

The Conscription of Ultra-Orthodox: Security Needs and Short- and Long-Term Solutions

I. Introduction

The Supreme Court's ruling on June 25, 2024, which unanimously determined that the state does not have the authority to refrain from enforcing the provisions of the Security Service Law on yeshiva students, has opened a new chapter in the painful issue of the de facto comprehensive exemption from military service that an entire sector of the Jewish public has received (one-sixth of all candidates for military service in 2023). The Supreme Court ruled that there is no longer a legal basis for the state to act in a manner that differentiates between yeshiva students and the general population – a principle that should guide all governmental actions from the moment of the ruling onwards – and therefore, it must enforce the provisions of the law on yeshiva students without further delay.

In practical terms, the court referenced the statement made by the Attorney General during the hearings on the petition, which indicated that “the IDF authorities would be able to recruit approximately 3,000 soldiers from the Haredi community in the upcoming conscription year (in addition to the number of soldiers who, on average, have enlisted from this community in previous years).”¹ The court determined that the petitions it reviewed do not deal with the actual conscription numbers of yeshiva students and, therefore, did not take a stance on this matter. The court further added that in every implementation, the state must act “according to the rules of administrative law,” meaning (among other things) in good faith, with proportionality, and with equality.

Following the ruling, the Attorney General instructed the defense establishment to “act immediately to implement the court’s decision to recruit yeshiva students who are obligated to perform military service, in accordance with the needs and capabilities of the army. In this context, the defense establishment has already committed to recruiting 3,000 yeshiva students in the current conscription year, in addition to the average number of recruits from recent years. This is an initial number for immediate conscription, which does not fully reflect the current needs of the military and the promotion of equality in assuming the burden. The defense establishment must work on presenting a conscription plan that includes increasing this number.”²

¹ Supreme Court ruling sitting as the High Court of Justice on Conscription Petitions, 25.6.2024, Section 6

² Letter from the Deputy Attorney General to the Legal Advisors of the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Education, 25.6.2024

The Institute for National Security Studies holds that the number 3,000 does not signify anything substantial, apart from a general statement by the defense establishment regarding its capabilities.

This number does not meet the immediate needs and reflects an inadequate understanding of the issue's importance and its implications. As will be demonstrated below, this number does not address the real security needs following the "Swords of Iron" war and with an eye toward the future, and caution must be exercised not to see it as the implementation of the Supreme Court's decision. This number is also significantly smaller than the number suggested by the committee headed by Major General (res.) Eliezer Shkedi, which was recently established by the Minister of Defense to increase conscription among ultra-Orthodox – indicating that, even within the defense establishment itself, it is clear that the number 3,000 is not the product of comprehensive and thorough staff work.

These points are particularly important in light of past experience, which shows that the defense establishment did not make a significant effort, to say the least, to meet the conscription targets set by previous legislation and to promote the conscription of ultra-Orthodox beyond mere lip service. The Supreme Court has sharply criticized this in previous rulings on this issue, such as the two rulings on petitions against the "Tal Law."

II. Security Needs

The term "security needs" is, of course, general and depends on the operational concept formulated by the IDF General Staff in light of the ongoing war and the subsequent security requirements. However, several clear and immediate points regarding the IDF's personnel needs are as follows:

- A. The army requires immediate replenishment of its ranks due to the large number of casualties and wounded among the combat soldiers. According to IDF data, there were 682 casualties from October 7, 2023, to July 10, 2024. According to the same data, there were 4,174 wounded in combat, of whom 1,767 were moderately or severely injured, and it is assumed that most of them will not be able to return to combat roles.³
- B. The defense needs in the south and north, to safely return the residents of these areas to their homes, will require significantly more forces compared to the situation before the war. For example, in the north, an additional division will be required for defense in an area that, prior to the war, was defended by Division 91 alone.
- C. The preparation for a major campaign in the north, including the possibility of a multi-front scenario, requires a significant addition of combat personnel.
- D. The strain on the reserve system is approaching a crisis point due to repeated and prolonged call-ups. The unprecedented use of reservists also carries a heavy economic and social cost.
- E. Extending the regular service for combat soldiers to 36 months, decided upon by the government in July 2024, is not enough to meet these needs and imposes a severe burden on the serving sector. Without massive conscription of non-serving individuals, it will further

³ IDF Spokesperson's website, July 16, 2024

erode the people's army and create difficulties in volunteering for combat service, officer roles, and extended service in the regular army and reserves.

The Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi, recently presented to the political echelon his position that the IDF is short of 15 battalions to fulfill its missions, following the "Swords of Iron" war and in light of future security needs.⁴ A battalion, in this context, consists of approximately 600 soldiers, of whom about 450 are in combat roles (detailed in the following paragraphs). Thus, in this specific aspect – combat soldiers in assault and in the defense of borders and settlements – the IDF is lacking 9,000 personnel, according to the Chief of Staff.

A detailed calculation recently conducted by a professional team of senior officers presents a picture showing that the IDF currently needs over 20,000 personnel in combat roles and combat support roles, divided as follows:

- A. Approximately 1,500 combat soldiers and about 3,000 soldiers in general roles to fill the ranks, given the number of casualties in combat. Some of these recruits could, in the short term, serve in support roles within combat units (guards, cooks, etc.) to free up soldiers trained for combat roles who are currently serving in these positions.
- B. 15 maneuvering infantry and armor battalions, each with approximately 450 combat soldiers and 150 support soldiers, totaling about 6,750 combat soldiers and 2,250 support soldiers – 9,000 soldiers in total (this estimate aligns with the Chief of Staff's statements).
- C. 2-4 brigades for border defense in all sectors (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt).
- D. 1-2 battalions for the Home Front Command.
- E. 3 guard battalions for the so-called "Seam Zone" and platoons for the defense of fence-adjacent settlements in the south and north (a total of 1,800 soldiers).
- F. A defense company for each Air Force base and additional companies for the defense of central IDF bases (the team estimates the total number of required soldiers at 2,500).
- G. 1-2 additional Iron Dome batteries.
- H. Guard units at various detention facilities.

It should be noted in this context that the number of service deferrals under the current exemption age (24) is estimated at 63,000 individuals, and the size of the annual cohort of ultra-Orthodox reaching the age of 18 is currently estimated at approximately 14,000 individuals, with an upward trend due to birth rates.

The solution found by the defense establishment in the meantime includes extending regular service to 36 months and raising the age cap and quota of days for reserve duty – two measures that have not yet advanced in the Knesset due to public outrage over increasing inequality and the burden on those serving. Additionally, it includes shortening the service deferment for pre-military academy students and service year participants, and keeping the cohorts who were supposed to be discharged since the war broke out in service under "Order 8." Beyond the clear injustice of significantly

⁴ Nir Dvori and Yair Sherki, "The Chief of Staff's Warning to the Political Echelon: The IDF Does Not Have Enough Battalions to Fulfill its Missions," N12, June 11, 2024

increasing the burden on the serving public, and the issue of equal burden-sharing which impacts motivation for meaningful service, staying in the officer corps, and continued service in the regular army and reserves, these steps carry particularly high financial costs. Furthermore, as mentioned, they will not be sufficient to fill the ranks as required for current and future security needs.

According to data presented by the financial advisor to the Chief of Staff at the Israel Economic Association conference, the monthly subsistence allowance for a compulsory combat soldier is 3,374 ILS. The cost of a soldier on a minimal “Order 8” call-up reaches 15,250 ILS per month, and for an average “Order 8” call-up, the cost is 29,000 ILS per month.⁵ Based on these figures, if the IDF fills the shortage identified by the Chief of Staff with regular soldiers instead of minimal “Order 8” soldiers, it would save more than 50 million ILS per month from the defense budget. This does not account for the fact that under the current circumstances, soldiers who have already borne the heavy burden of long months of combat continue to serve. Every replacement of a regular reservist with a compulsory soldier would be even more significant in budgetary terms.

III. Sorting and Placement, Adapting Service Conditions to the Ultra-Orthodox Lifestyle

We accept the statement by the Shkedi Committee, which claims that “IDF screenings are not suited to the ultra-Orthodox draftee.”⁶ The committee’s recommendation to adapt the screening tests for ultra-Orthodox draftees must be implemented to create the most efficient sorting for various roles in the army. Additionally, the same fair test established by the Segev Committee should apply to ultra-Orthodox draftees, whereby the sorting for roles will be based on skills and not any other criteria. All positions in the IDF should be open to ultra-Orthodox draftees. However, it should be clarified to the draftees that, except in designated bases (see below), the relevant General Staff orders regarding lifestyle will be maintained in all other bases without changes or modifications to the existing procedures. The recommendation by the Shkedi Committee to establish a dedicated “landing base” for ultra-Orthodox draftees, serving as the ‘entry gate to the IDF,’ should be positively considered.⁷

To reduce resistance to enlistment, it is essential to alleviate the fear of losing the ultra-Orthodox way of life during military service, as much as possible. However, the model of an “ultra-Orthodox bubble,” where a “gender-segregated service environment” is maintained (as described on the Netzah Yehuda battalion’s website), is problematic concerning the central values of the IDF spirit, as it appears in foundational documents and in practice – specifically in terms of gender equality, statehood, and more.

Therefore, we accept the Shkedi Committee’s recommendation that “each branch and authority should prepare at least one base planned for the integrated stay of ultra-Orthodox and non-ultra-

⁵ Financial Advisor to the Chief of Staff, Presentation at the Annual Conference of the Israel Economic Association, June 27, 2024

⁶ The Team for the Comprehensive Integration of Ultra-Orthodox in the IDF (“Shkedi Committee”), Final Report, May 2024, p. 24

⁷ Shkedi Committee Report, p. 27

Orthodox. Define the necessary, simple, and minimal requirements for ultra-Orthodox service in IDF bases as much as possible, and develop the ability to serve together in integrated bases while maintaining lifestyles.”⁸ These are all issues that need to be addressed immediately to accommodate the thousands of ultra-Orthodox soldiers that the IDF must recruit this year and in the future.

However, in a practical assessment, it is doubtful whether, in the short term, the military can absorb more than two ultra-Orthodox brigades, even if ultra-Orthodox service is perceived as a national mission and receives the appropriate attention. This means approximately 5,000 new draftees in total, including a few hundred to staff the units mentioned in sections F and G above. A target of around 5,000 additional draftees to the IDF for the 2024-5 conscription year (beginning on July 1, 2024) seems both necessary and achievable. Yet the conscription of ultra-Orthodox into the IDF is only part of the solution.

IV. Service Within the Framework of Civil-Security Service for Border and Home Front Defense

In the multidimensional service model presented by the Institute for National Security Studies in September 2022,⁹ it was proposed to establish a civil-security service to fulfill tasks in home front defense, internal security, and emergency preparedness, such as natural disasters or mass casualty events on the home front during wartime. Conscription for this body would be the responsibility of the defense establishment, which would retain the ability to screen conscripts for different types of service and units within the military service framework. The operation of draftees for the civil-security service would be under the Ministry of Internal Security, similar to the current arrangement with the Border Police (screening, conscription, and placement by the defense establishment, operation within the Israel Police framework). The length of service would be equal to the duration of basic military service (the shorter period), according to the principle of differential service established in the multidimensional service model, and it was also part of the understanding between the Chief of Staff and the Ministry of Finance in 2023.

It should be explicitly stated: the civil-security service is a clear security necessity, and its purpose is not to simplify the solution to the issue of ultra-Orthodox conscription. In the full model, it should be open to any individual, male or female, whom the defense establishment determines is not designated for military service. According to the multidimensional service model, if implemented, existing alternative services such as national service and the current civil service for ultra-Orthodox – which are based on political arrangements and have been severely criticized by the State Comptroller – will be abolished. However, in the immediate term, and due to the national need to quickly advance a practical solution to deepen conscription among the ultra-Orthodox population, it is important to note that this framework has many advantages in the context of ultra-Orthodox conscription:

⁸ Shkedi Committee Report, p. 28

⁹ Ofer Shelah, “The Multidimensional Service Model: A Proposal for Changing the Structure of Personnel in the IDF,” Institute for National Security Studies, Memorandum 223, September 2022

- A. The service itself is conducted within the civilian community, significantly reducing the tension of creating special frameworks for ultra-Orthodox within the military. For example, an ultra-Orthodox guard and readiness unit can perform its duties in a given settlement while maintaining its lifestyle regarding living arrangements or prayer times, similar to how ultra-Orthodox work in general public workplaces.
- B. The symbolic resistance within the ultra-Orthodox public to military service will be much lower in the context of civil service, part of which can take place within the ultra-Orthodox community itself and for the benefit of its own security.
- C. Many ultra-Orthodox, even those above the draft age, can be quickly trained for this type of service and immediately deployed, thereby releasing the readiness units established in many settlements after October 7th, which are composed of reservists and are costly. There are existing civilian initiatives in this area that can be quickly integrated.
- D. All these factors could lead to a dramatic increase in the number of ultra-Orthodox serving in security roles in a short time, allowing the continuation of this process while reducing the growing internal tension within Israeli society regarding the issue of ultra-Orthodox service.

Practically speaking, training ultra-Orthodox units to fulfill the tasks outlined in sections D, E, and H above (emergency tasks on the home front, guard and defense duties in the “Seam Zone”, border settlements, and detention facilities) can begin immediately. These units will be operated by the Border Police and the Israel Prison service.

Simultaneously, it is necessary to engage in dialogue with the leaders and residents of municipalities in the “Seam Zone” and border areas, some of whom may express opposition to the presence of ultra-Orthodox security and readiness units within their jurisdiction. It is essential to explain the significance of this step in terms of burden-sharing, the ability to meet security challenges, and the benefits to the economy and society. Drafting ultra-Orthodox is a critical step toward healing Israeli society, and municipal leaders should be enlisted to help explain this and support the integration of ultra-Orthodox service members in the new environment.

These units will enable the release of most reservists who were called up for guard, security, and readiness tasks. According to data from the Israel Democracy Institute, as of April 2024, there were 906 readiness units across the country under police responsibility, with at least 269 of them in border or fence-adjacent settlements (according to the Knesset Research and Information Center). Instead of (or in addition to, as needed) these readiness units, ultra-Orthodox conscripts should be assigned to guard, patrol, and initially respond to tasks, which will release reservists from active duty whose direct and indirect costs are high. Ultra-Orthodox reserve battalions, as outlined above, can also fulfill these tasks, including guard duties at detention facilities (as detailed in section H of outline). This will not only fulfill their share of the burden but also reduce costs, as the average cost of an ultra-Orthodox reservist, based on the average income for men of a similar age in the general sector, is much lower.

We believe that implementing these sections will immediately bring thousands of ultra-Orthodox into the service framework, as the training required for these roles is relatively short. We estimate their number to be approximately 2,000 conscripts and an additional 18,000 reservists, equivalent (in terms of one month of service per year) to 1,500 regular soldiers (see the following section).

In summary, it is possible and necessary to recruit 7,000 ultra-Orthodox – about half of the cohort of ultra-Orthodox reaching the age of 18 this year – into compulsory service in the IDF and the civil-security service (and until its full establishment, into the Border Police and Israel Prison Service). This is in addition to the 18,000 volunteers for reserve service aged 24-35, as detailed in the following section.

V. Conscription of Men Aged 24-35 for Reserve Service

According to a survey conducted by the Haredi Institute for Public Affairs in December 2023, 38% of men in the ultra-Orthodox community expressed willingness to volunteer for reserve service, which would include several weeks of training for guard duties and providing initial responses to security threats, similar to what readiness units do, and one month of active reserve service per year. An additional 12% expressed willingness to perform such service within their community. This is not the superficial conscription that received media attention in the early weeks of the “Swords of Iron” war, but genuine conscription, training to the required level by the IDF, and years of reserve service.

As noted by the Shkedi Committee, adults in these age groups have a profound and important influence in the ultra-Orthodox community.¹⁰ Their enlistment, appearance in uniform on ultra-Orthodox streets, and commitment to meaningful service – guarding their own communities, other settlements, and performing the tasks mentioned above – will have a deep impact on normalizing service within ultra-Orthodox society, in addition to their direct contribution to security. Another advantage is that this type of service can begin almost immediately, signaling the seriousness of all parties in fulfilling their commitments in light of the security situation and the Supreme Court ruling.

It is important to note that these individuals are already exempt from IDF service, so this involves volunteering for reserve duty – which may continue even if the exemption age is lowered and the current service deferral is abolished.

It should be emphasized: the conscription of reservists in these age groups will not be mere lip service or numbers for show. Men in these age groups are fully capable of meeting the operational demands of defending settlements, bases, and border areas, as well as providing an initial response to terrorist attacks, even on a relatively large scale (as evidenced by the performance of readiness units in the Gaza Envelope settlements on October 7th). They can hold the line until regular units arrive. The number of ultra-Orthodox men in these age groups, based on recent data, exceeds 100,000. If half of them were indeed to be recruited for reserve duty, properly trained, and serve for one month per

¹⁰ Shkedi Committee Report, p. 17

year, the overall reserve force of the IDF would increase by approximately 20% (about 250,000 were recruited on October 7th), and the reserve force relevant to these tasks would increase by several tens of percent. Twelve reserve battalions serving one month a year are equivalent to one regular battalion – meaning that about five regular battalions could be freed up for other tasks, or the burden on reservists in combat units could be significantly reduced, allowing them to return to their civilian lives and prepare for assault-level missions.

VI. To Whom Should Conscription Orders Be Issued?

To recruit an additional 3,000 soldiers, orders need to be sent to a significantly larger number of candidates. Among the general public, the enlistment rate of eligible in the IDF exceeds 80%.¹¹ According to this calculation, conscription orders should be sent to 3,750 candidates to draft 3,000 individuals. However, given the unique conditions within the ultra-Orthodox community – lack of core curriculum education, a lifestyle that does not include physical fitness training, and difficulties in adapting to a non-ultra-Orthodox framework – the rate of candidates found unfit for military service is likely to be higher. This necessitates issuing conscription orders in even larger numbers. If the goal is to reach a significantly higher number of draftees than 3,000, as instructed by the Attorney General and as required by security needs, the number of required orders will increase accordingly. To reach the recommended numbers within the first year, conscription orders should be sent to more than 20,000 individuals.

As mentioned, the number of graduates from ultra-Orthodox institutions reaching draft age each year is currently about 14,000 individuals. Among the older age groups below the exemption age, we are dealing with men who are already married with families, whose cost in various subsistence allowances is high. Ethically speaking, it is appropriate to cancel the deferment of service beyond the customary age for various reasons (pre-military academy, service year) in the general public as well, especially when the existing law does not include any special arrangement for ultra-Orthodox, and it is doubtful that the Supreme Court will approve such an arrangement in the foreseeable future.

Therefore, we recommend issuing initial conscription orders to all Haredi education graduates up to the age of 19 (two cohorts, approximately 28,000 individuals) and considering – as long as there is full compliance in reporting – exempting older individuals with deferred service and setting a uniform maximum age limit for service deferment for all recruits. Admittedly, this would mean granting exemptions to those who are still legally obligated to serve; however, a one-time step like this, only after all draftees comply with the obligation to report and there is an immediate increase in the number of ultra-Orthodox actually enlisting, might be understood by the general public. Those

¹¹ According to data presented by the Head of the Technological and Logistics Directorate in the IDF to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and the State Control Committee of the Knesset, the non-enlistment rate among eligible recruits in 2020 reached approximately one-third, with half of them under the “*Torato Umanuto*” (Torah study as a profession) exemption. This means that the enlistment rate among non-ultra-Orthodox recruits was around 80%.

exempt from service could either remain in yeshivas or engage in legal employment, according to their choice, and would, of course, be encouraged to volunteer for reserve service.

Another necessary condition for such a step is the uncompromising application of a deserter status to anyone who does not report as required for the screening processes and the enlistment itself. The consequences of deserter status in Israel are severe (criminal record, risk of imprisonment, etc.), and if applied to all draftees, it would correct the ongoing injustice of selective service deferment.

VII. Defining Ultra-Orthodox and Correcting Conscription System Failures

It should be noted that previous legislative attempts encountered the problem of defining “who is ultra-Orthodox” – something that seems to every Israeli to be intuitively understood – since there is no legal precedent for it, except for the Unique Cultural Institutions Law of 2008. This led to the definition appearing in Amendment 19 to the Security Service Law, passed in 2014, which states that for conscription purposes, a person will be classified as ultra-Orthodox if they studied at an ultra-Orthodox institution for at least two years between the ages of 14 and 18. This definition allowed the IDF to recruit as ultra-Orthodox those who had left the religious lifestyle long before their service, to fill frameworks intended for ultra-Orthodox draftees with individuals who clearly were not ultra-Orthodox at the time of their enlistment, and generally to “play with the numbers” and inflate the number of ultra-Orthodox draftees. The IDF itself has admitted to this having happened several times, and it is also documented in the 2020 report of the investigative committee headed by Major General (res.) Roni Numa.¹²

This definition should be anchored in law (one option is included in the same legislative amendment, stating that an ultra-Orthodox institution is one that the Minister of Defense, in consultation with the Minister of Education or the Minister of Economy – ministries through which ultra-Orthodox institutions are defined for funding purposes – recognizes as such). In any case, the new definition should be as broad as possible to include the maximum number of individuals whose lifestyle is ultra-Orthodox and who would not enlist under the existing legislation.

Additionally, all recommendations of the Numa Committee should be implemented to address the failures related to the lack of strategy, professionalism, poor coordination between government systems, and low level of attention within the defense establishment concerning ultra-Orthodox conscription. The system must regard this issue as a high-priority security and ethical matter, acting with a sense of urgency given its implications for security needs and the motivation for enlistment and retention in the IDF. As the committee notes, such a sense was not evident in the system during previous attempts to address this matter.

VIII. Summary of Recommendations

- A. In the upcoming conscription year, the target should be to recruit 7,000 ultra-Orthodox for service in the IDF and for internal security tasks under the Border Police and Israel Prison

¹² Examination Team on Haredi Conscription Rates (“Numa Committee”), Final Report, 2020

- B.
- C. Service. Additionally, there should be encouragement for volunteering for reserve duty, with a target of 18,000 ultra-Orthodox above the exemption age, who will be trained for guard and readiness tasks and will serve at least one month annually in these roles.
- D. Immediate call-up orders should be sent to all ultra-Orthodox education graduates up to the age of 19 who have not yet received such orders.
- E. Screening, placement, and training systems tailored to the ultra-Orthodox community should be implemented under the responsibility of the defense establishment. In this context, the Shkedi Committee's recommendations to create a dedicated "landing base" for ultra-Orthodox and prepare at least one base in each branch or service for integrated living of ultra-Orthodox and non-ultra-Orthodox should be positively considered. In any case, there should not be an excessive creation of "ultra-Orthodox bubbles" within the IDF, and military values and ethos, particularly regarding gender equality and statehood, should be upheld.
- F. A civil-security service should be established for internal security tasks, border settlement defense and "Seam Zone" protection, police reinforcement, and emergency tasks on the home front, incorporating a large number of ultra-Orthodox in both compulsory and reserve service.
- G. The target for drafting ultra-Orthodox in all frameworks for the 2025 conscription year must exceed 7,000 new draftees, while determining a plan for significant increase in the future.
- H. As long as there is full compliance with reporting for screening and enlistment, consideration should be given to exempting ultra-Orthodox above the age at which general public drafts receive service deferral and eliminating service deferral beyond this age – ensuring that those who do not report for service are classified as deserters, with all the consequences thereof.
- I. The definition of ultra-Orthodox in the Security Service Law should be amended to include the entire ultra-Orthodox community.
- J. The IDF, the defense establishment, and the government should view the conscription of ultra-Orthodox not only as a duty according to the Supreme Court ruling but as a crucial step for the survival of the people's army, the economy, and society in Israel, as well as for meeting the heightened security needs of the present and future.

IX. The Numerical Significance of the Recommendations

Immediate Conscription Orders:

- For the last two cohorts of ultra-Orthodox education graduates – approximately 28,000 individuals.
- For a reasonable number of those aged 19-24 (exemptions for these ages will only be granted after full compliance with screening of the younger cohorts and draft numbers according to the proposed outline) – approximately 5,000 individuals.
- Target for volunteering for reserve duty for ages 24-35 – 18,000 individuals in the upcoming conscription year.

Appendix

Planned Influence Actions:

- Publication of the outline by the institute
- Promotion through the institute's channels: podcasts, videos – financially sponsored
- Interviews in the media (Ofer Shelah, Idit Shafran-Gittleman, and others)
- Meetings with senior officials in the Ministry of Defense and the IDF
- Continuous engagement with the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, participation in its discussions on relevant legislation, and discussions with the committee chair and other senior officials.
- Events organized by the institute, including discussions on the outline with: prominent activists for equal burden-sharing, researchers from other organizations, and former senior defense officials.