

# Israel's Current Strategic Security Challenges

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Israel's strategic balance comprises both significant positive elements and developing new threats that signal difficult challenges ahead. Regional trends of recent years indicate a weakening of the state actor, and consequently, a decline in the traditional military threat. On the other hand, a hybrid, asymmetric, and multi-faceted threat from extremist Islamic jihadi elements has emerged. Riding a wave of change and the dissolution of social and political structures – even though this wave was initiated and at the beginning led by young liberals – and a rise in the influence of Islamic movements, the radical Islamist groups have declared war against the old order and stability in the Middle East. They have bolstered their influence using their ability to subvert governance processes and upset daily life in the region, even though they lack the ability to construct new functional frameworks that can satisfy public needs.

This article presents a balance of Israel's strategic security situation, and suggests that the current balance is generally positive. It maps the security challenges and considers how Israel can best deal with the challenges before it, while arresting negative trends and taking advantage of opportunities to stabilize and enhance the positive aspects of the balance. The analysis features a multidisciplinary approach, examining the interface between the various challenges through an integrated look at political, diplomatic, social, economic, humanitarian, military, legal, and media-related dimensions.

## **A Current Positive Balance**

The positive aspects on Israel's security balance sheet are headed by the weakened conventional threat on the northern and northeastern fronts, following the attrition of the Syrian military due to the protracted civil war, and Israel's maintenance of a credible deterrent against Hizbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. These join the disappearance of the threat from the Iraqi army in the preceding decade. The international determination to dismantle the Assad regime's chemical arsenal has created an opportunity to deprive the Syrian army of its primary nonconventional capabilities. The economic crisis in Iran caused by the sanctions has had a negative impact on the Iran-led radical axis in the Middle East – leading to the interim agreement reached in Geneva in November 2013 between Tehran and the P5+1 – with implications too early to determine. Hizbollah's standing in Lebanon has been undermined given its support of the Assad regime and its active involvement in the Syrian civil war. For its part, Hamas, weakened in the wake of the fall of the Muslim Brotherhood regime in Egypt, has also distanced itself from the radical camp through its refusal to support the Assad regime. However, the radical axis continues to struggle to preserve the main elements of its power and influence in the region.

Against the background of the tumult in the Middle East, Israel has managed to keep its distance from the focal points of the regional events and conflicts, positioning itself as an island of stability at a time when many of the regional actors are faced with threatening internal and external challenges. At the same time, Israel has maintained its effective deterrent in the area, in part by initiating, without fanfare, judicious and measured low signature operational actions against the transfer of strategic weapons – air defense weapons and long range precision missiles and rockets – from Syria to Lebanon and from Sudan to Hamas and jihadi groups in the Gaza Strip.

The renewed takeover of the political system by the Egyptian military and the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood from power have halted – at least for now – the strengthening of political Islam in Egypt and, from a broader perspective, in the entire Middle East. Here too the potential inherent risks for Israel have been curbed. For its part, Israel was careful

to maintain its special relations with the Egyptian military even during the one-year rule by the Muslim Brotherhood, and it continues to help boost the military's effectiveness in dealing with the smuggling of weapons to the Gaza Strip through Sinai and in combating jihad terrorist infrastructure in Sinai.

In the third year of its bloody civil war, Syria continues to implode, despite some improvement in the ability of the regime to combat the rebels. In effect, control is divided between the Assad forces and the many uncoordinated opposition groups. The crisis in Syria has created an acute humanitarian problem for Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon, following the flood of refugees into these states. The influx of this Syrian refugee population brings with it a particular risk for escalation in Lebanon, where there is real potential for the upset of internal stability.

In Jordan, governmental stability has been maintained and the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood has been checked. Jordan has managed to contain, albeit with increasing difficulty, the socioeconomic challenges created by the wave of refugees from Syria, but its stamina will be limited without external aid. The peaceful relations between Jordan and Israel have been preserved. The civil war in Syria and its threatening regional consequences, combined with the prevalent feeling in Jordan that the US will not stand by it in times of crisis (in view of the precedents in Egypt and Syria – the American failure to use force, and the embrace of an agreement on chemical weapons that harms the secular opposition – and the agreement reached with Iran) have underscored to both Jordan and Israel how essential their bilateral ties are.

Another ray of light, at least for the moment, is the renewal of the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, following more than four years of impasse. The negotiations, if they do not end in a crisis blamed on Israel, can enhance Israel's international and regional standing, at least in the sense of easing pressures and preparing the ground for future cooperation with moderate Arab countries – even if it takes place through covert channels. In particular, it points to an opportunity that, if properly exploited, will help promote a substantial change in relations between Israel and the Palestinians, even if a permanent agreement is not achieved.

Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, is in deep trouble, following a series of strategic gambits that proved mistaken. These include distancing itself from the radical axis; siding with the Muslim Brotherhood regime in Egypt, a natural choice given Hamas's close affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood camp; and its rejection of reconciliation and unity in the Palestinian ranks. The fall of the Muslim Brotherhood regime deprived Hamas of support and political backing, while the economic and political stagnation in the Gaza Strip has cost it domestic support. Due to the organization's political weakness and helplessness in the regional theater, especially in view of the renewed dialogue between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Hamas will find it difficult to recover its standing in the regional and national arenas. In the event of renewed Fatah-led reconciliation efforts in the Palestinian arena, Hamas will find itself in a position of relative inferiority.

### **Alarming Signs for the Future**

*The Iranian nuclear program:* The preliminary agreement signed by the P5+1 and Iran outlines a path toward a permanent settlement with Iran under the assumption, underscored by US President Barack Obama, that only a diplomatic and economic agreement can persuade Iran to abandon its nuclear weapons program. The preliminary agreement does not eliminate the capabilities in uranium enrichment and weapon systems that Iran has already attained; at best, it freezes the current situation and slightly rolls back existing capabilities. At the same time, the Iranians have long since realized that the world measures the progress of its nuclear program according to breakout time, i.e., the length of time required to obtain enough enriched uranium for a nuclear bomb. They have therefore decided to deny international agencies the ability to point to a smoking gun by building their capabilities "laterally," meaning that they deepen and expand the nuclear program's infrastructure and redundancy mainly by raising the number and quality of centrifuges, increasing the number and defense of sites connected to the project, and developing a parallel plutonium track at the Arak reactor. Iran succeeded thereby in shortening the time it needs to break out to a bomb to a few months. The preliminary agreement allows Iran to retain these capabilities and to position itself as

a nuclear threshold state. Iran has chosen, at least for now, the path of rapprochement in order to achieve a substantive easing of the economic sanctions and calm internal protests. The path to a permanent agreement that will remove the Iranian nuclear threat for the foreseeable future and meet Israel's security interest is long and rocky, and it is far from certain that such an agreement can be achieved.

*The rise of non-state actors:* Non-state actors have assumed greater prominence in the region in tandem with the weakening of the state actors. These non-state elements are becoming stronger militarily, which enables them to inflict security and political harm. Their diverse capabilities to disrupt political processes, upset civilian daily routines, and damage infrastructures have earned them the title of spoilers. Countries where the central government has become weak are hard pressed to contain the activity of aggressive and extremist non-state actors.

The dangers arising from developments in Syria are particularly acute. The ongoing civil war there threatens to make Syria a regional model of a failed and dysfunctional state of the Afghanistan/Somalia type, with the prospect of disintegration and loss of national identity; an additional danger is a spillover of the conflict to Lebanon. Syria has become a base of activity for global jihad activity against the Assad regime and its supporters, particularly Hizbollah and Iranian Republican Guards, which are fighting alongside the regime. The primary jihadi groups active in this theater are Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), aided by various Salafi jihadi groups attacking Hizbollah and Iranian targets on Lebanese soil. Moreover, the spread of the events to Syria's neighbors is threatening to cause parallel disintegration processes, the creation of sectarian enclaves, border changes, and new alliances. A further threat is from the fierce fighting in Sinai between global jihad groups, led by Aknaf Bayt al-Maqdas, and Egyptian government and security forces. These jihadi elements are active against government targets in Egypt itself, and they may receive further support from Muslim Brotherhood supporters frustrated by the toppling of the Morsi government.

Global jihad groups operating in Syria and Lebanon were so far generally not active against Israel (except for isolated rocket fire in August 2013), but several attacks against Israel were launched from Sinai, including rocket

fire aimed at Eilat. Overall, the control by non-state forces, particularly global jihad elements, of areas along Israel's borders where there is no effective state control creates a growing security challenge for Israel and threatens to disrupt daily life – not only in the border areas, but also deeper within the country – and to drag Israel into cross-border conflicts. In particularly serious scenarios, Israel could be forced to conduct operations to remove the threat in populated areas beyond its borders, while being constrained by its responsibility for the local population and the need to limit any collateral damage to a minimum. One possible consequence is damage to relations with Arab governments, including those that have signed peace treaties with Israel. Furthermore, it is difficult when fighting against non-state forces to locate the enemy's strategic centers, achieve a clear and decisive victory that ends the conflict, and introduce stabilization mechanisms to ensure prolonged quiet.

*Relations with the Palestinians:* In tandem with the negotiations with the Palestinians to reach an agreement, it is necessary to prepare for a crisis should it emerge that the gaps between the parties are too wide to be bridged, which leads to a halt in the political process that in turn may lead to renewed conflict in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. An accompanying danger is a decline in the ability of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to enforce law and order, manage its economy, and govern effectively. Political irrelevance and a loss of governance on the part of the PA will leave Israel with no partner for a political process, and without a partner for security coordination and economic cooperation in the Palestinian arena – on top of the defense and economic burdens that are liable to ensue.

*Ostensible United States weakness:* Israel's deterrence – both its range and effect – is liable to be affected by the prevailing perception of US weakness in the Middle East. As a result of its years of exhausting campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, the US has become averse to military intervention, preferring to “lead from behind.” President Obama's policy is to avoid using force whenever possible, as reflected in the administration's policy vis-à-vis Iran and the chemical weapons incident in Syria. These cases reinforce the regional belief that when push comes to shove, the US will not stand by its allies in the area as readily as in the past, and that as with Syria, the American military option against Iran lacks credibility.

*Delegitimization:* Another source of concern for Israel is the delegitimization efforts leveled against it in international and regional forums, particularly given the lack of political progress in the Israeli-Palestinian arena and in view of continued Israeli construction in the West Bank settlements. The renewal of the talks between Israel and the Palestinians under US sponsorship is not enough to counter this trend if there are no concrete signs of a breakthrough toward a settlement that can be implemented. There is also a growing impression that the international community, especially Western countries that are aware that their influence on Middle East developments is limited, is seizing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a key issue whose resolution will ostensibly enable resolution of other problems in the region. While this argument is highly tenuous, Israel must take into account the political and diplomatic difficulties it will face if the negotiations with the Palestinians fail, especially if a violent conflict ensues. This is compounded by international opposition to the use of force and Israel's negative image as a country that employs disproportionate force.

### **The Strategic Security Goals**

The threats and opportunities facing Israel define its political and security goals and its preferred areas of focus, in its attempt to arrest negative trends and cultivate positive developments.

*The Iranian challenge:* A primary goal for Israel is for Iran to be impelled to reach a permanent agreement with the major powers that will ensure that a breakout to nuclear capability requires a long time. This entails combining negotiations with political measures, economic pressure, and financial incentives, and demonstrating a credible military option – not only by Israel, but also on the part of the US. Israel should focus on an attempt to influence the content of the agreement between the US/the international community and Iran, and on reining in Iran's ability to deceive the West. At the same time, Israel must continue to demand, especially from the US, continuation of the sanctions regime with no letup as long as Iran has not implemented the preliminary agreement, and as long as Iran places obstacles to achievement of a permanent settlement. Israel must also make sure that its military option is ready if it is needed.



*The radical axis in the Middle East:* Another goal is to undermine and work toward the dissolution of the radical axis. A change of regime in Damascus will serve this purpose and remove Iran and Hizbollah from their positions of influence in Syria, although it may present new risks. Israel's ability to promote this far reaching goal is limited, owing to disagreements between the major powers, especially the US and Russia, over what action should be taken in order to stabilize Syria, and due to concern that Syria will disintegrate into enclaves and cantons – for which the West will be held responsible – and become a stronghold of al-Qaeda and other Islamic jihadi organizations. Israel must decide whether achieving this objective is worthwhile from its perspective, even at the risk of the development of a failed and divided state that serves as an operational base for jihadi groups on its northern border. At the same time, it is critical to help implement the international agreement on the dismantlement of Syria's chemical arsenal. If the Assad regime survives, Israel must continue to consider military operations against strategic weapons in Syria in order to prevent their transfer to Hizbollah in Lebanon or their falling into the hands of jihadi elements in Syria itself. In any case, a prolonged period of instability can be expected in Syria, which will present challenges to Israel's ongoing security, particularly in the area of the border between Israel and Syria, but also along Israel's border with Jordan and Lebanon, due to a possible spread of the crisis to Jordan and Lebanon that would generate internal shocks.

*Securing the borders:* An important need has arisen to improve security along the borders with Syria, Lebanon, the Gaza Strip, Sinai, and even Jordan, in order to prevent infiltration, terrorism against Israel, and weapons smuggling into the PA and the Gaza Strip. In order to secure the borders, better border defense systems and enhanced deterrence, including by means of covert operations, are necessary in a continuous integrative framework between the systems.<sup>1</sup> In this context, it is essential to preserve security coordination with the Egyptian and Jordanian militaries, and to foster direct communications between Israeli security agencies and their counterparts in Arab countries, even in Lebanon, for the purpose of avoiding uncontrolled escalation following terrorist attacks by global jihad groups, Hizbollah, and other extremist elements. The strengthening of global jihad



groups, including al-Qaeda, and their consolidation near Israel's borders require the development of offensive and defensive intelligence and operational capabilities; the establishment of broad regional coordination, including coordination with local groups and forces; and multidisciplinary levers of influence in order to blunt the ability of hostile groups to cause damage.

*The Israeli-Palestinian political process:* In addition to the direct advantages derived from progress in the Israeli-Palestinian arena, progress in the political process will improve Israel's chances of promoting normalization and deepening its security cooperation with its neighbors in the region. Israel can accomplish this by moving forward on three parallel axes: negotiations toward a permanent settlement, transitional arrangements based on the principle that "what is agreed on will be implemented" before a permanent agreement is achieved, given the difficulties in bridging the gaps on the core issues; and independent measures, whether coordinated or not, to shape a two-state reality. The essence of the three axes is to design a supportive environment for the political process, while consolidating a stable and responsible Palestinian government that functions effectively and fosters economic growth. Progress on the three axes is conditional on security calm and stability, based on the persistent operational activity by the IDF and the security services that is essential for destroying the terrorist infrastructure, combined with ongoing improvement in the Palestinian economy and living conditions of the population and close cooperation with the Palestinian security agencies.

*Restraining Hamas:* Another goal linked to the Palestinian arena, and as such, to Israel's relations with its neighbors, especially Egypt, is limiting the potential damage that Hamas can cause. Israel can exploit Hamas's weakness to reach understandings on the basis of security quiet in exchange for economic development and benefits in the border crossings with the Gaza Strip. In this context, Israel should emphasize that Hamas is the authority in the Gaza Strip, and as such is responsible for preventing terrorist activity against Israel by other organizations operating there. If Hamas continues to weaken and opposition to it increases among the Gaza population, there might be an opportunity for the formation of a coalition with Egypt and moderate Arab states in order to increase the pressure on

Hamas and force it to choose between loss of power and acceptance of prolonged calm, including cooperation and reconciliation with the PA. In order to moderate the anticipated security threat from the logistical and operational connection between jihadi operatives in the Gaza Strip and Sinai, Israel, in coordination with Egypt, must demand that Hamas be accountable for terrorist activity by global jihad groups originating in the Gaza Strip, even if it is carried out from Sinai.

*Policy coordination and cooperation:* Israel, Arab states, and the West are contending with non-state actors in dynamic theaters of activity across a number of continents, and it is therefore difficult to focus the conflict on a well defined enemy territory. One of the formulas to improve the ability to confront these groups is closer political and defense cooperation (intelligence, military, humanitarian, diplomatic, communications, economic, and so on) between Israel and Western countries, particularly the US, and between Israel and the pragmatic Arab countries. New cooperative relationships should be established, and existing coordination with Middle East countries – Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf emirates, as well as with Turkey – should be strengthened, for the purpose of joint action to prevent cross-border weapons smuggling and infiltration by terrorist operatives. Coordination will facilitate prevention of hostile activity at the planning and organization phases, not only at the operational phases. Beyond security cooperation, joint economic projects and ventures in new markets in the region can be promoted, including water and energy projects, as a basis for political and strategic understandings.

The possibility of improved relations with Arab states is necessarily tied to the changes in the social pyramid in the Middle East. Young people from the middle class who are pushing for change have a growing influence on the political agenda, the balance of power between the various groups in society, and the conduct of the ruling elite. It is easier for the new social forces to defy conventions and existing frameworks, but they have difficulty in forming effective political organizations and political alliances and redesigning state structures and mechanisms to meet the needs of the general public. In order to promote security and stability in the region, an attempt should be made to enlist the various active civilian groups through a dialogue on matters pertaining to the design of effective government,

economic growth, and security. The social networks are likely to be of assistance in having this dialogue and gauging and understanding the public moods in Arab countries. A direct approach through these networks to shapers of public opinion and known figures on the social networks may help build trust and provide grounds for a relationship, which has the potential to yield long term positive consequences.

Israel is dependent on American security and political assistance, and relations with the US constitute an important element in Israel's regional deterrent image. Israel should therefore continue to strive for cooperation with the various arms of the American defense establishment by taking the global and Middle East interests of the US into account, though without impinging on its own freedom of action in all matters pertaining to its right of self defense.

### **Selective Use of Hard Power Integrated with Other Means**

Ehud Barak, in his position as Minister of Defense, defined several fundamental principles for a broad solution to Israel's defense challenges, including:<sup>2</sup> insisting on the right to self defense, meaning that Israel bears sole responsibility for making decisions about its security and destiny, and enhancing its self defense capability. Indeed, the attainment of these political and security goals should drive all of Israel's endeavors. Israel's concept for exercising force, however, is still limited and focuses more on obtaining military results – victory, decision, and deterrence – and less on political, economic, and infrastructure results and on processes that serve the interests of Israel in the regional and international arenas.

One essential element for effective pursuit of the goals defined by the government is legitimacy, both domestic, i.e., from civil society, and international. In order to obtain legitimacy, it is important to recognize that force is no more than one of the available means of attaining political and security goals. Indeed, shaping the results of the conflict does not depend exclusively on which force wins on the battlefield, and particularly when more difficult challenges are involved, it is hard to achieve a clear cut military decision. As such, legitimacy and proportionality in the use of military force, construction of the Israeli narrative, and international recognition of that narrative are essential. A military option should therefore

be chosen only after all the non-military efforts have been exhausted: political, legal, economic, and humanitarian, along with strong strategic messages and media efforts.

A strategy to build legitimacy demands comprehension of the special challenges and the possible consequences of actions, definition of the strategic problem, and formulation of the intelligence-operational technique that constitutes the optimal solution to counter the enemy's operation. The military forces should be trained and prepared for short, targeted military missions to achieve a clear decision in engagements at the tactical level, while avoiding situations in which such a decision is impossible. Cumulative tactical decisions affect the enemy's ability and desire to initiate a renewed conflict, and the extent to which the population can be recruited to support it.

In order to best utilize military force, control of the conflict's intensity and stages of escalation is necessary, while striving to keep the campaign short, reduce damage to the home front, and return to daily routine quickly. The scope of military action also depends on political and humanitarian measures that are taken in parallel to the military operations. Collateral damage should be limited, and friction with the civilian population in enemy territory should be minimized.

Because Israel confronts non-state actors and global jihad groups and has limited capability to influence their agendas, it is important to enhance the elements of deterrence against them and to weaken these players with a series of covert surprise actions that affect their capabilities and organizational capacity. This corresponds to the concept of a continuous low level campaign between the larger operations that aims at disruption and interruption of the buildup of forces and prevents the equipment of recalcitrant elements with weapons that alter the balance of power and are liable to affect Israel's military supremacy and relative advantages, while minimizing undesirable consequences of these operations and avoiding uncontrolled escalation to a high intensity conflict. In order to consolidate prolonged security quiet while strengthening deterrence, an important instrument is a stable security regime based on arrangements or understandings with the enemy that are concluded following the use of force.

## **Implications for Military Force Buildup**

Given the consistent decline in the percentage of the GDP and the state budget allocated to the defense budget, the Brodet Commission framework, which advocated a multi-year security establishment budget to support multi-year planning and criteria for growth of the defense budget, should be implemented. Limited resources, constraints, and growing uncertainty require the government to set clear priorities for defense expenditure through an assessment of the contribution of the different security-military solutions to challenges designated as important.

Specifically, Israel should focus on the following areas: (1) maintaining the IDF's offensive force and its ability to achieve quickly the targets set by the political leadership in the event of a decline in security and escalation, particularly vis-à-vis the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, and its ability to adjust quickly and deal with asymmetric threats from additional theaters; (2) reinforcing the elements of Israel's home front defense by continued development of warning and missile interception systems, unmanned rockets, and aerial vehicles; cyber capabilities; and strengthened border defense through the construction of sophisticated barriers with astute intelligence and observation capabilities covering the other side of the border; (3) maintaining the IDF's ability to shift its effort between fronts on short notice, while relying on the air force's flexibility and intelligence capabilities; (4) consolidating deterrence through construction of long range operational capabilities that can strike at the enemy's force and infrastructure deep within enemy territory, while maintaining surprise and a low signature; (5) strengthening operational intelligence, especially data collection and processing, which, combined with attack capabilities and precision firepower, will make it possible to take full advantage of the IDF's operational capabilities; (6) stepping up use of unmanned tools (airborne as well as land systems), which make it possible to penetrate enemy territory and launch precision strikes against enemy targets, while reducing harm to IDF forces; and (7) developing less deadly weapons that reduce collateral damage and injury in general and in particular to uninvolved civilians, especially in scenarios of civilian disobedience.

The defense aid and Israel's strategic cooperation with the US constitute a central element in the buildup of the IDF and the maintenance of its

qualitative edge against a range of military and asymmetric challenges. It is critical for Israel to carefully adhere to its understandings with the US administration and continue to develop cooperation with the US armed forces and joint military capabilities.

## **Conclusion**

Israel's defense anchors are based on: (1) preserving and strengthening its peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan, while striving to reach a settlement with the Palestinians, which will open opportunities for regional security arrangements and agreements and understandings with Arab countries; (2) Israel's deterrence, which rests on its unique offensive and defensive military capabilities, flexibility, and rapid adjustment to new situations, together with the readiness and determination to use force – openly or clandestinely – when necessary; (3) Israel's qualitative and technological advantages in both the civilian and military spheres; and (4) the resilience of Israel's civilian society, combined with reinforcement of Israel's strategic and home front defense, preservation of the operational continuity of systems, economic growth, and daily life.

In order to deal with the security challenges facing Israel, the Israeli government should formulate a policy that combines simultaneous efforts in three spheres. In the security sphere, Israel should continue to rely on its independent core capabilities and its right to self defense by consolidating its deterrence, reinforcing its defensive capabilities, and conducting missions against immediate concrete threats. In the international sphere, Israel should deepen its special relationship with the US, Israel's principal ally in diplomacy, security, and economics. At the same time, efforts must be made to neutralize the delegitimization pressures, in part through a genuine effort to make progress toward a settlement with the Palestinians while avoiding new facts on the ground as long as a serious political process is underway. In addition, Israel should support efforts by the international community to reach a settlement with Tehran that will leave Iran sufficiently removed from a nuclear bomb, and should conduct an open dialogue with the international community on a variety of topics of common interest, as well as topics in dispute. Finally, in the regional sphere, in view of the events and processes in the Middle East, an opportunity exists to promote

partnerships with Arab countries and with societies, groups, and sectors playing a critical role in reshaping the Middle East. Israel has unique advantages in technology, water, and even energy, through which it can expand its relationships in the region. In many cases progress toward arrangements with the Palestinians is a precondition for that to happen.

The nature of the challenges developing in Israel's strategic environment, together with the accepted rules of the game in the international sphere, require Israel to adopt a multidisciplinary approach that combines political, diplomatic, military, social, economic, humanitarian, legal, and media-conscious dimensions. Situation assessments should be conducted while taking into account sources of power and centers of influence, including those that are not military and reflect cultural, value, and normative ideas and aspirations. If military force becomes essential, its full effectiveness will require addressing the legitimacy aspect before, during, and after the force is used.

Integrated multidisciplinary thinking, even if it is not simple to formulate or implement, will help Israel promote dialogue and understandings with its allies and neighbors, leverage its military achievements to yield political gains, and establish acceptable rules of the game and stable security regimes in its environment.

## Notes

- 1 This refers to covert military and intelligence operations, usually with a low signature, carried out between rounds of conflict that escalate into larger scale military conflicts.
- 2 Ehud Barak in his position as Minister of Defense in a speech to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on March 19, 2012, State of Israel, Ministry of Defense.