security forces, expecting major damage to physical and human infrastructures behind the direct terrorist and conventional threats. The second effort involves continuing the campaign in place before the war against non-conventional capabilities, attacking the components of nuclear capability construction, while clearly separating this campaign from the one against terrorism and conventional threats. Both campaigns must, simultaneously and through mutual support (in fitness and readiness), aim at maximum achievements in the direct war.

The purpose of the action derived from this strategy is the ability to reach a decision in the current campaign, such that the decision made will deter the potential threat in the long run. What is needed, then, is a short, intensive campaign, both in its offense and its defense. Combining the IDF's offense capabilities and an optimal deployment to defend the civilian front is the necessary product of this strategy. Experience from the recent past – the Second Lebanon War and Operation Cast Lead – shows that a military blow of great force, along with high damage expectancy to the terrorism and conventional threats, is an important component in deterring terrorist activity.

### **Preparing for which Scenarios of War**

The State of Israel must prepare its military force for joint war scenarios: war on terrorism based on high trajectory fire against the Israeli public

operating out of densely populated civilian areas, with the serious possibility of deterioration into a conventional war. If Iran attains nuclear weapons, a scenario such as this is liable to occur under the umbrellas of Iranian nuclear deterrence.

However, history cautions that states that attained nuclear capabilities exited the circle of conventional warfare against their neighbors. On the other hand, in the Iranian case it may be that attaining nuclear capability is liable to improve its capability to fight Israel on the battlefield of terrorism and conventional warfare. The reason is Iran's desire on the one hand to attack Israel through proxies and on the other hand to deter Israel from engaging it directly in a war.

The Iranian example is one that demonstrates a state constructing nuclear operational capabilities by means of ballistic missiles while conducting a parallel campaign of direct terrorism via terrorist organizations. Iran's construction of nuclear force is aimed at allowing it strategic freedom of movement for its primary effort, terrorism against Israel, in addition to internal and regional motives.

Iran operates through specific force buildup and work with organizations such as Hizbollah and Hamas in all aspects: assistance with doctrine and training, weapons and military equipment, organization on the ground and managing the military organization by means of military and political advisors, physical and communications infrastructures – in practice, everything a military organization needs for continuous, effective activity. Iran presents a model of terrorism and conventional threats combined with the model of nuclear deterrence. Such a situation is liable to deter nations under attack by this threat from taking direct action against the terrorist organizations for fear that taking action will set off a comprehensive war that might deteriorate into a war with nuclear missiles.

This situation represents a threat that extremist states in the world like Iran, North Korea, or Pakistan are liable to adopt as standard operating methods. Pakistan, for example, a state with nuclear capabilities whose stability is threatened by terrorist organizations, may in a certain scenario become a state controlled by terrorist organizations operating from under the umbrella of that nuclear threat. The deterrence achieved by nuclear weapons would allow a state with these capabilities, if sufficiently motivated, to operate all of its other military components, which could



then evolve into a threat to global stability. This is the practical meaning of a state having nuclear capabilities that simultaneously projects a significant terrorist threat. The nuclear capabilities are maintained by the nation while direct terrorism is carried out through the nation's proxy organizations.

Therefore, in the Iranian context – and this may even seem paradoxical – it is necessary to examine the idea of focusing the main effort against the conventional and terrorist threats rather than against the nuclear capabilities, because although the former seem less threatening, they are standard components of warfare against which it is possible to operate military force in a conventional war. As the threat from terrorism/conventional means is reduced to tolerable levels, the nuclear threat will become isolated and remain in the realm of cold war, where it is possible to handle it using other tools related to cold war and special operations.

An effort must be made at all times to separate the different threats and prevent their integration, the way that in practice Iran has succeeded in doing and the way that states such as North Korea and Pakistan are liable to do in future. The attempt to grasp all by acting directly against all three threats simultaneously acts in Iran's favor by joining together in a single campaign its entire operational capabilities: terrorism, conventional, and nuclear. However, it behooves us to remember that nuclear weapons cannot be operated without assuming the second-strike risk and total destruction within the nation using it and in the region in general. Israel must create the rules that will allow it to fight in a conventional war against threats to its existence without bringing the entire region to the brink of nuclear war.

## Force Buildup

Force buildup and operational preparedness to respond to a threat that includes nuclear, conventional, and terrorist threats necessitates a military force with high intelligence capabilities<sup>5</sup> that can deploy quickly from its bases to the battlegrounds, has high firepower capabilities towards both short and long range targets, and has high ground maneuver capabilities in densely populated urban civilian areas.

Most of the deterrence against terrorism and conventional threats must be created in areas near Israel's border. A severe blow if not complete destruction of direct war efforts against Israel, high trajectory

fire terrorism, and the established terrorism organizations as well as the armed forces of the conflict states will create the major deterrence when action against Israel is considered in the future. Therefore, the primary effort of the strategy must aim at land and aerial capabilities at the front and in the heart of the near circle threatening the state's borders. This strategy aims to achieve a military decision in a campaign of direct war and to deter potential systems from attempting war in the future. The force buildup must be derived from this strategy and force application must be aimed at a short, intensive war, preferable from Israel's perspective to a long, drawn-out war with the features of a war of attrition.

The future military force must therefore continue to be based on all forms of high conventional capabilities, with emphasis on a large infantry order of battle. The construction of the force of the future must on the one hand allow warfare with a massive presence of infantry in the battlefield, complemented by concentrated precision fire into the heart of the battlefield.

Some words regarding force buildup in accordance with what is known as "lawfare." One of the primary reasons for enlarging the infantry's order of battle comes from a current trend that has recently become known as lawfare. As the presence of infantrymen on the battlefield increases, action through close contact will reduce the need to use standoff fire, i.e., less standoff fire and more direct, focused fighting and use of precision fire in close combat. Terrorist organizations such as Hizbollah, Hamas, al-Qaeda, and the Taliban attempt consistently, often through international institutions, to condemn the use of aerial weapons by presenting the non-combatant civilian casualties. In this context, see the example of Operation Cast Lead and many other operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The direct result of increasing the infantry's order of battle in warfare operations in urban or other populated areas is a better ability to distinguish the enemy from the civilian population and greater precision in using aerial and ground fire. This is not to say that civilian casualties can be totally eliminated. It does, however, mean that civilian casualties in particular and damage to the environment in general are reduced. Because lawfare<sup>6</sup> in its new definition is an important component in the comprehensive campaign against terrorism, there are many

ramifications for force application and buildup, and it demands thorough consideration.

At the same time, the strategy for force buildup in the face of a nuclear threat must aim at deterrence while using focused action capabilities inside the enemy's strategic depth. In any case this is a secondary effort. Thus, the future force is a combined force capable of providing a combined response.

### **The Security Dilemma with Regard to Force Buildup**

The addition of the terrorist threat as a major component of the reference threat caused decreased effectiveness in the IDF's conventional response. For our purpose, the lesson is that the conventional operational response capabilities must be strengthened as the primary foundation of the IDF's response capabilities, while capabilities to respond to terrorism must be added. This lesson, which the IDF learned from experience, necessitates an in-depth look as we examine the addition of the Iranian nuclear threat to the reference threat. On the basis of experience and on the assumption that the reference threat in the near circle from states with which Israel shares a border and from the Gaza Strip will continue into the future, we may conclude that Israel's conventional capabilities must continue to be the primary foundation of the military response.

Iran's partnership in constructing the terrorist threat has not been a secret for quite some time and has been widely discussed in essays sponsored by the Institute for National Security Studies and in the press. The addition of the nuclear threat to the reference threat is liable to upset the priorities of the operational response. The combination between the nuclear threat on the one hand and the conventional and terrorist threats on the other is a combination between two types of war phenomena that are qualitatively different. Fighting terrorism and conventional warfare are closer to one another than either is to nuclear warfare. The reason is that the latter belongs to the category defined as cold war and the other two to the category of classical war, whose accepted principles remain those defined by Clausewitz. The addition of terrorism, especially since 9/11, left the concepts of military response in familiar places, based on soldiers waging war on a battlefield.

By contrast, the battlefield of the nuclear war is different. The response is different and is also much more expensive in economic

terms. It seems that in a case combining military capability of response to terrorism and conventional threats it would be possible to share components and achieve similar ends, whereas with the nuclear threat the force construction is distinctive and requires large budgets, not only for its construction but also for its maintenance.

Past experience has demonstrated that a cold war can be sustained only by superpowers, because the economic abilities of any ordinary state to construct and maintain nuclear capabilities necessarily affect other national issues. The change in recent years in the State of Israel, which is not an economic superpower, is the addition of a direct nuclear threat directed against it. Therefore, the balance in the response to a combined threat of this sort is of critical importance.

The dilemma posed is, what accounts for the most significant threat to the security of the State of Israel? Is it the terrorism and conventional threats of the family of classical threats, or is it the nuclear threat of the cold war family? A decision regarding this dilemma is one that will determine the balance defining the response and the priorities of force buildup.

## Deterrence

Deterring a state using terrorist organizations from acting is very hard, because such a state hides behind the identity of the terrorist organizations, and in Iran's case operates by means of proxies. Deterring a failed state (such as Lebanon) with regard to the activity of terrorist organizations operating within its borders against neighboring states is complex and problematic, while deterring the terrorist organizations from acting against a state seems well nigh impossible. If so, why has Hizbollah, supported by Iran in every possible way, not taken direct action against Israel since the Second Lebanon War? What is the reason for the relative calm on the Gaza Strip front since Operation Cast Lead? Because an index of success for deterrence is difficult to define, I suggest that we examine the following hypothesis: the effect and pressure of civilians in the state in which the terrorists operate on the organizations' leaders and operatives not to begin a war is the major restraint given the anticipation of great damage to the civilians' assets. The hypothesis is that the greater the expected damage, the greater the deterrence of going to war.

Another hypothesis is that constructing an apparatus of deterrence affects the civilians' feelings of loss from war. The Americans are using this approach in Iraq and Afghanistan. With the civilian population seen as terrorism's center of gravity, then investments in civilian infrastructures, the civilian fabric of life, and the quality of life of the population complement direct military operations attacking terrorist operatives and can generate a significant decrease in terrorism and deter it further. On the other hand, Afghanistan is an area where many empires have tried to impose order on the local population. Quality of life – a distinct feature of the West – is not necessarily a supreme value in Pashtun culture; at the very least, the indices of quality of life are radically different between the two cultures. The culture of war and struggle is more important to the Pashtuns than an organizational culture imported from the West. It would seem that the Pashtuns are a tribe that has historically opposed governability and they form the vast majority of the Taliban.

## Conclusion

The threat of terrorism operated under the aegis of established or failed states and the construction of nuclear operational capabilities by these states as an umbrella for terrorism is a strategic situation upsetting the familiar equilibrium of the response. The experience gained by Israel and the United States in fighting terrorism since 2000 shows that the starting point for this force buildup is a conventional force whose infantry scope is larger than the traditional joint force structure.<sup>7</sup>

Separating the response to terrorism and conventional threats from the response to the nuclear one will strengthen deterrence. The lessons of the Second Lebanon War and Operation Cast Lead show that the greater the anticipated damage, the greater the deterrence of engaging in war. The conclusion is that the military response in a changing world must direct its primary effort against conventional capabilities and terrorism. This will isolate the nuclear threat and leave it in the realm of a cold war, managed by secondary efforts using cold war tools and special operations. Nuclear weapons cannot be used without assuming the risk of second strike retaliation and total destruction in the state using it and the entire surrounding region.

The State of Israel must create the rules that will allow it to fight a conventional war against threats to its existence and quality of life without bringing the entire region to the brink of a nuclear war.

## Notes

- 1 David Ben-Gurion, "Army and State" *Maarachot* No. 279-280 (May-June 1981): 2-11.
- 2 In 1981, an attempt was made to compose a working document entitled "National Security" but this paper never achieved government approval.
- 3 Ben-Gurion, "Army and State" p. 2.
- 4 In September 2001, the free world became aware of the destructive potential of the global terrorist threat. On October 7, 2001, the coalition forces headed by the United States started a coordinated attack on Afghanistan. Operation Anaconda, one of the largest operations to catch Bin Laden in Afghanistan, took place in March 2002. Operation Defensive Shield took place in March 2002. The American war against Iraq started in March 2003. The Second Lebanon War started in July 2006. This essay does not deal with parallels between the phenomena in Israel and the world at large, but it is easy to see that they are there, obviously with regional relevance. In December 2009, President Obama decided on a significant expansion of American forces in Afghanistan in order to step up the war on terrorist organizations.
- 5 High capabilities are meant in the sense of a relative advantage over the capabilities of the threat. The product of force buildup is never optimal, and therefore I propose to eliminate from the discussion notions of "developing superiority." Such an approach fails again and again and risks the development of illusions with regard to the phenomenon of war. David struck Goliath by means of a sling and trickery, not by "developing superiority." Clearly, the relative advantage achieved through technology must be maintained.
- 6 Charles J. Dunlap, Jr., "Lawfare: A Decisive Element of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conflicts," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (2009): 34-39. At the time of writing, Brig. Gen. Dunlap was the deputy to the Chief Military Attorney of the United States Air Force.
- 7 Defined for the first time during World War II, on the basis of the principles of the combined ground battle.

# Ethical Aspects of the Response to Terrorism

Asa Kasher

## Introduction

The ethical questions pertaining to war are usually divided into three categories: When is it appropriate to embark on a war? What is appropriate action in the course of fighting? What is appropriate after the war, when working towards peace?

In a democratic state the question of when it is appropriate to embark on a war is within the purview of the government, because it is the body responsible for any activity touching on relations between states and other political entities. This question has ramifications for defense of the state, its citizens, and its soldiers. Similarly, the question of what is appropriate action after the war, when working towards peace, is within the government's purview because any step towards a settlement between the parties is of political significance in terms of foreign relations and is of internal political significance. The second question, however, deals with the activity of the military, a professional state organization, and often can be dealt with apart from the other two questions. This essay deals with the distinction between what is and what is not proper in military activity during an operation or in a war.

## The Weaknesses of International Law

Where may we find the answer to such a question of propriety or at least a clue that can bring us closer to the answer? We often hear the suggestion or the demand to look for the answer in international law. We hear this

Professor Asa Kasher, Laura Schwarz-Kipp Professor Emeritus of Professional Ethics and Philosophy of Practice, and Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Tel Aviv University

from hostile bodies such as the council that appointed the Goldstone commission, from NGOs that pose as interested in human rights, from Israelis interested in serving their own political agendas, and even from some professionals expressing their naive opinions. Because this is the spectrum, it is best to respond on the most basic, fundamental level, and that is the level at which my remarks are aimed. From this perspective, the demarcation by international law of what is proper and improper in military activity seems to me to be based on four grave mistaken views.

### ***The Required Dual Considerations***

The first of the mistakes is the consistent ignoring of the obligation to have internal considerations. The considerations of a democracy with regard to war must always be twofold, both internal and external. The internal considerations of a democracy rest on its fundamental principles, such as the moral principles of the state's obligation to protect its citizens and its obligation to maintain the human dignity of all its citizens, including its citizens in military uniform. The prevailing approach in recent years has been that non-combatant civilians are sacred, while combatants and other persons in military uniform are disposable and can be used as tools. A democracy must reject such an approach, even if it is robed in the mantle of international law, and especially when the guardian knights of human rights proclaim it. In a democracy, a soldier is a citizen in a military uniform. At this moment he is a combatant, but he cannot be stripped of his human dignity, and especially not on the pretext that when he is in military uniform he has forfeited his rights to life and liberty. As a combatant he will clearly assume certain risks, and it is also clear that in time of need he will forfeit his life; combatants are liable to be killed. Nevertheless, a combatant is a human being whose human dignity must be protected. He can never be merely an instrument of the state, a tool of the government, or a resource of the military. These are examples of internal principles of a state, which operate alongside principles and considerations related to the engagement between the warring sides.

At times, internal and external considerations lead to the same conclusions, but it is wrong to blur the profound difference between the two sets of considerations. Embarking on a war is justified only on the basis of self-defense, be there a risk to the lives of the combatants (an internal consideration), and be there a diversion from a routine situation



with no bloodshed or destruction to a war situation with much danger of death and destruction to both sides (an external consideration). Nevertheless, it is clear that the state's obligation to protect the lives of its citizens, including its combatants, rests on an internal set of principles rooted in the pursuit of justice that differs from an external set of principles rooted in the desire for international peace.

### ***The Assumptions of Conventional Wars***

A second mistake among the prevalent notions of international law lies in ignoring the nature of that law, and in particular the assumptions upon which it rests. International law, as it is familiar from the Geneva Conventions, was designed to regulate the distinction between proper and improper fighting in conventional wars of state versus state, of a state military force versus a state military force. All the working assumptions familiar from international law are assumptions that were generally borne out in such wars: World War II, the Six Day War, the Yom Kippur War. These assumptions do not hold up in the irregular wars we have come to know. When the working assumptions are incorrect, the entire structure built upon them collapses.

A central assumption that any ostensibly practical system of norms must uphold is that the regulations demanded by the norms can be fulfilled. In a conventional war, it should be possible to maintain the distinction between combatants and non-combatants, and such an arrangement is met in the familiar, practical, and simple way of identifying the combatants by the uniforms they wear and the weapons they carry openly. In irregular wars such as the Second Lebanon War and Operation Cast Lead, the terrorists wear civilian clothing, live in civilian neighborhoods, operate among civilians, and operate against the non-combatant civilian population. There is no simple, practical way to distinguish between them and anyone else, as is possible in conventional wars. In short, the assumption of practicality fails the test.

Another central assumption that fails the test of experience is the assumption of reciprocity. A state fulfills its part in an arrangement by limiting its own use of the force at its disposal. It does not thereby bestow a military advantage on the enemy state it is fighting, because the enemy state is supposed to limit its own use of the force at its disposal to the same degree. The assumption of reciprocity is an assumption of

symmetry as to limitations the warring sides impose on themselves. This symmetry underlies considerations on self-restraint: it is advisable for a state to concede some of its force because in return it receives the enemy's concession of the parallel portion of its force. In the last decade, the assumption of reciprocity has consistently been violated in the wars Israel engaged in: all of Israel's enemies in the early 2000s, the Second Lebanon War, and Operation Cast Lead used terrorism designed to harm the largest possible number of Israeli non-combatants. Israel, by contrast, took many steps in order to minimize the number of Palestinian non-combatant casualties in its activities against terrorists. Those who are aware of these steps know how impressive they were, both at the ethical and at the professional levels.

Since the working assumptions do not hold up, one may say that international law in its familiar form does not apply to irregular wars. If there is no basis to the demand to act upon it in these wars, the question becomes: how should Israel act in these new wars?

### **Criticism of Creative Interpretations of International Law**

Here I come to the third mistake inherent in the prevalent notions of international law as the source of guidance for military activity in irregular wars. There are those engaged in creative interpretation of international law to make it possible to apply it in situations of irregular warfare. Proponents of this method like it because it leaves the power of compelling interpretation in their own hands. This inclination to retain the authority of compulsory guidance is understandable but certainly not justified.

The idea of developing creative interpretations for the purpose of practical guidance is mistaken because it keeps practical guidance in the political world of international law institutions and interpretations. When dealing with this province of international law we are liable to find ourselves in a bind, because organizations trying to interpret the current norms of international law in a binding way are organizations that had, have, and will likely continue to have a hostile political structure. These are the organizations that established the Goldstone commission and expressed themselves in its spirit well before it started its work.

In my opinion, it is preferable for Israel to take a different direction, both on the basis of conceptual responsibility and of political responsibility.

Israel must encourage any state that finds itself fighting an irregular war of a certain type to develop its own doctrine for irregular wars of this type, and not just a doctrine in the operational sense – something every state already does – but also an ethical doctrine for irregular wars. Such a doctrine can largely be non-classified. For example, the doctrine of the US Army and Marines with respect to insurgency and counterinsurgency was openly published (by the University of Chicago Press), and anyone can buy a copy. It goes without saying that the doctrine includes an ethical chapter.

Were every democracy engaged in irregular wars of a certain type to develop its own ethical doctrine for such wars, it would be possible to compare them. To a limited extent, it is already possible to make such comparisons. The doctrines of democracies engaged in similar irregular wars resemble one another despite their particular differences. In this manner, what would finally emerge would be what one could call customary international law: if all democracies engaged in irregular wars of a certain type act on the basis of the same ethical doctrine or on the basis of ethical doctrines with a sufficiently wide common denominator, it may be possible to make a serious claim that this constitutes customary international law.

Therefore, it is incumbent to get out of the business of creative interpretation of conventional international law and move into the world of ethical doctrines of democracies such as the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Canada, and Israel, all of which are developing customary international law by means of their doctrines.

### ***The Foundations of International Law***

The fourth mistake inherent in current allusions to international law is the superficial understanding of the grounds on which it rests. People often use it as if it is the basis for every consideration relating to proper war. In truth, international law does not constitute such a basis. Existing international law rests on a longstanding philosophical (and theological) tradition of what is called the just war doctrine (or theory).

The just war doctrine began with St. Augustine and was developed further by St. Thomas Aquinas. In seventeenth century Netherlands, Hugo Grotius framed it as a proposal for international law. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, its practical expression was international

treaties. Whenever there is a lack of ready-made international law, there is a rich, ready-made conceptual tradition of the just war doctrine, which is a system of philosophical principles underlying familiar international law that may serve as the foundation for new doctrines regarding proper wars.

This method is acceptable in every normative system: when a structure is created for a particular purpose or situation and is found to be unsuitable to a new purpose or situation, the question of what are the principles at the foundation of this structure is an apt one. The method uses these principles in order to guide the action for the new purpose or situation.

The scope of this essay limits me to brief comments on two principles of the just war doctrine. The principle of distinction (or discrimination), which distinguishes combatants from non-combatants, is a principle designed in familiar arrangements to fulfill the deeper philosophical, ethical principle of *minimizing the calamities* of war. One minimizes the calamities of war through the division of every dimension of fighting into two parts – the proper and the improper. This is true for people who are encountered by military force; this is true of targets; this is true of arms and of methods of fighting. One may also use this general notion to formulate an ethical doctrine for the purpose of irregular wars of a certain type, such as the Second Lebanon War and Operation Cast Lead.

Now, some brief comments on the *principle of proportionality*: A numerical comparison of the casualties on both sides of the front is not the idea at the basis of the principle of proportionality. First of all, it is designed for cases in which the military action is expected to harm non-combatants, not because they are the targets but because they happen to be near a legitimate target. In this particular context, the principle of proportionality dictates the question: does the value of accomplishing the military action justify the unintended damage it results in? Thus, the question of proportionality is very difficult, and any casually made claim about proportionality or non-proportionality is usually unreasonable and irresponsible.

Take, for example, the beginning of the Second Lebanon War. When it broke out, we heard the usual superficial claims about proportionality: the force used by Israel against Hizbollah was supposed to be similar to the force Hizbollah used against Israel to abduct and kill soldiers. Such

claims are unsustainable: legitimate claims regarding proportionality are claims made regarding the justification of collateral damage on the basis of what is gained by military utility.

In contrast, the relevant considerations on the opening of the Second Lebanon War can be sketched in general terms. First, because Israel was attacked in a certain manner, with soldiers killed and others abducted, the first action that should be taken is to ensure, to the extent possible, that the same type of action, i.e., Hizbollah killing some soldiers and abducting others, not recur. To this end, it is necessary to render a significant blow to Hizbollah forces able to authorize such an action, command it, control it, and carry it out. Such a significant blow means attacking Hizbollah beyond attacking the force that acted against Israel and killed and abducted soldiers, and there is nothing wrong with that.

Second, Israel knows what Hizbollah will do when it is denied the opportunity to attack again, abduct, and kill soldiers: it will attack northern Israel with high trajectory fire and thereby endanger the state's citizens. This is an entirely foreseeable reaction and therefore Israel is entitled to prevent this too from happening. In such activity, which is of a preemptive defensive nature, there is liable to be collateral damage. Here is where the real question of proportionality arises: does the military value of preventing Hizbollah activity against the citizens of the State of Israel – totally foreseeable after its ability to repeat operations of abducting and killing soldiers has been stymied – justify the collateral damage? If the army takes great and effective pains to minimize the collateral damage as much as possible, we may say that the principle of proportionality has been maintained.

It is therefore clear that the application of the principle of proportionality does not lie in one measure of damage or another but in the justification of the damage on the basis of the military value of the action. In truth, the principle of proportionality would be more appropriately called the principle of justifiability.

### **Ethical Aspects of the Threats**

In order to present some ideas for developing ethical doctrines for irregular wars, one must first deal with the map of threats. The ethical aspects of the threats affect the ethical aspects of the response.

Every threat one may be exposed to is a threat that can be characterized by some fundamental aspects. Let us call it the profile of the threat. Every such profile has meaning in terms of the ethics of the response, in terms of what is proper and what is improper in a response. This is not the place for a full discussion of all ten parameters from which threat profiles are created; I will therefore only note them with some examples for relevant analysis.

First and foremost is *the object of the threat*: towards whom is the threat directed. Is it directed at the state or its army, at its citizens or state infrastructures, at the routine life of the public, and so on. The ethical significance of the difference in the host of values of this parameter is clear in some of the cases: if the threat comes from a body that behaves like an army, in that it limits the objects of its attacks to military targets, even if it is not the military of the nation from whose territory it is operating, then it is necessary to treat it and its people in a way similar to how we would treat an army and its soldiers. However, if the threat emanates from an organization whose major activity is directed against the citizens of the country who do not participate in any fighting whatsoever, then it should not be treated as an army with soldiers, but rather as a body of “illegal combatants” who may be attacked the way soldiers are, though they do not have the status of prisoners of war if they are caught.

Second is *the military status of the threat*. Is the threat coming from individuals or from organizations of the type we encountered in the early 2000s, or is it coming from a semi-military organization operated by a civilian organization, such as Hizbollah today, or perhaps the military of a state? Again, the differences between the various values of this parameter are of far reaching ethical significance. A central question is how to relate to an organization that is quasi-military even though it is not the army of a state. For example, if we relate to Hizbollah (its military wing) as we relate to the army of an enemy state, then every member of Hizbollah’s military wing would be a legitimate target even if no immediate danger is emanating from him. At the same time, any one of these fighters who is caught, unless accused of war crimes, should be considered a POW who cannot be judged in Israel for his actions against it.

Third is *the political status of the threat*. Who is acting against Israel – individuals acting of their own volition, a political entity that is not a state, a political entity as part of a state, an entity that is part of the state

regime such as Hizbollah today, or an entity that is a branch of the regime? Each of these values (and many others) has its own distinct ethical significance. The simplest example is as follows: a war between two states is a regular war and international law is applicable to it, but if the enemy is not a state then the war is irregular and it is necessary to make use of an ethical doctrine that can guide us in how to fight. Sometimes, the state will have to decide if the war it is fighting is regular or irregular. This is not a theoretical decision but one that has political significance as well as clear ethical aspects.

In a recent article in the *Washington Post*, IDF Maj. Gen. (ret.) Giora Eiland was quoted as saying that in the near future, should we have to confront Hizbollah, it will in fact be a confrontation with Lebanon – not with the organization called Hizbollah but with the state called Lebanon. If one considers the need to develop an ethical doctrine for such a scenario, it may possibly be a classified ethical doctrine – which is new in the world of ethics – because it may involve decisions about the nature of dealing with the enemy, and it is sometimes undesirable to reveal the contents of such decisions in advance. It would be unreasonable to tell all of our enemies exactly how we would relate to them in every contingency of their relationships with their host countries.

Other parameters include *the territory where the threat originates, the territory where the threat is targeted, the methods of the threat, and the self-limits of the threat*. Let us delve for a moment into the parameter of self-limits because this is a point of great ethical importance. There are organizations that are not interested in any sort of ethical norm. Hamas and Hizbollah are organizations not self-constrained in their operations against Israel and its citizenry by any ethical norms. By contrast, there are those who take ethical norms into partial consideration, such as the armies of non-democratic states, and there are those who claim to be interested in taking ethical norms into consideration fully – the democracies.

When an entity fails to consider ethical norms or even announces that in the future it will not consider them, a democracy facing it must view this as cause for two declarations: one, that it views the enemy as an entity that in advance has admitted it is going to violate its obligations; and two, that the state has a special ethical doctrine for this situation. This doctrine is designed both to help the state defend itself in face of



the military advantages the enemy would acquire by violating the norms, and to minimize to the extent possible the deviation from appropriate norms and do the most it can to ensure that these regulate the conduct of both sides.

When we hear of 160 towns and villages that are Hizbollah fortifications in southern Lebanon, the State of Israel could already announce first, that the conditions of reciprocity do not exist and Hizbollah is deemed an entity violating its obligations with regard to norms that must control a war; and second, that we have a doctrine that tells us how to conduct ourselves under conditions in which there is no reciprocity. What is that doctrine? Israel must decide if it wants to present it, and whether to discuss it now or later or not at all. However, whether Israel desires to present it publicly or not, it must have such a doctrine.

Other parameters are: *the measure of responsibility the enemy assumes for the threat; the cause of the threat; and the future development of the threat on the basis of the enemy's views.* Each of these parameters has varied values and therefore also a spectrum of ethical meanings.

### **Changes in the Ethics of Irregular Wars**

What follows is a short, preliminary survey of some novelties in the ethics of irregular wars, non-standard ideas in military ethics as compared with the norms guiding us in regular wars.

First of all, the State of Israel needs well defined and different ethical doctrines for irregular wars of different profiles. The Second Lebanon War was an irregular war and Operation Cast Lead was an irregular war, yet their profiles differ from one another and differ from the profile of the war during the early 2000s and the profile of the Third Lebanon War, should it occur in the current framework of Hizbollah as an organization that is a partner to the Lebanese government maintaining its own semi-military and terrorist force. A separate ethical doctrine is needed for each type of war because they are all essentially different given the values of the various parameters. In the Second Lebanon War, Israel confronted a semi-military terrorist organization that was not the Lebanese government; in Operation Cast Lead, the fighting was against a semi-military terrorist organization that was in practice the Hamas regime of the Gaza Strip. When fighting an entity that in practice is the government of the territory, this enemy bears moral responsibility for whatever happens in that



territory, including the measure of distinction between combatants and non-combatants. In addition, its security forces, infrastructures, and other elements all have a significant status determined in part by that profile of the irregular war. This was not the case in the Second Lebanon War in which the approach to the state of Lebanon and the Lebanese government had to be different. It should be stressed that these doctrines must be prepared with the help of commanders and other experts, not only jurists.

The principle of constant warning: This principle appears in the ethical doctrine of fighting terrorists that Maj. Gen. Amos Yadlin and I wrote already in 2004. I assume that widespread use was made of this principle in the Second Lebanon War and Operation Cast Lead. At the core of the approach leading to the principle of ongoing warning lies the familiar moral principle of the obligation to make every justified effort to minimize the horrors of war to the extent possible. In regular wars, it is usually possible to minimize casualties by limiting the fighting, which is allowed to occur between armies while an effort is made to avoid harming civilians who are not directly involved in the hostilities. In irregular wars, the distinction between combatants and enemy innocent civilians cannot be made according to the formula of distinguishing between those who wear a uniform and those who do not or according to a similar formula, and it is therefore necessary to find indirect ways to make that distinction. A key way to contribute to the distinction is by means of the ongoing warning issued to the enemy's innocent civilians calling on them to leave the combatants' area of activity. If the means of delivering the warning are effective, it is possible to arrive at a situation in which the moral responsibility for the presence of someone in the area of combat, near the loci of terrorist activity, would rest on the shoulders of whoever has decided to remain in such an area. Should this person become a casualty, the moral responsibility for this would also rest on him/her and on the terrorist whose actions caused the state of fighting. Because the moral responsibility rests on the shoulders of those who refuse to evacuate a combat zone despite clear warnings, there would be no justification in risking the life of an Israeli soldier by checking if any people who are not terrorists remain in one building or another in the combat zone.

This is the place to add two further points. First, it is possible that the military force would not always issue a warning. If the target has great military value, it may well be that the considerations of proportionality would justify damaging the target despite the collateral damage to the innocent neighbors of the dangerous terrorist or the terrorist's means of attack. Second, if in the target area there are people who cannot evacuate themselves because they are ill and so forth, the means of warning will have to take that into consideration in various ways, such as breaks in fighting for evacuation by ambulance or some other means, with the help of family members or neighbors, within a reasonable period of time.

The principle of proportionality, not the numerical comparison of casualties but the possibility to justify collateral damage on the basis of the military value of the action, is a fundamental principle of the just war doctrine, in the spirit of familiar international law, and within the framework of our own system of constitution and law. It would be best if the State of Israel, by means of its various spokespeople, would never announce it was about to act disproportionately. Such a statement is always a self-inflicted wound. Israel should always act proportionately, though it should always operate according to a responsible understanding of proportionality rather than according to the superficial, fallacious understanding Israel's enemies and their friends try to impose. Israel should not count its losses the day before the Second Lebanon War and compare them to the number of Hizbollah's losses in that war, and it should also not compare the size of the IDF force that participated in the war itself to that of the terrorist force. These are baseless comparisons, lacking in any moral value. They do not support the true considerations of proportionality, but only political considerations cloaking themselves in the mantle of morality or legality.

I also propose distinguishing between global proportionality and local proportionality. Local proportionality can be the familiar form of proper application of the principle of proportionality in regular wars: there is an enemy sniper or gunner on top of a house, but there are also 30 people the terrorists have brought up to the roof to serve as human shields, a strategy the enemy has employed time and again. If we destroy the building, not only will the terrorist be killed but 30 other people will be killed as well. Another given is the assessment of the military advantage of destroying the house, which is the military advantage of

killing the sniper or gunner who is there. The proper application of the familiar principle of proportionality does not compare the number of people killed on both sides but asks if the military advantage justifies the harm to human shields. In order to understand the situation better, let us assume that a proper application of the principle of proportionality tells us there is no justification to destroy the house because its destruction would give us on the one hand only a small decrease in the already-low probability of harming civilians or soldiers and, on the other hand, the killing of dozens of innocent people. In this application of the familiar principle of proportionality, the assessment is “local”: we assess the local military utility and the local collateral damage. Therefore, I label such considerations local proportionality considerations.

Now let us complicate the picture. Because this is an enemy strategy, it may be that we will find dozens of innocent civilians serving as human shields on every rooftop of every house in the area from which terrorists operate against the state, its citizens, and its soldiers. Let us imagine a situation in which considerations of local proportionality conclude, with regard to each individual house, that it would be improper to destroy it. Therefore, the application of local proportionality considerations along the entire front brings us to the conclusion that there is no way to defend ourselves against enemy snipers or gunners in any location or at any time. This is not an acceptable conclusion: avoiding the destruction of a single house, which contains an active enemy and dozens of innocent people, creates a situation of a low – though not zero – probability of the terrorists harming civilians or soldiers (but certainly damaging to the state, which is attacked with every incident of fire). By contrast, avoiding the destruction of every single house creates a higher probability of the terrorists harming civilians and soldiers and no permitted way to defend them.

If local proportionality considerations bring us to the conclusion that we are not allowed to harm any one of these houses, despite the not-negligible risk emanating from terrorist activity taking place in them, then we find that considerations of proportionality cancel out our capability of self-defense and grant the enemy a clear military advantage just because of its use of human shields, which to begin with is patently immoral. This is where a consideration that I call global proportionality comes into play: the considerations of proportionality with regard to justifying the

collateral damage on the basis of the military value of the action occur not at the tactical but at the operational or strategic level. The military value of the activity would be realizing the nation's capability of self-defense, a capability the enemy is trying to deny it through the immoral use of human shields. This is a military value of supreme importance when we compare it to the possibility in which seemingly the state is denied the ability to defend its citizens and itself because of the enemy's immoral conduct.

Nonetheless, realizing self-defense capabilities does not allow an attack on every single house containing dozens of innocent people. The basic moral idea of the obligation to mitigate the horrors of war to the justified extent possible, including loss of civilian non-combatant lives, requires us to ask: to what extent are we allowed to attack houses and their human shields in order to realize our right of self-defense? The answer depends on circumstance, but it is possible to understand its essence by means of a simple example. If one house serving terrorist activity against Israelis (and the state) is destroyed along with its terrorists and their human shields who did not evacuate the premises, we have realized our right to self-defense and have shown that the strategy of the human shield used by the enemy does not work and does not give the enemy the military advantage it is seeking thereby – denying the state its ability to defend itself. What happens if only one house is destroyed, one house from which there is terrorist activity, on whose roof there are dozens of unfortunate people where the head of the household – the zealous terrorist himself – will not allow them to leave? The military value is the clear realization of the state's ability to defend itself in order to puncture the enemy's human shield strategy. The collateral damage is the death of several dozens of innocent people. There is no desire to hurt them and they were also warned about the coming danger. If such an action does not cause the collapse of the enemy's strategy and a clear change in its conduct, one should continue to apply the considerations of global proportionality as long as the enemy's strategy threatens to deny the state's right to self-defense. If the enemy stops using the human shield strategy, the state should resort to considerations of local proportionality.

The State of Israel must make it clear that it will act on the basis of a range of considerations, including proportionality, but that proportionality considerations are sometimes local and sometimes

global. In both cases it is appropriate to stress that this entails not a numerical comparison, rather the justification of collateral damage on the basis of the military value of the action planned.

Finally, consider issues of proportionality under conditions of uncertainty. When can Israel make justified, responsible, and credible proportionality considerations? If the military advantage is extensive and the collateral damage is low, such as property damage rather than human casualties, then it is clear that utility decides. By contrast, if the military advantage is small, such as a very slight improvement regarding the probability of property damage and human casualties, in a situation in which this advantage is low to begin with, and on the other hand the collateral damage is high, then the damage decides. Of course the leading question is what happens in the middle zone, when there is no simple way of deciding one way or the other?

Here is a possible proposal: in any situation in the middle zone, in which there is no simple way of deciding one way or the other, we have to assume that the situation is balanced, i.e., that the military advantage and the collateral damage are even. Now the question becomes what should the state do when the advantage and the damage are equally balanced? My answer is that in such situations, the state must act for the good of its citizens and its own well-being, first because it is inconceivable that in a balanced situation one has to prefer the enemy's best interests, and second because the state's obligations to its own citizens and soldiers take precedence over its obligations to any other person, and in a case of this type it is appropriate that this difference be expressed. It seems that the only way to avoid using such considerations is to invent a better way for comparing advantage and damage in the intermediate zone.



# The Foundations of Israel's Response to Threats

Giora Eiland

The current issue of this journal focuses on the major problems and threats facing the State of Israel and the IDF. It is usually easier to describe the problem than it is to solve it, certainly in the military field, and especially in the public non-classified arena, since “what is there to do” or “what should be done” must be formulated with a certain amount of caution, as not everything that is known may be publicized.

The following essay suggests responses that the State of Israel – not necessarily the IDF – should provide to five types of problems presented elsewhere in this volume: (a) the problem of Lebanon; (b) the high trajectory threat, which although it relates to Lebanon is a more general threat, as it also appears from the Gaza Strip, Syria, and Iran, and harbors great damage potential that may not have been presented in full in the preceding discussions; (c) what is the right way of prosecuting a war with Syria; (d) coping with the Iranian nuclear threat; and (e) how does one prepare for peace agreements and lines that cannot be crossed in these agreements, both with the Palestinians and the Syrians.

Let us begin with Lebanon. A confrontation with Hizbollah in the near future seems of little likelihood because current deterrence is effective enough on both sides and the organization is therefore not interested in war. The restraining elements are currently stronger than opposing elements. Clearly this is subject to change, but I do not think a confrontation may be expected in the near future.

What is the problem with regard to the deployment of military forces between us and Hizbollah? The problem is that Israel cannot defeat Hizbollah in the wider sense. Israel cannot achieve a victory against

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Giora Eiland, senior research associates at INSS

an effective guerilla organization as long as three conditions prevail: (a) Israel is on one side of the border and Hizbollah is on the other, i.e., Israel does not control the territory. (b) The organization enjoys full state assistance and patronage, as Hizbollah does in Lebanon. Indeed, this is more than mere political patronage – Hizbollah is actually a formal part of the government. (c) The state extending the patronage (Lebanon) is completely immune to response from the state attacked (Israel).

In this situation there is no way to achieve victory, even if at the tactical level the IDF has undergone tremendous improvements such as described by the GOC of the Northern Command regarding the lessons learned and the improvements in training, preparedness, and all other aspects. But Hizbollah has also improved: it has increased its missile arsenal, the range of the missiles, and the organization's entrenchment in villages where it is much harder to operate than in the "nature reserves." Therefore at the tactical level, Hizbollah's improvements offset Israel's. Certain aspects that could have been very effective in the Second Lebanon War will not be effective in a Third Lebanon War. For example: Had the IDF in the last war undertaken a quick military ground operation at the Litani line, it would have been able to remove some 80 percent of the missiles within the range of Israel, and that would have represented a real military gain. This is practically irrelevant in the context of the next war because most of the missiles, whose range is now greater, are beyond the Litani, and therefore any ground operation would be more like the First Lebanon War in the scope of force and depth of area; even then success would by no means be guaranteed.

Therefore tactically, Israel has a serious problem that relates to the question of what kind of war to prosecute: a war on the organization, in which case Israel fights with one hand tied behind its back, or a war with the state, which is always preferable. Lebanon is providing more than enough reasons for the world to understand that it is responsible for what happens within its borders, not only because Hizbollah is a legitimate political party and a member of the government – and not just any member, but one with the right to veto any decision. The Lebanese reality is more complex – or perhaps simpler – but certainly more problematic. In Lebanon, there is an agreement between the "good guys" – the State of Lebanon – and the "bad guys" – Hizbollah and its supporters. This unwritten agreement is as follows: since all Lebanese share a common



goal, let us divide the roles on the basis of our relative advantages. For the sake of the West, the government will present the moderate approach and Lebanon's prettier face, a society seeking culture and tourism, host to the wonderful institutions of democracy such as a presidency, a government, a parliament, and elections. At the same time, we will preserve the situation in which the real responsibility for using military force lies in the hands of Hizbollah, with even the Lebanese prime minister confirming that it is a legitimate part of Lebanon's defense. Indeed, it is the sole significant military power in the country, and only Hizbollah can decide whether to go to war or not. Thus Hizbollah is still the effective military force along the Israel-Lebanon border and it will decide what happens there. This division of roles is convenient for both sides.

The question thus becomes whether Israel cooperates with this Lebanese strategy, and in my opinion, the answer must be no. The only real way to deter a war for years, not only for months, is to make it clear to everyone that the next war, should it occur, will be prosecuted by the State of Israel against the Republic of Lebanon, which in deeds and declarations is saying, "Hizbollah Is Us." It should not be able to avoid its responsibility. It is imperative that the reality of the Second Lebanon War – where Haifa residents lived in bomb shelters while Beirut residents were blithely going to the beach – is no longer acceptable to Israel.

Should a war be fought between states, it is obvious that Israel has clear advantages over Lebanon. But the essential point is that no one wants to see Lebanon destroyed: not the Lebanese, not Hizbollah, certainly not the West or France, not Saudi Arabia, nor even Syria and Iran. No one wants to see Lebanon hurt, and everyone wants to see Israel behave according to the rules of the game that are convenient to Hizbollah. If Israel explains all of this beforehand and creates a situation in which it is clear to everyone that war, if it breaks out, will be with the state of Lebanon, then it is reasonable to think that Israel can achieve deterrence. Should war break out in spite of this, Israel can be victorious.

In contrast with what was typical in classical wars, whereby you fought first and only then, in accordance with the military results, the political campaign started, today's reality is usually reversed: the political campaign must start first because when the war starts or the hostilities break out, no one in the world has the patience to listen. Thus the correct explanation must contain three components: (a) Hizbollah is positioning

a widespread military infrastructure inside 160 Shiite villages and is creating an inevitable situation of deadly destruction for hundreds of thousands of locals; (b) the Lebanese government is responsible for what is happening, not only by virtue of binding UN resolutions but primarily because of its own policy; (c) militarily, Israel has no choice: it either loses the next war or prosecutes it in a way that will allow it to end quickly.

This argument must be presented ahead of time. One of the biggest mistakes of the Second Lebanon War was that no attempt was made to explain to the world ahead of time what was liable to happen. I recall Ehud Olmert's first visit to the United States as prime minister in April 2006. It was clear he would be talking with the heads of the Bush administration about Iran and the Palestinians. Some people said this was an opportunity also to talk about Lebanon. At that time, Hizbollah attempted an operation every month or two, from an attempted abduction in Rajar to opening fire at Mt. Dov, and at that point a confrontation between Israel and Hizbollah seemed inevitable. Some said that the situation should be explained ahead of time because once Israel undertakes a military operation it would be too late to start explaining. In April 2006, before his first meeting with President Bush, Olmert advised leaving the Lebanon issue alone, that it wasn't a burning item. Yet once the war started in July, it was impossible to explain anything to the United States administration and certainly not to the Europeans.

The high trajectory threat has indeed grown, but in some respects not everyone understands just how much it has grown. It is obvious that the threat has grown numerically: Hizbollah has more rockets and missiles, as do Hamas and others. It is obvious that the rocket and missile ranges of both Hamas and Hizbollah have also increased, and likewise for Syria's rockets. It is also obvious that the military warheads are growing and the damage they can cause is much greater: you cannot compare a 107 mm Katyusha or Qassam to a 220 mm – or bigger – rocket. It is also clear that the rocket threat prevails not only on the northern or northeastern front but also, and simultaneously, in the south. In such a situation it will be difficult to find any calm areas in the country and it will be harder to defend against fire coming from several directions. It will be harder to attack a large part of the launchers because they will be hidden deep in the midst of populated areas; this is true of the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, and especially Syria. In the past, the Syrians had primarily Scud missiles, which were

very large but limited in number, and operated from clumsy launchers. These features made them more open to attack by the Israeli air force. Today Syria also has hundreds of rockets, some of which are smaller and easier to operate and located within populated areas. Therefore, even these blatant military targets are becoming harder to attack.

All of these points add up, yet they are still not the primary issue, which is: even now, and certainly in the future, we may expect a far reaching change in the enemy's missile and rocket accuracy, making statistically tolerable weapons into accurate weapons. Maj. Gen. Amidror mentioned Israel's small size, its concentration of strategic targets in a small area, and the lack of redundancy; all of these factors are becoming more and more critical.

One of the issues that took the army a long time to understand is the problem of the threat against the military rear: in 1991, during the Gulf War, it was understood that while in previous wars, such as the Yom Kippur War, there was primarily the front, now Israel had both a front and a rear. The army is on the front and the civilians are in the rear, so it is necessary to defend the civilians too; this was already clear twenty years ago. Much time passed until it was understood that in addition to the civilian casualties – a problem in and of itself, but one that does not directly affect the ability to fight – a much more serious threat was developing, namely the threat against the military rear, i.e., everything that creates the capability to wage war and do so continuously, from air force bases through logistics, command, and control means to headquarters. This is true at the national level, and not only the military level: from power stations and refineries to hospitals. The damage from an attack to strategic targets of this kind is greater than the familiar damage caused by human casualties or economic damage. Moreover, the threat of precision weaponry in the hands of the enemy is also liable to affect the ability to prosecute the war itself effectively.

The response to this threat is complex and in part already exists in the form of anti-missile systems such as the Arrow, Iron Dome, and others designed to defend large areas, but they are not enough. What is necessary is also the fortification of certain targets and improvements to their survivability, their redundancy, and their backup, and this costs money. The statement "we will not fortify ourselves to death" is basically sound, but as with everything else it is a question of how much, i.e., Israel

will not invest limitlessly in defense. Generally speaking, this approach is correct; nevertheless, fortifying sites of supreme strategic value is critical and is, technologically speaking, possible.

My third point is Syria. After the Second Lebanon War, amidst the plethora of lessons, both those worthwhile and those less so, some said, "We built an air force, and it turns out not to have been good enough; it can't attack every Katyusha; we ignored ground combat; we didn't develop and train the ground forces well enough," and so on. Therefore the response is to return to good military capabilities of the ground army, because that is what brought Israel its victories in the past.

The relative importance of the air force and its effectiveness depend primarily on the type of enemy it encounters. If the enemy has predominantly classical military targets in the sense of tanks, headquarters, cannons, airstrips, planes, ships, and ports, and the enemy is a state entity, i.e., it has institutions of government and government infrastructures, the most effective means by which to act against that enemy is indeed the air force. Therefore, it remains the case that the air force is the most effective means in a war between Israel and Syria also in the future. The fact that use of the air force is not optimal in other sectors must not change the assessment of its importance relative to a future confrontation with Syria.

The ability to achieve success on the ground in a war against Syria is limited. One could reach a point of victory in the sense that the enemy would agree to a ceasefire, primarily by attacking the most important components to the government such as its strategic ability in the form of surface-to-surface missiles, anti-aircraft weapon systems, airfields, ports, and other infrastructures. Israel has the ability to attack all of these with a high degree of accuracy and cause a great deal of destruction. That is Israel's most prominent relative advantage, and not the army-versus-army warfare on the hills of the Golan Heights. That is not to say that the ground maneuver is redundant, and it is clear that it is necessary to invest in it in order to yield optimal results, but in terms of priorities its place is second.

The primary dilemma in a war with Syria is how to use the force with such power that the price Syria has to pay keeps growing to the point that it will want to end the fighting quickly yet at the same time not bring its leaders to the brink of desperation such that they will want to use chemical

weapons. In other words, it would be unwise to be too successful and thereby cause the leaders of the regime to think they might be losing their grip on the government or bringing an unbearable national disaster on the Syrian people. It is difficult to ascertain what kind of action would lead to maximal damage to the enemy without bringing about the use of a type of weapon where the goal is to push it outside the circle of threats, i.e., chemical weapons. This, I believe, is the primary dilemma with regard to a war with Syria.

As for Iran, in the military dimension, there are two graphs that do not proceed along parallel lines: the one – improvements in Israel's offense capabilities, and the other – improvements in Iran's defense capabilities. The Iranian defense improvements graph is steeper than the Israeli offense improvements graph because it is easier to defend, to dig down in the ground, to conceal, or create more storage areas than it is to improve offensives. In the military sense, time is not in Israel's favor. It may be that when the relevant state-political conditions are right for an attack, the desirable operational window of opportunity will already have closed. This is liable to create a dilemma: if a military operation is important or crucial it may be right to undertake it when the military circumstances are the best, while acknowledging that it will be necessary to deal with the political level later. On the other hand, there are political constraints: as long as there is a chance of keeping nuclear weapons from Iran through non-military means, it is best to exhaust it. Furthermore, there are steps Israel cannot take without first having understandings with the United States, and the American pressure to avoid or prevent an Israeli military operation is inevitable.

Legal warfare: I would like to second Prof. Kasher's sentiments, and I am convinced that there are elements working to terrorize Israel from this angle. However, Israel's situation is better than we usually imagine, and what follows are some examples.

In 2002, during Operation Defensive Shield, a problematic political decision was made, based on the understanding that Israel cannot continue fighting Hamas effectively without taking full control of the West Bank. The political significance was that there was no choice but to prosecute a war against the Palestinian Authority. This difficult political decision was made after a major disagreement at the Cabinet level, but it gave the army the necessary freedom to act. At first, the American

administration went along with this idea but its understanding of the campaign differed from Israel's, and after 48 hours, figures in the American administration were demanding that Israel remove its forces from Palestinian cities lest the PA collapse, which would have had far reaching ramifications for the entire Middle East. It was clear to Israel that withdrawing 48 hours after going in would look like a defeat; in any case, it would be impossible to maximize the results of the operation in that amount of time. The confrontation with the administration was not a simple matter, in part because Israel did not explain the conditions of fighting ahead of time. As I noted with regard to Lebanon, it is important to explain to our friends ahead of time why Israel might have to engage in a certain kind of action. Nevertheless, despite the difficult exchanges and actions that looked like the vicious trampling of refugee camps in Nablus and Jenin, Israel conducted the operation assertively enough so that even the administration understood the necessity of the operation for Israel, and in the end stepped back and allowed Israel the necessary room to operate.

Another chapter of Operation Defensive Shield also relates to the Goldstone report, and I refer here to the story of the "Jenin massacre" and the UN decision to send a commission of inquiry to study the issue. The secretary general himself authorized its establishment with the agreement and support of Secretary of State Colin Powell and the agreement of then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Shimon Peres. Such an investigation could have been expected to be similar to the Goldstone effort and possibly even worse in terms of its potential damage. When Prime Minister Ariel Sharon understood the possible damage, he harnessed all his resources to cancel the recognition of the commission of inquiry. My sense is that the error with regard to the Goldstone issue was not whether to cooperate with it or not, rather from the outset allowing this pot to boil over. It could have been prevented had the fight started early enough and been aggressive enough.

Not long after Operation Cast Lead, which drew the ire of the Goldstone report, six of the most important European prime ministers came to Israel as a show of solidarity with the Israeli prime minister. In other words, credit is due to Olmert, who has not earned a lot of plaudits, because it proved that Israel had much stronger political support than was reflected by the existence of UN-sponsored commissions of inquiry.

It was a show of support for Israel's moves, not only on the part of the military but also on the part of important political echelons, and not only from the United States.

In the final analysis, there is a basic understanding among national leaders regarding not only what is just and unjust but who is really worth supporting and who is not, if they want to protect assets threatened by terrorism or extremist Islam or elements supported by Iran. Therefore, we should not panic because of the media and legal frenzy of antagonistic outburst. I am not dismissing it and the struggle against the delegitimization of Israel is very important, but I think that these matters do not represent a real threat to the State of Israel. The real threats are well known throughout the world, and there is a complete congruency of interests between Israel and nations other than the United States. There is even a strong correlation between Israel's interests and Turkey's, despite repeated statements by Prime Minister Erdogan.

On the dilemmas of the army's force buildup, a survey of Israel's capabilities with regard to the resources at its disposal indicates that there are areas in which there are essentially no limitations. Israel has no limitation on technology or on manpower. Despite certain problems in mandatory enlistment and in this or the other percentage of people enlisting or not enlisting, they do not represent a real bottleneck. The only limitation is budgetary. In the end, Israel's capabilities are a function of its budget, the budget being not only the overall sum but also its composition and the balance among priorities it reflects.

Below are some dilemmas with regard to the budget and force buildup: (a) how to divide the budget between the naval, ground, and air forces; (b) how to divide the budget on the basis of types of threat, such as fighting terrorism, conventional wars against states, and a war with distant states such as Iran; (c) whether to build the force on the basis of relative advantages or on the basis of responses to gaps. Operating on the basis of relative advantages means the following: given the fact that the relative advantage vis-à-vis the enemy is the air force, we should continue to strengthen it and thereby force the enemy not to establish good air forces, because the enemy is doomed to lose, but rather to invest in anti-aircraft defense systems. On the one hand, there are gaps that do not favor Israel, creating unbearable risks, and one of them is the



vulnerability to high trajectory fire. Where, then, is the proper balance between closing the gaps and cultivating the relative advantages?

There are other dilemmas with regard to force buildup. Should force buildup occur on the basis of a scenario (or scenarios) or on the basis of generic capabilities? If on the basis of scenarios, a force can be built in a fairly precise manner, but there is the risk that events will unfold differently from the anticipated scenarios. If buildup is on the basis of generic or general capabilities, right for any situation, then on the one hand you have a broad-based response, but you have also wasted many resources. Here, then, the question becomes: where is the balance? Are we prepared for overlap in force buildup, and if so – what is it? For example, we have an old system and a new one has been purchased; we have old planes and have now bought new ones – do we keep the old ones until the new ones are operational? Or do we start taking out the old ones so that there is a gap between the ones going out and the ones coming in, in order to save on resources? How much of a gap can the IDF allow itself? In addition, what is the measure of interchangeability in force buildup? To what extent do remote piloted aircraft replace tanks? Is such interchangeability valid for every scenario? What is the critical mass that must remain in each system?

The last and most important issue in which there were errors that were apparent in the Second Lebanon War – and as head of the planning division in the preceding years I was a party to them – is the question of the optimal response to four dimensions that are qualitatively different in terms of response times:

- a. *Readiness and routine security level.* This is a fluid area and changes can be effected within a matter of hours. For example, today there is a battalion along a certain sector. Should it appear that the threat has grown, within a few hours it is possible to deploy an additional two or ten battalions. If today there are a certain number of airplanes in a state of alert and there is a new warning, it is possible to prepare three times the number of planes within a few hours. That is to say, in terms of readiness and routine security, response times are very rapid.
- b. *Preparedness level.* Preparedness is composed of the level of training, the number of spare parts, the levels of reserve supplies, and technical fitness. Changes in preparedness take several months to effect.



- c. *Military size*. How many battalions, air squadrons, and ships will there be? Here response time is close to five years. In other words, if the decision is made to dismantle a division for any reason whatsoever and it turns out that two years later it is necessary to reconstitute it, the process will take about five years.
- d. *Investment in new projects*. Research and development begin with the hope that in another ten years it will be possible to realize the achievements.

The proper balance relates to understanding the issue of response times. One can assume great risks with regard to the first point because the response time can be measured in days; medium risks are acceptable with regard to preparedness for which the response time is measured in months; very small risks are allowable when it comes to the size of the armed forces because here the response time is years. Finding the optimal solution among all of these aspects given the spectrum of threats is the art of military force buildup.



# Creating the Relevant Response to the Threat: Between the Technical and the Adaptive Response

Gershon Hachon

This essay discusses the response to the threat at the strategic level and to some extent also the operative level, but does not address the response at the technical or tactical level. Likewise at the tactical level, one must always ask what requires the most attention. On this topic, I have chosen to begin with a conceptualization formulated by Prof. Ronald Heifetz, which distinguishes between three types of problems: technical, semi-technical, and adaptive.

	Identifying problem as technical	Identifying problem as semi-technical	Identifying problem as holistic adaptive challenge
Familiar problem	+	+	?
Familiar solution	+	-	?

For example, when your car won't start, both the problem and the solution are familiar and both are recognized as being technical in nature. There are more complex situations, such as a space shuttle exploding after takeoff. Clearly, the problem is familiar – it blew up. The solution may or may not be known, but we do know that at the end of a technological-professional investigation it will be possible to arrive at a proposed solution. The interesting area is the third column: problems

Maj. Gen. Gershon Hachon, commander of the IDF Military Colleges and commander of the Northern Formation

that Ronald Heifetz calls adaptive and I call holistic, where the difficulty begins in the very act of identifying the situation as problematic. That is to say, while the situation is familiar, the problem itself might not be known – unlike the car that won't start – so that someone may find himself in a situation in which he is still not aware that he is in trouble, in which case the solution is far from being technical.

So that the use of this conceptualization is clear, consider the following example: at his wedding, a groom was advised to make sure to observe three rules in order to lead a happily married life. He was to bring flowers to his wife every Friday, he was to take her out to a café or a restaurant once a week, and he was to take her out to a concert or the theater once a month. If he gets to the point where his marriage collapses, it should be possible for him to undertake a technical investigation of the situation by recreating the events. Imagine this man saying to his wife in such a situation, "Look, according to my calculations, we're missing 30 café evenings and four concerts. Let's make up the gap; maybe we can cram all of it into this coming week and everything will be fine." However, in this case the situation has likely gotten out of reach of technical intervention. My claim is that in many cases we conduct ourselves at the technical level in an attempt to create a working plan to handle every problem. Take for example the issue of Israel's Arab population: practical people charged with planning and formulating a working program identify discrimination. They analyze the functional parameters that involve discrimination – it could be in land allocation, employment, education, or other fields; they implement the working program; and from that point onwards the problem is handed over to trusted technicians and clerks who are supposed to translate the program into a reality. It is only rarely that anyone will examine the issue holistically-adaptively. The tendency by and large to prefer the linear-analytical and technical approach is often related to an effort to reduce a holistic, adaptive situation to a list of tasks that allow a technical, instrumental management process. Many times this is also true in the analysis of the military-security operative response.

Indeed, at the end of the planning stage, practical people and soldiers such as I have to know how to submit a plan whereby it is possible to organize and build a force. Obviously it is necessary to know how to operate the force, and the operation of force is always based on a concept that takes on an executable shape using components that are in essence

technical. However, I have chosen to focus here on questions that precede the realm of action and these, in my opinion, are at times the most tangible preconditions.

President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and the attack in the Sinai Peninsula can serve as a prime example of a holistic-adaptive response. Sadat had a goal, which he defined as restoring both the Sinai and Egyptian honor. He identified gaps between his armed forces and Israel's capabilities, focusing on the superiority of Israel's air and armored corps. He understood the limitations of his military, internalized them fully, and did not rush to a working plan to gain the Egyptian army symmetrical capability to counter Israel's aerial superiority. He bypassed the problem. He defined a different concept of war, a different concept of strategy. He operated in the holistic-adaptive dimension (according to Ronald Heifetz's schematics) and thereby created a revolution in the realm of war.

Ron Tira's study on the changes in the phenomenon of war<sup>1</sup> clarifies just how profound Sadat's action was: he changed the story of war from a defined concept directed by Western logic of planning backward, from the end to the beginning, and returned it to a concept directed by Arab logic in which there is no basis to a detailed description that conforms to a desired end state. Instead of a pre-defined war goal, his goal was characterized by a desire to set a process in motion, to create friction whereby something would be created and leave the rest to unfold at a later stage. This is a concept focusing on actions designed to create friction, in the hope that such friction will spark change, and with change will come an opportunity for something to happen, a type of change that can be taken advantage of – in this case, to promote Egypt's interests. This, then, is the concept of a war whose entire purpose is directed at creating effective friction. As such, Egypt did not first have to attain aerial capabilities to match Israel's aerial supremacy. In this plan, designed to conquer just a strip east of the Suez Canal, what was needed was an umbrella of aerial defense, which he constructed west of the Canal, and arrays of infantry and anti-tank systems, which he deployed in order to withstand the battering of Israel's armor towards the front line of the Canal. Sadat recognized the limits of his army, internalized them, and bypassed them.

Hizbollah and the Syrian leadership think and operate along similar lines. In attempting to clarify the identification of the problem and providing a response at the operative level, the adaptive way of thinking leads one to interesting places. I will demonstrate this with an example taken from the commentary on the Pentateuch by Rabbi Haim Ben Attar, known as "Or HaHaim Hakadosh," who emigrated from Morocco to Palestine in the eighteenth century. Rabbi Haim Ben Attar provides an insight of strategic thinking on the story of the patriarch Jacob dividing his retinue into two camps in advance of his reunion with his brother Esau. The verse, "the other camp may yet escape" (Genesis 32:9) is usually interpreted at the literal, simple level: Jacob divides his retinue into two camps so as not to have all his eggs in one basket. The Or HaHaim proposes the operative logic that leads to dividing the camp into two. Jacob was struggling with a dilemma: Esau was coming towards him with 400 men. Jacob did not have the means of determining whether Esau was friendly or hostile. Were he not to prepare for war, he would be easy prey to Esau's battle preparedness. On the other hand, should Jacob prepare for war and come armed and equipped at the head of a camp ready for battle, Esau could well retort, "Is this how you greet me after all these years of absence?" The very fact of being armed, then, is liable to lead to undesirable escalation. Therefore he divided the camp into two: the forward camp looked innocent, friendly, and unarmed, while the second camp, just behind, was armed and ready for battle. Thus a type of response is fashioned, which is a response to a dilemma – not a response to Esau's technical advantage coming towards Jacob with 400 men, but a response to the question of the opening point of the meeting, at the very shaping of the encounter. This is a response to an adaptive dilemma, which demands the choice between one of two options (either-or), but Jacob seeks to be prepared both for battle and for a peaceful meeting at the same time. Today, we call this a hybrid solution; the hybrid aspect is deeply embedded in the heart of the systemic rationale.

This is what the Arab armed forces were missing in the wars between 1948 and 1967 – adaptive creativity. This is how Ron Tira in his study explains the IDF's victory in the Six Day War: the big mistake on the Arabs' part, both in 1948 and in 1967, was that their armed forces were constructed and operated mechanically on the basis of rigid criteria and doctrines. A wonderful segment in the movie *Lawrence of Arabia* shows a

meeting between Faisal and Lawrence. Lawrence is explaining to Faisal that if he requests cannons and does what his advisor, a British colonel, tells him, then the most he can achieve is having a well-equipped but mediocre Western army. By contrast, Lawrence notes that Faisal's men excel at desert mobility, riding camels, and using swords. He therefore suggests, "Go with your strength." Until 1967, the Arabs equipped themselves not just with weapons but also with concepts of operation that were foreign to their culture, and in military encounters with Israelis, who were skilled in technology and knew how to operate the industrial machines of war better than they, they always came out on the bottom. This is also the vast difference between Syria's showing in 1973 and Egypt's. In the fighting in the Valley of Tears (Emek HaBacha), the heroism of IDF soldiers was readily apparent, but what decided the battle was the crushing techno-tactical superiority of the Israeli tank operators who stood on ramps and managed to achieve supremacy even though the Israel to Syria force ratio was 1 to 10. The Syrians approached the war with a mechanized Soviet concept and *modus operandi* that was not suited to their culture and strengths. By contrast, the Egyptians acted in a way that suited the basic mental limitations of their forces. The very ability to internalize this recognition earned them a significant advantage.

According to Tira, the Six Day War was a victory won primarily in the tactical dimension and the success in this dimension guaranteed the success of all the other dimensions. To one extent or another it may be that the problems that arose after the war were also related to the inability to attain a tactical decision and translate it into a strategic one in all dimensions. For example, in World War II a significant decision was achieved in the dimension of national resources. Rommel stated this explicitly in his diaries just before the Normandy landing. He understood very well that from the moment the Allies had a bridgehead on the continent, it was only a matter of time before their armies reached Berlin. Rommel understood that in the battle of resources against the US-led Allies, Germany did not stand a chance.

When we speak of the response and the difficulties in delivering a response, we speak of the ability to present a point of equilibrium that integrates the entire spectrum of dimensions of action. Israel has a concept whose sources lie in the Western cultural environment – the production line model. On the basis of the concept of planning and

managing a production line, there is a basic distinction between the activity of senior management, which has to decide questions of what and how much to produce in order to sell and earn a profit, and the activity of the production and operations managers who have to deal with questions of how to produce and how to manage and operate production. The first question lies in the realm of the human sciences; it is a complex question lacking a geometric calculus. The second question is within the realm of engineering operations, which can be planned and managed by a quantitative geometric calculus. From the operations manager and staff to the production engineers and workers in the production rooms, the system is geometric and linear. In this sense, if the workers come to work on time, if the engineers plan correctly, if the raw materials go into the machines properly, and quality control is at work, then the plant's operations manager has fulfilled what upper management has required of him. Let us assume that he was expected to produce 100 cars a year and the cars are ready and in perfect condition by the due date, fulfilling every standard necessary, but the cars don't sell. What could the plant manager say? "I did my part; my workers were on time! The engineers planned well, I succeeded." The failure or success will be ascribed to a different level, to the market of car buyers, which for some reason changed its taste in cars – i.e., to the realm of human sciences.

The central question is the interface between the technical-engineering realm of the questions given to engineering planning and the other realms. There is a basic belief that says: if I managed to fulfill my commitment in the form of the tasks that were defined for me and I did what I was charged to do, then I fulfilled my duty. To a large extent, this approach is Protestant and Jewish in its modern form: I've done my part and the rest will, with God's help, work out. It is a kind of metaphysical approach whereby if I try with all my might in the areas designated as being within my purview, this will somehow have a positive effect on the events that are not in my control. If I have a sales problem, I will try to work harder so that the workers are more diligent and the machines work faster, because those are the areas where the control is my hands. This is how we try to formulate responses when we do not have the capability of affecting them immediately or through means within our control.

I turn now to the case of Syria. Giora Eiland described a typical dilemma of creating effectiveness for a military action. The fighters



should be there on time, and they should be well equipped and equipped in time, but will all of this ensure that they do the right thing? There are no mathematical rules to answer this question, nor is it a geometric challenge. Both the Winograd and the Agranat Commissions often left us with the statement that the issue “requires further clarification.”

The claim that IDF’s defense at the Suez Canal in the Yom Kippur War came from people who were unfamiliar with doctrines of war is another example of examining a military event in its mechanical dimensions, akin to checking under the hood of the car that won’t start, to look for the malfunctioning engine or fuel injector, to exchange the broken part, and then assume that everything will work just fine. It is hard for me to believe that the problem can be fully explained by “if only they knew doctrines of war.” To my mind, this is much too simplistic. There was another story there, and I therefore come back to the question: in recent years, what does the concept of war cultivated in the Syrian military mind look like?

First of all, the Syrians look to Anwar Sadat of 1973 for inspiration. The success of 5 km east of the Suez Canal was achieved, and the rest developed in a political process that culminated with Israel’s full withdrawal from the Sinai. In this sense, the Syrians could have a similar concept of war: attacking the civilian rear of Israel with missiles for the purpose of sparking a trend of political agreements culminating in Israel’s full withdrawal from the Golan Heights. To this end, Syria is undergoing a structural change in thinking, and the Syrian military has begun to change. Until 2000, its main force, its force of decision, was the ground army, and the second force, the complementary and support force, was the aerial defense system and the surface-to-surface missile systems. In recent years, this balance has shifted: the secondary supporting force has gradually become the force of decision, just as Hizbollah’s force of decision and central effort in 2006 lay in its rockets. This transition changes the order of components in the Syrian system; the functions continue to exist but serve a different rationale and with different degrees of dominance.

Operationally speaking, the trend of change can be reflected in the idea of an action like the one described above. The Syrian military with its ground forces is prepared for defense in traditional defense systems – its deployment is blatantly defensive. On the other side, the IDF is prepared defensively because the first act that the IDF performs as a type of default

when the alert level goes up is to declare “metzuda” – deployment in defenses. Syria or Lebanon, through the use of Hizbollah forces, launches rockets into the heart of Israel and the IDF responds aggressively from the air. Neither one of the sides has crossed the border yet. In this situation the question is: who is on the defensive and who is on the offensive? Notwithstanding notions defining defense and offense on the basis of the ground criterion, i.e., which one of the adversaries has crossed a border and entered the territory of its ground adversary, we have mutual use of firepower in the primary incident before us. Therefore, in this situation the border no longer serves a defining purpose. This conundrum was clearly understood in materials prepared by military intelligence leading up to the war in 2006, yet this material, though it was well edited and formulated, seems not to have been internalized by the relevant personnel. The crux of the matter is that we are not just talking about the size of the enemy force and its deployment in an intelligence snapshot, rather about the overall rationale of action. Hizbollah internalized its limitations vis-à-vis the IDF’s superiority at ground maneuvers. Thus through the stimulus of the rocket fire and based on the ground defense systems facing an IDF ground attack, Hizbollah leaders hoped to drag the IDF into action in an obsessive Pavlovian manner, i.e., immediately embark on a ground attack in order to move the fighting over to enemy territory and then be caught among the well-prepared defenses.

In response to such a scenario, the IDF must redefine the form of its offensive moves so that it does not find itself playing into the hands of the enemy. This prompts a question that not only the IDF but also the entire military world must tackle: how does one wrest a decision from an enemy that operates with the kind of logic described above? I would like to know what Clausewitz would say about this development where we cannot return to theories from the past regarding offense and defense.

In order to discuss some further questions relating to Israel’s proper response, I return to the Egyptian story of October 1973. In the end, the Egyptian military suffered an operational defeat when the Third Army was surrounded. Nevertheless, Egypt’s strategic plan was realized in terms of its ability to force a political process in its favor on the State of Israel. I will therefore try to suggest what kind of solution the IDF could have come up with as a relevant response, and I consider this a moral for other situations as well.

Consider the air force's effectiveness in the opening hours of the fighting on the Canal. This question has been extensively examined in Brig. Gen. (ret.) Emanuel Sakel's doctoral thesis. One of the claims by the air force in the days and years following the war was: "If only we had been allowed a preemptive first strike." In my opinion, anyone who wants to construct a relevant response cannot build a response on so shaky a basis as "if only we had been allowed a preemptive first strike." I remember Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz telling the air force to prepare a preemptive first strike but to understand that there would be serious limitations in getting it approved. As for the matter itself, the air force could have planned a preemptive *parallel* strike in a situation in which the Egyptians would still be the first to open fire and then have the air force attack directly in a widespread attempt to prevent the crossing of the Canal. The problem was that the air force had a rationale of a hierarchical order of actions whereby it was first necessary to achieve aerial supremacy to deal with all manners of aerial defense and the airstrips, and only then make room for missions associated with ground battles. In his thesis, Brig. Gen. Sakel demonstrates that had the air force only examined aerial photographs that were available in the days before the war, it would have been possible to identify the bottlenecks and force concentrations preparing the crossing, including the necessary crossing equipment, in which case the air force could have attacked in the presence of Egyptian aerial defenses with the loss of planes, but achieving a simple objective – preventing the construction of the bridges. The IDF's force at the time was sufficient to allow such a significant systemic achievement to occur at the outset of the war.

That is to say, the response must be examined in relation to the outline of the relevant, operative story, and must also be examined in light of the ability to create the suitable manners of action. The air force must receive organized operations orders and formulate offensive capabilities on the basis of data analysis of the targets. Had the air force operated this way, it could have prevented a significant Egyptian success.

Another matter, obvious with the wisdom of hindsight, has to do with decision making in the operations arena of the Southern Command on the morning the war broke out. Imagine that I go back in time: it is now 6 A.M., and I'm told: "You are commanding the front; tonight or at midday there is going to be a war; the Operation Dovecote deployment will not

succeed, so that by 1 P.M. there will not be a single Israeli soldier left on the waterline.” In a scenario of preemptive withdrawal from the line of fortifications, the Egyptians would have found themselves conducting a grand attack on an empty line. The State of Israel would not have lost its fighters, would not have been subject to the humiliation of having its soldiers taken captive, and would not have lost some 200 tanks in heroic but unsuccessful link-up attempts. Sakel notes that he had tank platoons that reached the fortifications, asking whether or not to evacuate the soldiers, and the answer was no. In other words, with regard to the questions had the IDF produced in advance a response that would, operationally speaking, have suited the time when the war broke out and in the absence of the means to present a proper symmetrical response, it is possible that Israel would have emerged on top in the sense that the initiative would have remained in its hands. Even a decision to withdraw in order to preserve force is initiative. Israel would have emerged holding the upper hand in the sense that it may have prevented the realization of the Egyptian desire to humiliate the IDF and refute its image as the unbeatable army.

These events are in my mind as I try to explain that full congruency must exist at all times between tactical excellence and thinking at the highest level, so that the fighters on the field can be sure that the decisions made at the highest echelon are made on the basis of a proper understanding of development at the tactical and operative levels. From my personal acquaintance with soldiers and from comments by soldiers such as Yuval Neriya in his book *Fire*, the main factor that broke our men in the first hours and days of the Yom Kippur War was not the battles themselves or the loss of their comrades but the growing sense that the generals were issuing irrelevant commands.

The IDF is required to provide a relevant, effective response in the face of the complexity affecting many dimensions of action. For example, it is necessary to construct a variety of forces based on the recognition of the need for two main types of force. One is required to provide a mass of widespread force of average professional capability, in the sense that it can fulfill basic tasks of defense, maneuver movements, offense, clearing, and securing an area over time. The second force must be composed of highly skilled professional shock troops. They are the spearhead and as such, are charged with the task associated with what is chosen as central

to wresting a decision in the battle. The construction of force and its operation are directed by the knowledge that this type of excellence will never be a mass phenomenon. In practice, this is how the IDF operates, and such forces were used in Operation Cast Lead. From Operation Defensive Shield onwards, there were series of actions by strike forces trained for their tasks and these forces operated as forces with unique adjustment capabilities. The spirit of this type of action was already present in the War of Independence, and Palmah units used strike forces that were transported from one arena to another to wrest decisions at the system-wide loci of decisions. The other forces gave their full support by providing the critical mass in the general sphere of activity.

Let me mention one example of the change that is taking place in the war arena, which is increasing the need for excellent strike forces. In the Six Day War the enemy was clearly defined and there was no question of who was a civilian and who was a combatant. Ammunition Hill and Givat Hamivtar, for example, were prime military targets. For the fighters, these were fortified targets, familiar from training. It is true that these fortified targets were located in the urban sphere, but the way they were constructed gave the soldiers a sense of familiarity. From the moment they entered the tunnels they thought of the targets as fortified within an open sphere. Then, the fortified target had a generic tactical response that was appropriate to all arenas. Today, the situation is more complex and it is necessary to know how to function while uniquely adjusting the concept of the action and the composition of the force to each and every sector.

Consider the operation that the Egoz Unit carried out in 2004 together with forces from the Golani Brigade near Jenin. Unique, outstanding forces arrived at the target, forces capable of approaching as if they were local Arabs. Their mission was planned according to intelligence; even if the intelligence was not exact enough to know through which window or in which room the terrorist could be found, it was exact enough to be able to define which houses were the focus of the operation. The forces dashed quickly into operation from under the cover of being locals and finally had to insert a fighter into the trench that served the terrorist as a hiding space under the kitchen. These are skills that cannot be taught to the whole army, and it is also unnecessary to do so. However, the ability to carry out such a surgical operation must be taught to forces charged with

these actions. This is a lot like medicine: on a journey to the North Pole, the role of expedition doctor cannot be filled by the best ophthalmologist in the country. Rather, what is needed is a general practitioner who is *average* in many ways. For the specific task at hand, he is the one who *excels*. In other words, it is necessary to define the distinction between certain qualities with which we achieve excellence on the one hand and a broad based capability to support a specific surgical operation on the other. However, it is impossible to construct the entire army on that.

Such a distinction allows a response to a different aspect, which to a large extent is the real test in the new operational environment. The army is constantly examined as to the concrete effectiveness of its force. The moment a force arrives at an event, such as the attempted capture in Atzira Shamali in which three Duvdevan fighters were killed in August 2000, it is defined not just as an operational failure but also as having lacked operational effectiveness. Given the understanding that one operates in an arena in which every point of our showing has strategic weight, it is necessary to demonstrate the appropriate capabilities. In such events, the encounter with the enemy takes place like a screen test where it makes sense to bring in the special virtuosos, but in the general sector there is no need to maintain such people and it is, in any case, impossible to do so. To a large extent, the test of relevance worked also during Operation Cast Lead: the ability to reach focal points that the enemy knows are real military targets is a capability that in the end instills in the enemy's mind a profound understanding of the impact of the IDF's abilities. This is a combination of intelligence in systematic investigative efforts, persevering over a long period of time preceding the operation, and accurate, effective execution at a particular point.

An incident I experienced in one of the attack cells of Operation Cast Lead may illustrate the complex environment in which the IDF operates. The command center of the Hamas Gaza Brigade is located in the home of the brigade commander. Is this a civilian or a military target? On the basis of international laws of war, this is a military target, but a family lives in the house while the lower level serves as a weapons cache. We telephoned his wife and told her we were attacking the house; I was present while the call, which was also recorded, was made. The team included a member of Israel's General Security Services; he was speaking to her in Arabic. She answered, "I am not leaving – I am a *shaheed*." Upon further examination,

it turned out that she was elsewhere and was not speaking from home. At the same moment, another team member announced that this person has a second wife. We called the second wife who gave the same answer, but it turned out, on further investigation, that she too was not speaking from home. We attacked with a small explosive charge and a few people fled the premises, and then we attacked the building. This is an event that demonstrates effectiveness. The central question, which to a large extent is the real test in such an environment, is how to attain effective functioning when the enemy intentionally causes the IDF to attack targets that will delegitimize the Israeli army.

Prof. Edward Luttwak explains the issue of legitimacy by using the law of conservation of energy and the law of conservation of matter. He claims that the amount of legitimacy is finite and it may be found either on one side or on the other. By means of the law of connected vessels, legitimacy passes from one side to another. The moment Israel attacked from the air, its legitimacy passed to the other side. Without the aerial attack, legitimacy would have remained on the Israeli side. According to Luttwak, it is necessary to distinguish between internal and international legitimacy. If more Israeli soldiers are killed than society can tolerate, it is a concern for internal legitimacy, but then Israel wins international legitimacy. In his opinion, Israel must consider if it is not better off losing legitimacy internally in order to win legitimacy internationally.

In response to Luttwak's claim, I find it important to explain that the loss of fighters is not just the loss of internal legitimacy but damage to the IDF's image of operational effectiveness, and the IDF must not come to a point of friction and clash with the enemy without being able to present convincing operational effectiveness. The meaning of such effectiveness is that when the forces meet at the tactical level, the result will unequivocally demonstrate that we hold the upper hand. The IDF works extensively on the ability of its large force to realize effective actions in the very first hours of war; effectiveness in this context means the ability of ordnance to reach the proper place and achieve convincing offensive results.

To conclude I have chosen to discuss Israel's need for both internal and external legitimacy, because Israel is always under scrutiny internally. Prof. Avi Saguy, who claims to have been involved in the formulation of the IDF's code of ethics,<sup>2</sup> is one of the IDF's critics for its methods because



the IDF, in his opinion, is not attentive enough to moral considerations. In my opinion, the main topic of both the Goldstone report and Saguy's critique, beyond the discussion on the international arena, is an internal Israeli and Jewish one. This is not to dismiss the international discussion, but we must clarify for ourselves what we did to ourselves by coming to the land of Israel and assuming sovereignty. Anita Shapira recounts the difficulty of the Jewish community's leadership during the 1936-39 Arab Revolt, the "events" as they were called by the Jewish community, in accepting the actions carried out by Orde Wingate:

The transition from defense to offense entailed a psychological reversal. Up until this point, the hostile encounter between Arab and Jew was usually initiated by the Arab. Now the Jews were turning into the initiators of such activity. While ideology continued to distinguish between "good" and "bad" Arabs, the encounter in the field or the Arab village was built on violence between Jew and Arab, which highlighted the totality of the national confrontation...These actions, said the Jews in the settlements, are suited to the British army but are not suitable to our people. And Wingate had trouble getting support from those settlements.<sup>3</sup>

Our question is thus bound up in the history of Zionism and also relates to the question of whether the State of Israel should represent a special type of sovereignty without resorting to real use of the sword. On this issue, Avraham Burg has written some very harsh remarks:

Why do we always have a somewhat sour taste in our mouth? Why is it that precisely when the world is finally starting to use the discourse of Jewish morality and is finally starting to act on the principles we have always preached, why is it that precisely then we feel that something is not OK from our perspective? And now that it's happening, we're not pleased. Why? Perhaps because of the simple, painful reason that the world is turning our demand on it around on us: the world is demanding that we act according to the same criteria we demanded of it. And that is inconvenient just at the moment we have discovered power and its resultant enjoyment: to beat up and smash the Gentiles without being held accountable. The time it took for us, for the first time in our lives, to taste revenge – now, of all times,



does the world have to turn Jewish? Repents and becomes righteous? It's not fair, it's not OK.<sup>4</sup>

The question is: what is Burg really offering us? I found an answer in a book written by Rabbi Eliyahu Benamozegh, a Jew of Moroccan heritage who was the rabbi of Livorno, Italy in the nineteenth century, and who wrote his *Morale Juive et Morale Chrétienne (Jewish and Christian Ethics)* in French at the request of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. According to Rabbi Benamozegh, there is not a single nation in the world required in its sovereign conduct to obey Christian morality. In light of this, I would suggest that we clarify for ourselves if we have not come to the point at which the only nation in the world being asked to obey and conduct itself on the basis of Christian evangelical morality is none other than the country of the Jews and that we conduct the discussion amongst ourselves, as Jews. The foresight in his analysis is fascinating:

Let them try and see if they can apply this principle to the nations – the principle of forgiving insults, precisely at the point where it seems that Christianity rises to heights loftier than any seen in the past. Let the nations be required to conduct themselves according to the principles of humility, tolerance, forbearance, and forgiveness found so abundantly in the Gospels. Let the nations dare to turn the other cheek to slaps and spittle and to swallow it all in silence and even repay with the kindness the most horrible affronts – what then? If a homeland's existence and the state's right to exist are possible and the term nationalism is not empty of meaning, the Gospels and Gospel morality can never serve as the law of nations. Why? Because the nation is charged with fewer obligations than the individual, because the scope and number of obligations decrease the larger the social grouping.<sup>5</sup>

In order to explain the matter in the simplest way I will draw on my own experience. When I was a soldier, following the Yom Kippur War, I was among the last to be released home. It came to a point that my mother sent a letter, which by chance ended up with me, to the battalion commander, the late Amir Yaffe. She wrote the commander asking why everyone was already at home while I was not. It was already after Hanukkah and I said to myself: why should I argue with the soldiers about whose turn it is to go home. Already when I was a company commander, I understood that I could no longer act on the basis of the criteria that had

guided me as a soldier. I had a responsibility towards my soldiers. I am allowed to impose on myself a pattern of conceding my rights but not on others. My duty to them obligated me to fight others for their rights. The moment someone becomes responsible for something outside himself, the environment in which he operates is always one of struggle, and in this struggle the rules are different. The saying “seek peace and pursue it” is, in my opinion, applicable to the individual, in the space between one person and another, but it cannot serve as a commandment dictating the conduct of a nation. The nation has interests and nations interact on the fundamental basis of a continual struggle for interests. The guiding rationale does not allow for a simple existence of “seek peace and pursue it.”

Here I come back to Goldstone and the schematics presented at the beginning based on Ronald Heifetz’s approach. It is right for the army and the institutions to relate to the details of every one of the claims in the report, but in the final analysis the problem is vastly more essential and general and cannot be summarized by factual questions such as did or did not the IDF destroy wells or flour mills. One side will claim it did; the other will deny and prove it didn’t. Rather, the question is fundamental: is the state of the Jews obligated by an ideal, evangelical morality whose criteria are applied only to it? This question must first of all be clarified among the Jews and is in fact currently undergoing such clarification. When discussing the question of how to conduct a military action that may be presented as a rational and relevant response, all of these considerations form part of the picture. In this sense, the IDF is in the right place in terms of its ability simultaneously to produce an effective response with surgical virtuosity, i.e., operate discretely and proportionately, and produce a larger scope response where necessary and employ force with great intensity. In any case, and as with regard to questions arising from a close reading of the Goldstone report, it will remain necessary to maintain the ability to distinguish between issues that are essentially technical, e.g., in the form of a legal clarification of evidentiary rules, and other issues that lie in the adaptive-holistic sphere, for example, in the guise of a fundamental discussion on the state and its security, and the essence of the phenomenon of war and the changes taking place in it.

Anita Shapira opens her book *The Sword of the Dove* with a quotation from Heinrich Heine: “One Jew said to another, ‘I was too weak!’ This statement may serve as a motto for a book on the history of Judaism.” To paraphrase her words, I wrote my own version for the discussion of the Goldstone report: “One Jew said to another, ‘Was I too strong?’ This statement may serve as a motto for a book on the history of Zionism.”

## Notes

- 1 Ron Tira, *The Nature of War: Conflicting Paradigms and Israeli Military Effectiveness* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010).
- 2 Avi Saguy, “A Time to Investigate,” *Haaretz*, December 14, 2009.
- 3 Anita Shapira, *The Sword of the Dove: Zionism and Power 1881-1948* (Tel Aviv: 1992), pp. 342-43.
- 4 Avraham Burg, *Defeating Hitler* (Tel Aviv: 2007), p. 143.
- 5 Eliyahu Benamozegh, *Morale Juive et Morale Chrétienne* (translated into Hebrew by Eliyahu Zinni), *Or Veyeshua Yeshiva*, p. 68.