

# “The Missing Effort:” Integrating the “Non-lethal” Dimension in the Israeli Military Lines of Operation

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This essay examines the idea of “Non-lethal warfare” and how it can and should be integrated in the framework of the IDF’s military campaigns. It addresses the organizational, conceptual, and cultural barriers obstructing such a policy, and the changes required in the IDF’s operating principles: establishing the guidelines; changing the concept of time in a military operational design; shifting from a structure of covert to overt campaigns that are connected to the civilian environment; and devising a supportive intelligence and operational mechanism. In practical terms, the way to promote “Non-lethal warfare” in the IDF requires focusing on four relative advantages: technological innovation; Israel’s relationship with the United States and other strategic partners; utilization of the compact size of the defense establishment; and reliance on acquiring civilian know-how through the reserve system, or creating other mechanisms enabling know-how and “soft” capabilities acquirement.

**Keywords:** Soft power, Non-lethal warfare, Non-Kinetic warfare, Influence operations, Information operations, situational awareness, IDF strategy, lawfare, economic warfare, psychological warfare

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## Introduction

In his book, *The Utility of Force*, British general Rupert Smith stated that the change in the current battlefield has turned “warfare between peoples” into “warfare amongst the people.”<sup>1</sup> What he meant was that in the modern world, in which communications, public opinion, and global considerations are of growing importance, concepts such as “decisive victory” are obscure and dependent upon how relevant audiences—who are not necessarily a direct part of the military campaign—perceive and recognize them. This contrasts with classical warfare, in which the victor alone is the one that determines victory on the battlefield.

In the background of this change are two overriding trends that characterize the modern global environment. The first is the information revolution, which has increased the speed of change of information, its accessibility, and patterns of its consumption, and moreover, transcends borders and sovereignty. In this framework, conceptual connectivity and technological networking enhance an individual’s capability; at the same time, they augment the systematic vulnerability of nations and societies. The second trend includes the changes that have occurred in the political-diplomatic field. Over the past two decades, we have witnessed a growing significance of non-governmental organizations; greater consideration of public opinion in making security decisions; the emergence of international quasi-legal agencies; the growing influence of lawfare; and a lively discourse on human rights as a major criterion in considering the legitimacy and legality of using military force.

Two central arguments can be derived from these changes. First, nations face difficulty in controlling information and shaping the narrative and legitimacy of their actions. Second, the effectiveness of lethal or kinetic force lines of efforts for achieving strategic objectives has been weakened. In addition, the use of lethal force has exacted political prices from state armies in numerous cases, so that many prefer not to use it. Given these changes, and the wish to develop means of exerting ideological, cultural, and economic influence instead of solely military might, the “soft power” approach emerged as a basis for the defense and foreign policy for major Western powers and many countries. The concept of “soft power” refers to

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1 Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force – The Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Penguin Books, 2005).

the ability to persuade others to act in accordance with one's wishes without using physical force but rather by non-lethal resources and capabilities, such as economic, legal, diplomatic, cultural, and ideological resources.<sup>2</sup>

The problem with soft power is its need to cope with changes in the enemy's DNA as well as in the environment. In current conflicts, an imbalance exists between the traditional state armies and the new players with which they must confront. While the traditional state armies are characterized by bureaucratic inflexibility—both conceptually and resourcefully—the new players embody elements of flexibility, innovation, and the ability to adapt. These features enable the new players to make optimal use of the new strategic field. This dichotomy between the two is not a decree of fate, and some state armies have shown a strong desire to adapt and acquire operating capability in the use of non-lethal tools, which we will refer to in this article as “soft” tools.

This essay examines the idea of non-kinetic warfare and how it can and should be integrated in the framework of Israel's military campaigns. The first section in the article is theoretical; it surveys the source of the concept and its elements and cites some examples of parties that have adopted “soft” reasoning as a key part of their operational strategy. The second section presents the Israeli perspective about the need to adopt the logic of influence operations. The third section analyzes the challenges and obstacles of assimilating “non-lethal” logic in the IDF's operational concept. The final section presents the principles of the response to these challenges and recommendation for future directions of action.

It should be noted that “non-lethal” efforts are not confined to the army alone; other governmental agencies in Israel need to use them—and some already do—as part of Israel's security and foreign policy approach, among other things, to facilitate the IDF's actions. This essay does not address the entire national effort, although the army needs to develop close reciprocal relations in order to realize the joint potential of the security, government, and private sector so that Israel's interests can be promoted.

## Theoretical Background

The root of “soft” action lies in the recognized historical arsenal of political and strategic concepts and tools. However, the profound, changing character of the new conflicts and challenges for armies that developed in the modern

2 Joseph Nye, “Soft Power,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 80 (1990): 153–171.

era leads to more intense efforts to develop soft tools. For example, it is not easy to attack terror and guerilla organizations embedded among a civilian population because of the intelligence and operational difficulties as well as the fear of harming uninvolved civilians, which is liable to lead to a Pyrrhic victory and a loss of legitimacy. Another example is the development of weapons and their transfer to terrorist and semi-military organizations, often occurring between wars; dealing with them involves the use of political or economic pressure. A final case comes from the realm of cyberwarfare; the target is not necessarily destroying an infrastructure (the enemy's weapons systems) but rather causing effects at a higher level of cyberspace in the cognitive-semantic level, including effects such as deception, confusion, paralysis, embarrassment, and so forth. To influence this realm, new planning and action tools are needed.<sup>3</sup>

The sources for military thought about non-lethal warfare have been deeply rooted in security and military endeavors for many decades. For example, the United States has a considerable history of Train and Equip strategies as well as psychological and economic warfare operations. At the national level, the American soft power paradigm, which was conceptualized in the 1970s as part of the cold war era, kept its prominence also in the last decade in the form of the "smart power" strategy of the Obama administration, as employed by the imposition of effective financial sanctions against Iran and Russia as well as actions in the cybersphere. Recognizing the military potential, the United States military has in recent years established a special command for cyberspace and has strengthened the role and organization of information operations (IO).<sup>4</sup> Even if the ability to judge the effectiveness of this activity is limited, it is clear, nevertheless, that it is being planned and integrated into US military efforts. Furthermore, soft warfare is expected to gain in importance and expand greatly in the coming years.<sup>5</sup>

As initially defined, the concept of "soft power" referred to the ability to persuade others to accede to one's wishes without the use of physical power against them. The original intention underlying the concept was to disseminate liberal democratic ideas and concepts using cultural and

3 M.C. Libicki, *Conquest in Cyberspace: National Security and Information Warfare* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

4 Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Information Operations," Joint Publication, 3–13, 2016.

5 DCDC, "The DCDC Global Strategic Trends Program, 2007–2036," [http://www.cuttingthroughthematrix.com/articles/strat\\_trends\\_23jan07.pdf](http://www.cuttingthroughthematrix.com/articles/strat_trends_23jan07.pdf).

economic tools (along the lines of Thomas Friedman's "Golden Arches" theory, which argued that globalization would prevent violence between countries).<sup>6</sup> To this day, this original purpose is best reflected in the way that the rivals of the United States perceive the main threat that soft power poses to their stability. For example, Russia, China, and Iran all fear mostly the economic, media, and cultural abilities of Washington to "fuel" internal forces in their countries and bring about a "velvet revolution."

A recent RAND Corporation study produced for the US army concluded that the traditional dichotomy between "soft" and "hard" requires refinement and clarification. The study proposes an intermediate conceptualization between the use of military forces and soft forces based on positive diplomacy with a long-term vision. The study calls this new sphere the "power to coerce" (P2C). It includes a broad range of measures, such as economic sanctions, military assistance to opposition forces, cybernetic offensive warfare, psychological warfare, and more.<sup>7</sup>

These concepts are dominant in the cultural and philosophic practices and military doctrines of other countries as well, including Russia and China. In the case of Russia, "hybrid warfare"—as it is referred to in the West—has been manifested in several theaters, e.g., the invasion of the Crimean Peninsula, the broader conflict with Ukraine, and the Russian military intervention in Syria. The subject of extensive discussion in defense and academic circles, one of its prominent features is the combined use of military force with political subversion, economic coercion, and awareness campaigns. Cyber operations are also prominent in this framework (such as in Georgia, Estonia, Ukraine, and possibly recently in the United States), as is the use of proxy forces and agents (for example, the infiltration of forces for guerilla operations in Ukraine), disinformation attacks, and extensive propaganda (for example in Georgia and Ukraine).

The emphasis on these forms of action has been apparent in the war waged by Russia in Syria. These measures include sustained actions, such as sowing confusion about the purposes of Russia's involvement, for example, by declaring warfare against terrorism or "withdrawal" or "the termination of

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6 Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1999).

7 David Gompert and Hans Binnendijk, "The Power to Coerce" (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2016).

fighting” in order to give the appearance of international legitimacy through channels of dialogue with the United States and humanitarian ceasefires; the use of irregular forces (through Iran and Hezbollah); projecting an image of power in a series of well-publicized actions, including launching bombers and cruise missiles from Russian territory; naval maneuvers; the deployment of long-range air defense systems; and presenting disinformation about achievements.

Even though it is disputable if this is a new model,<sup>8</sup> the cultural and military basis supporting this possibility should not be ignored. This includes for example fundamental concepts such as “reflexive control,” which assigns a major role to military actions in creating provocative measures aimed at producing planned responses from the enemy and channeling them into spaces that the strategic planner is trying to reach.<sup>9</sup> Russian chief of staff, Valery Gerasimov,<sup>10</sup> in an article in 2013 made explicit statements about the Russian warfare doctrine and alluded to possible explanations, such as turning to non-kinetical methods in order to compensate for Russia’s weakness in the lethal arsenal and limited long-term endurance. In addition, over the past decade, Russia has learned from the West about the significance of the use of soft power and acquired experience in its own conflicts, such as in Estonia. All of this suggests a major conceptual and actual change in the Russian doctrine of warfare.

The integration of soft power can also be seen in the Chinese strategy of “Three Warfares.” This strategy holds that it is necessary to combine three types of warfare—public opinion warfare, psychological warfare, and legal warfare—to achieve strategic objectives. The Chinese chief of staff published an official guide on this subject as early as 2005, and important Chinese military writings in recent years have indicated that the strategy is being applied. These publications indicate that the “Three Warfares” strategy is designed for use in both peacetime and wartime and has multiple purposes,

8 Michael Kofman and Matthew Rojansky, “A Closer Look at Russia’s Hybrid War,” *Kennan Cable Wilson Center*, no. 7 (April 2015).

9 Dima Adamsky, “Cybernetic Operational Art: From the View of Strategic Studies and From a Comparative Perspective,” *Eshtonot* (Israel National Defense College), no. 11 (August 2015).

10 Max Fisher, “In D.N.C. Hack, Echoes of Russia’s New Approach to Power,” *New York Times*, July 2016, [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/26/world/europe/russia-dnc-putin-strategy.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/26/world/europe/russia-dnc-putin-strategy.html?_r=0).

including controlling public opinion; implementing strategic communications; undermining the enemy's determination; creating division among the enemy; and imposing legal restrictions. This line of action is evident in the dispute with the Philippines in the South China Sea, where the Chinese utilized a system of diplomatic, legal, and propaganda tools in their struggle to legitimize their control of territorial assets involved in the conflict.<sup>11</sup>

Armies in the Middle East are also applying this strategy. A statement by Iran in 2013 hinted to the establishment of a "soft warfare" headquarters—which will affect the structure of the General Staff of the Iranian army—in recognition that the virtual sphere is a "an important, complex, and convenient weapon of the enemy."<sup>12</sup> The Iranian preparations for soft warfare, as indicated by this announcement, is defensive as it is a reaction to Western power; it indicates, however, organizational deployment in this new sphere, which may also include offense derivatives.

Thus, given the increasing changes in the strategic environment in recent years, the strategic and operational discourse reveals a new definition of soft warfare that uses familiar tools but with new force, diversity, and sophistication. It emphasizes the information revolution and cyberspace, economic objectives, and information campaigns. According to the new approach, a successful non-lethal warfare effort combines overt and covert means. It leverages intelligence superiority and a profound knowledge of the adversary to focus secondary efforts in shaping knowledge and public opinion and disrupting and influencing decision making, all combined with traditional kinetic military measures.

## The Israeli Angle

Israeli military history is replete with scars from attempts to exert influence operations, such as in Operation Peace for Galilee in 1982 and the complex relationship with the Christian factions in Lebanon and later during the Security Zone period with the South Lebanese Army. Declarations by leaders of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) at the beginning of the Second Intifada about an Israeli victory seared into Palestinian consciousness so that

11 Elsa Kania, "The PLA's Latest Strategic Thinking on the Three Warfares," *China Brief* (Jamestown Foundation), 16, no. 13 (August 22, 2016): 10–14.

12 Tal Pavel, "Iran Establishing Regional Headquarters for 'Soft Warfare,'" *Middleeasternnet.com*, October 26, 2013 (in Hebrew), <https://goo.gl/wAhg4r>.

they would believe that they were losing the conflict; As well as measures designed to shape knowledge in the Second Lebanon War (such as hoisting the Israel flag in Bint Jbeil) have generated skepticism in the IDF's ranks toward such approaches.

Nonetheless, in the past decade, Israel and the IDF have experienced a series of significant events that have raised again the need to harness these capabilities in the military. These events highlighted the price paid for neglecting the non-lethal dimension, in contrast to the adversary's extensive use of it, such as the Mavi Marmara flotilla to the Gaza Strip, Operation Cast Lead, and Operation Protective Edge. At the same time, other events have revealed the benefits that these tools can provide such as the successful diplomatic campaign against Iran.

Israel is faced with a series of unique challenges that require non-lethal operational tools. First, the IDF is one of the few Western armies that is obligated to significantly maneuver in difficult urban, highly populated environments against asymmetric enemies. In addition, at the same time, the IDF has to deal with the ongoing threats of attack on the home front and strategic infrastructure and the adversary efforts to offset its strategic advantages, by operational "surprises" such as utilizing the underground warfare to penetrate its lines of defense. This translates into substantial difficulties in presenting victories in kinetic terms, especially when an adversary exploits and leverages unintentional peripheral damage in order to increase the pressure on Israel's political and operational freedom of action and to offset its achievements.

Second, Israel lacks the resources for supporting large-scale military campaigns due to the amplitude of the geographical arenas and the type of challenges with which Israel must cope. In this case, non-kinetic tools can help to enhance physical achievements, employ deceptive measures for destroying the enemy's resources or to create a surprise that will facilitate fulfilling the operational plans, to form appealing operational alternatives.

Third, since Israel faces both emergent risks and dangers far beyond its borders the non-kinetic tools can serve as an alternative to address issues of prevention and design. This involves, for example, using political and economic means to reduce the proliferation and development of weapons before they reach the battlefield, or alternatively, designing the conditions

of the campaign by shaping the attitudes of a population in certain areas toward Israel.

As mentioned above, the concept of soft power is shaped by the experience, conditions, and capabilities of the major powers, such as by employing sanctions, by moving military forces in order to signal intentions, and by massive use of communications tools. Countries like Israel are also capable of adopting a hybrid model, involving the use of more focused tools, such as media, electronic warfare, financial or cybernetic campaigns to enhance the military component and create optimal conditions for its use.

In the military discourse, this mode of action has already been recognized in the space of military action that is "under the threshold." The "IDF Strategy" from 2015 also defines the problem of the enemy's operations "in non-military-kinetic dimensions . . . from within population spaces, or in the underground, media space" that in his eyes, are "successful in thereby offsetting Israel's achievements in the campaign." The document holds that the solution to this problem lies in a "multidimensional approach during and between campaigns, which includes cyberattacks and a conscious-raising and legal effort."<sup>13</sup>

The academic discourse in Israel has also asserted that traditional military efforts are inadequate and that Israel should develop a multidisciplinary approach that integrates political, media, economic, legal, and cyber components, as well as humanitarian aid to its allies as part of Israel's regional strategy.<sup>14</sup> This is a direct continuation of the distinctions made at the Herzliya Forum in 2010, which called upon giving high priority to the threat of soft warfare and to prepare for it by establishing state agencies specifically for this task. Although the document produced by the Forum discusses only defensive aspects that Israel should adopt vis-à-vis soft warfare (political or legal) that is used against it, it now seems appropriate to consider adopting offensive logic as well. The recommendations calling for changes in the political, legal and media spheres are valid for both

13 Chief of Staff's Bureau, "The IDF Strategy," 2015, p. 12.

14 Udi Dekel and Omer Einav, "Revising the National Security Concept—The Need for a Strategy of Multidisciplinary Impact," *INSS Insight*, no. 733 (August 16, 2015).

offensive and defensive aspects, and to emphasize intelligence deployment in support of these efforts.<sup>15</sup>

## Challenges to Incorporating Soft Warfare in the IDF's Operating Concept and Operational Planning

Understanding strategy is not enough to bring about an operative change in IDF practice. Such a change requires clarification and development among those concerned with the depth of military practice and the translation of soft principles into operational, organizational, and professional practices; several significant barriers, however, stand in the way of integrating the soft logic and tools into IDF thinking in general, and into the operative plans specifically.

The first set of obstacles involves conceptual and organizational matters, beginning with the dividing line between non-lethal operations and the kinetic effort. The operational commander, who usually is inexperienced in matters unrelated to the use of military force, finds it difficult to integrate soft warfare logic into his operational plans, especially when, in most cases, the achievement sought and the criteria for evaluating the success are not clearly defined. The perception of the importance of non-lethal measures in the decision-making equation is thus distorted. A kinetic operation (for example, a targeted killing or destroying a tunnel) will usually be considered more significant and attractive than a soft action, the effect of which is more difficult to assess. This means that in most cases, commanders will not be willing to devote their attention to a non-kinetic operation, allocate data collection resources, risk the exposure of sensitive information, invest time nor prefer the risk that a non-kinetic operation incurs over a kinetic one.

Furthermore, since many of the soft spheres are the fields of disciplinary experts, another organizational bias is created. As long as non-military disciplines are involved, the default option will be to place the non-kinetic planning in the hands of professional parties as a side effort. The spokesperson, military lawyer, liaison officer, intelligence officer, and psychological warfare personnel constitute a "black box," of secondary importance to the operational thinking led by the commander. Furthermore, the professional agencies that

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15 Shmuel Bar, Shmuel Bachar, and Rachel Machtiger, "The Soft Warfare against Israel: Motives and Solution Levers" (Working Paper for the Herzliya Conference, 2010), (in Hebrew), [http://www.herzliyaconference.org/\\_Uploads/3036HateHeb.pdf](http://www.herzliyaconference.org/_Uploads/3036HateHeb.pdf).

deal with these elements are naturally less willing to concede their professional monopoly by creating an organizational whole that seemingly detracts from their status. Finally, the conceptual-organizational matter is burdened by the absence of a natural habitat in the army for content personnel in the non-kinetic spheres. As a result, the thinking, experience, and modus operandi—which have become more sophisticated in the civilian environment—have grown isolated, weak, and anachronistic in the military incubator.

The second and more significant set of obstacles concerns the Israeli military culture and the ethos of the IDF.<sup>16</sup> This culture values first and foremost action over words and concrete results and achievements over tiresome processes, and therefore its time horizon is usually short. Evidence of this can be found in the dubious dialectic that the IDF has been conducting for a decade or longer with the school of systematic thinking concerning the existence or non-existence of “intellectualism” in the military system and its importance.<sup>17</sup> From here, it is only natural that the basic military culture objects to any investment in overt elements, propaganda, public acts, and operations whose contribution and success is difficult to assess. In Israeli strategic culture, promoting a deeper and more comprehensive measure—which is not only in the form of special units or an investment in concentrated efforts but rather a total integrated effort—requires a deep sense of crisis.

## Directions for Future Thinking in the IDF

The necessary changes in the operational principles of the IDF should be implemented in three dimensions. First, the army’s operating theaters requires the development of new non-lethal lines of action as part of the basic military capability. Second, the time dimension of military action should no longer distinguish between war and getting ready for war; rather war begins before the campaign, and continues after it. Third, the structure of the military system requires a structure of action that moves from covert, hierarchical, and homogeneous systems to overt and networked systems that communicate with the civilian environment.

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16 Dina Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

17 David Kimhi, “The Intellectual Revolution in the IDF,” *Ma’arakhot*, no. 464 (December 2015): 14–25, (in Hebrew).

The way forward is to devise an operational concept that focuses on the four relative advantages of the IDF and Israel: technological innovation; the ability to rely on the special relationship with the United States and other like-minded partners; the compact size and thus agile character of the defense establishment, intelligence community, and governing system; and the acquisition of civilian know-how through the IDF reserves system and through the development of flexible methods of communications with relevant parties in the civilian sector.

### **The Operating Theaters—From Kinetic to Non-Kinetic**

The communications, diplomatic, economic, and legal activity includes a broad circle of partners in the national and international arena. In the case of Israel, this community includes various government ministries, the intelligence community, public relations apparatuses, and private parties. These partners possess the professional knowledge, experience, and network of connections needed to propel action. They also operate in international spheres vis-à-vis state agencies, international organizations, civil society, media and economic institutions and mechanisms, and so forth. With these parties, the IDF's unique role in the context of developing knowledge and operative non-lethal tools is questioned.

The IDF has two main strengths beyond the military and security aspects. The IDF can be an important source of data, information, and knowledge necessary for the existence of any soft power system. Above all, this is due to its being a key target of the adversary (for example, to undermine the legitimacy, freedom of action, and image of Israel in the world) and secondly as a major initiator of events in all the theaters of conflict. The IDF has many strong and relevant operational arms, such as intelligence, the military liaison, media, and legal branches. These mechanisms, its resources, and human capital are likely to provide a basis for operation on a nationwide scale. At the same time, it should be noted that in the non-kinetic spheres of action, a leading role is played by civilian parties—government and private—and the IDF must connect with them in various creative ways.

In order to promote its capabilities in the soft power field, the IDF should therefore create new capabilities or enhance its existing ones in the following areas:

1. *Information warfare*—This type of warfare utilizes the overt, covert, and international media sphere to deliver messages designed to influence large target audiences, including the adversary's audiences, the regional theater, the international theater, and the internal theater. These messages have various purposes, including deterrence, weakening the enemy, deception, counter incitement, and so forth. Such warfare can be focused on a specific person, an organization, social groups, population groups, and audiences.
2. *Political-legal warfare*—This type of warfare relies on the international diplomatic system. It is utilized in frameworks of diplomatic, military and legal cooperation as well as in the international, public, and clandestine spheres. Lawfare can be a defensive means for coping with legal claims against Israel, but it should also engage in potential offensive efforts, such as suing parties acting against Israel or lobbying international institutions.<sup>18</sup>
3. *Economic warfare*—This type of warfare relies on damaging the adversary's financial resources and assets in order to weaken its buildup of force, operational capability, and willingness to continue taking action. Israel and other countries have taken well-known and diverse actions against recalcitrant countries (Iran, Syria, North Korea, and others) in recent years as well as against various terrorist organizations.
4. *Cyberwarfare*—This warfare utilizes cyberspace for achieving various purposes: kinetic, informational, intelligence gathering, and so forth. Cyberspace contains opportunities for influence warfare and can be integrated into other spheres, such as media or economics or be used alone. Examples of soft cyberwarfare include: disabling the network of a country or organization; exposing and publishing sensitive data; disrupting central processes in a country in order to create disorder, and so forth (for the purpose of this discussion, cyberattacks against weapons and infrastructure are not included in this article).

### Time of the Operation—From a Sprint to a Long-Term Effort

The concept of time also requires change. Military endeavor should shift away from its division into two classic fundamental situations—"war" and

18 Noam Neuman, "Lawfare—Threats and Opportunities," *Ma'arakhot*, no. 449 (June 2013): 22 (in Hebrew).

“preparing for war”—to a broader and more complex perspective of the dimension of time, which should include the following:<sup>19</sup>

1. *The continuous effort* includes the actions taken in peacetime aimed at preventing a conflict. This effort is designed for purposes such as deterrence, slowing escalation processes, creating and leveraging influence, and enhancing assets or changing a problematic situation.
2. *The conflict-shaping effort* is also conducted in peacetime. It is aimed at predicting the nature of future conflicts, creating the optimal conditions for victory, and designing the future battlefield. One example of this is promoting international understanding for the possible need of using certain armaments or forms of warfare essential to IDF maneuvering.
3. *The preliminary effort* is directed at maximizing the conditions for victory in a campaign as they appear in the existing operational plan. For example, this can include operational deception devised over time that weakens the adversary’s concept of a specific capability or operational intention of the IDF.
4. *The delayed accompanying effort* includes the operations accompanying the campaign and its results. As soon as the campaign begins, the operational plans change. The enemy’s response creates a new situation that requires renewed planning, reveals new facts, and leads to unforeseen results. A capability to respond is therefore also needed. Examples of such responses is influencing the enemy’s perception of its achievements, assistance in designing effective end mechanisms, and softening negative influences on the IDF’s future freedom of action. In addition, after the war, political and legal issues will arise, for which more legal and other soft efforts will be needed for response.

## The Structure of the Campaign and its Relation to the Environment: From Covert to Overt

The preparation required to employ non-lethal efforts in the military endeavor is a challenge for the IDF, which has been oriented toward lethal actions and has limited its non-kinetic efforts to the media activity of the IDF spokesman, focusing mainly on the Israeli public. As noted, the IDF has not given rise to soft efforts, because the people who have been educated in these spheres and

19 Gur Laish, “Principles of the National Security Council’s Defense Concept,” *Eshtonot* (Israel National Defense College), no. 10 (July 2015): 41 (in Hebrew).

who engage in it are not the typical army officers. The obvious conclusion is that the structure of the action in the soft dimensions must be overt and flat, and should not take place between the ends of the bureaucratic pyramids but rather should occur in a joint area.

For producing substantial joint efforts, the IDF will need a different model of action. Such a model will have to create a network of daily action in the military circle, in which the ability to integrate the relevant command headquarters and action groups is necessary; and among the state authorities through coordination, synchronization, and harnessing of important partners in the government ministries and other authorities. Finally, unlike the IDF's secretive instincts, a structure is needed that will promote cooperation, dialogue, and harnessing of partners, such as research institutes, non-profit organizations, service providers, key countries, parties at the UN, civilian organizations, and NGOs.<sup>20</sup> This network would provide the army and its partners with two important "bridges." The first is the ability to extract relevant information from the security arena in order to initiate, plan, and promote exposure and influence activities through open platforms. The second leads to an understanding of the civilian theater, the opportunities and risks inherent in it, and the professional capabilities and experience acquired by those involved, all for designing an optimal military action.

## Principles for Designing a Non-Lethal Concept in the IDF

Israel has four main advantages that should be leveraged as part of promoting a non-lethal warfare concept in the IDF:

1. *Highly developed technological capabilities*, especially in information technology and social networks. In this sphere, with all its complexity, Israel's special quality and natural innovation should enable it to develop new lines of effort to support its military activities. A comparison can be made with the global reputation that some Israeli army units acquired, such as Unit 8200, in the field of intelligence collection that could be paralleled to an appropriate response in the world of influence.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the increasingly powerful medium of social networks is

20 "The Delegitimization Challenge—Creating a Political Firewall," Reut Institute, January 2010 (in Hebrew).

21 Zvi Hauser, "Redefining Israel's National Security," *Ynet*, April 5, 2016.

generating possibilities and ways of influence that did not previously exist and that represents great potential for action.

2. *The special relationship with the United States.* Israel's relationship with the United States should enable Israel to exercise indirect influence on its military campaigns and on the international environment through cooperative influence efforts and the combination of complementary capabilities.
3. *The advantages of compact size.* One important advantage of the Israeli defense establishment is its ability to integrate between different national agencies easily and rapidly. While cultural, political, and technical difficulties also make this task challenging, it appears that the IDF's dominant weight, combined with its relative agility and flexibility, can render it more productive in activating non-lethal warfare than its counterparts. For example, creating an organizational connection between the parties (not necessarily creating one agency) and creating a concept of joint action between all the agencies in the IDF or the Israeli intelligence community can constitute a force multiplier for advancing the subject. Promoting comprehensive training in the IDF can also lead to a systemic change in the army's awareness of the importance of the issue and in its integration into operational thinking.
4. *Integration with the civilian sphere*—Given that the army has access to most of the civilian content experts through the reserve system, there is a better chance of successfully connecting the civilian professional know-how and military knowledge through this informal network. In addition, it is necessary to develop new tracks to connect between the security sector and the private civilian one, which will better utilize the civilian knowledge in the military endeavors, and will enrich military knowledge with ideas, tools, and methods of action developed in the civilian and governmental sector.

Nonetheless, effective systematic operation using non-kinetic tools requires two basic conditions. The first is an **operational concept**. The non-lethal effort should be connected to the operational idea. Such an effort cannot come at a later stage, because it is mostly derived from the strategic aspects related to the narrative of the military action, its mechanisms of termination, national resources, and an understanding of the enemy's intentions and capabilities at the overall level. The second is a **supportive and empowering intelligence**.

Carrying out influence operations requires the development of a new type of supportive intelligence that builds a systematic understanding of the new goals and issues: social, cultural, economic, media, organizational, and personal. It also requires the allocation of some of the Military Intelligence operational capabilities. In addition, there is a need for developing an approach and mechanisms that will facilitate rapid publication and operational use of information and knowledge; intelligence organizations, which operate covertly and preserve their sources, are naturally not inclined to publish them.

## Conclusion

This essay examined the idea of soft warfare from a theoretical, military, and strategic perspective, and how it is expressed in the strategic and operational endeavor of the major powers in the information and cyber era. The Israeli angle and the unique challenges faced by the IDF were assessed in this context, including ways that soft efforts can and should be integrated into the framework of Israel's military campaigns.

At the same time, the organizational, conceptual, and cultural obstacles to adopting a soft approach in the IDF's strategy and its operational concept were assessed, and the main changes needed in the principles of the IDF's operation for enhancing the non-lethal dimension were presented. In this framework, the article emphasized the establishment of methods and tools that should be utilized in combination with lethal efforts, the change of the concept of time of the military operation, the move from covert to overt systems that are connected to the civilian environment, and the building of a supportive intelligence and operational mechanism. In practical terms, the way to promote the non-lethal dimension in the IDF requires a focus on the four relative advantages that the IDF and Israel enjoy: technological innovation, the relationship with the United States, the compact size of the defense establishment, and reliance on acquiring civilian know-how through the IDF reserves system or by creating other mechanisms for the flow of information and soft capabilities.