Introduction: On the Limitations of Military Doctrine

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ONE OF THE MANY REASONS for the humbling of the mighty Israel Defense Forces (IDF) during the 2006 Lebanon War was an Israeli combat doctrine named Systemic Operational Design, better known by its perhaps aptly abbreviated acronym SOD.

The brainchild of a group of military intellectuals clustered around the IDF's Operational Theory Research Institute (OTRI), SOD was first mooted in 1995. It was an operational doctrine that drew on U.S. studies and postmodern French philosophical and textual analysis to develop an integrative critical and creative approach to the battlefield and generate new means of addressing old problems. The basic paper outlining SOD was signed by then incoming Chief of Staff Dan Halutz and formally adopted as the IDF's operational doctrine in April 2006.[1]

Put to almost immediate test in southern Lebanon, the IDF's experience with SOD in July 2006 was disastrous. Not only did its intellectual content challenge senior officers' understanding, but its somewhat rarified Foucauldian precepts sowed confusion rather than clarity on the battlefield, with the consequence that orders were misunderstood, misinterpreted, or altogether ignored. Rather than help to "integrate" operations, SOD played a significant part in the tactical disorder that marked the IDF's performance over the thirty-three days of the war.[2]

The results were predictable. SOD was rapidly dropped, as the Israeli high command grappled with its shortcomings and failures as revealed by the war, and Halutz's successive replacements (Gabriel "Gabi" Ashkenazi and Benjamin "Benny" Gantz) launched a long process of organizational and doctrinal reevaluation that passed through the 2007 Meridor Commission, the 2008 Winograd Commission, and finally culminated in the 2015 IDF Strategy of Lt. Gen. Gadi Eisenkot (hereafter ED, short for Eisenkot Document), made available in English for the first time here, by the *Journal of Palestine Studies* (*JPS*).

Published in August 2015, the ED consists of thirty-three pages (in the original Hebrew) and is a shorter and unclassified version of a more comprehensive attempt to produce a five-year IDF plan known as "Gideon."[3] Unlike SOD, which was never made public and dealt with *operational* issues and *combat techniques*, the ED is intended as a *strategic* document that encompasses a broad spectrum of grand strategy analysis, prediction, and recommendation, as measured against a

complex matrix of operational, tactical, and logistical measures. It may be worth remembering that Israel has never previously formalized its strategic doctrine in a comprehensive and detailed manner, even though its leaders and military theoreticians since David Ben-Gurion have emphasized a varied set of principles and precepts that have assumed the character of an agreed, if tacit, doctrinal corpus.[4] The ED represents a significant departure insofar as it is the first time that the IDF has published an official account of its fundamental driving principles.[5]

The ED can be seen to comprise three main parts: first, a succinct "Strategy Document" that describes Israel's strategic and operational environment and that delineates the *basic principles* guiding its military actions (chapters 1–3); second, a description of the IDF's command structure and procedures (chapter 4); and third, the prescription of a series of follow-up steps (chapter 5).

In brief bullet points, the ED covers inter alia, national goals, threat perceptions, the domestic, regional, and international contexts, technical and technological challenges, the main functions and roles of the IDF, the different conditions (or "operating statuses") for the use of force, the importance of cyberwarfare, intelligence, questions of legitimacy, issues of command and control, resource utilization, defense capabilities, special operations, and the priorities for the five-year period covered by the document.

The ED contains no truly bold or startling innovation. It includes most of the elements that have long been part of Israel's strategic-military practice. It consolidates and elaborates on the well-established fundamentals of offensive action, deterrence, and the combination of early warning and intelligence. It highlights the "cunning" or "maneuver" approach, a variation of B. H. Liddell Hart's indirect approach as espoused by Israel's military theorists since 1948.

A number of new frameworks and conceptual elaborations may be worth noting, however. In light of developments after the so-called Arab Spring, Israel's traditional concerns with the threat from Arab states is downgraded in favor of the threat posed by sub- or nonstate actors (Hamas and Hezbollah), and "distant" players (Iran). Rather than what is conventionally referred to as the Eastern Front threat, the ED posits failed (Syria) or failing states (Lebanon) as a source of potential threat. Building on Moshe Dayan's longstanding distinction between "current" and "basic" security[6] (that is, daily versus existential threats), the ED introduces a new set of distinctions between "Routine," "Emergency," and "War" (REW) situations to address these threats. The first two pertain largely to sub-state actors and the third relates to a more state-like threat, although it is recognized that the boundaries between what it calls the three "statuses" may be fluid.

The ED sets a number of strategic/political goals for managing each category of threat: *deferring* the next confrontation via the exercise of force; *maintaining* or *improving* the status quo *after* the enemy has initiated hostile action; and *fundamentally altering the status quo* by neutralizing or otherwise degrading the enemy's capabilities. It also further elaborates on the REW concept by describing it here as a continuum that goes from reducing the enemy's freedom of action, to demonstrating the futility of an opponent's resort to force via a limited military campaign, to full military decision if and when achievable and appropriate (chapter 3, paragraphs 3 and 4).

As can be expected, the ED is essentially an attempt to prepare for the next "war." Despite all other potential threats and possibilities, it is another confrontation with Hezbollah in Lebanon that remains most likely, as recently highlighted by Eisenkot himself.[7] (Gaza is likely to remain within the first two shades of the REW spectrum.) One Israeli military analyst puts it thus:

> The IDF document sets the goal of preparing tens of thousands of targets in Lebanon and Syria and thousands in Gaza ahead of a conflict, and striking thousands of targets daily during a conflict, including targets of opportunity. To enable this, the IDF is revolutionizing connectivity within and between service branches, combat units, and intelligence assets. Ground maneuvers will be launched from the outset of a conflict (unlike in the 2006 Lebanon war), including a new emphasis on surprise operations aimed at centers of gravity in the enemy's operational or strategic rear, employing significant ground or Special Forces led by new command structures. The overall offensive concept is based on maintaining Israel's qualitative edge as well as its air, naval, and intelligence superiority, and on ensuring critical mass of forces and capabilities.[8]

As befits the author of the Dahiya doctrine, the publication of the ED may be intended as much as a warning and/or deterrent to its opponents as it is a manual for the IDF.[9]

Be that as it may, a few other salient points emerge from the document. The first is that *Defense* has now been formally added to *Deterrence* as a pillar of Israel's strategic doctrine. This is a development first mooted by the 2004–7 Meridor Commission, but that had hitherto not been formalized. *Defense* requires Israel not only to undertake passive measures to protect its population and economic infrastructure via technological means, but to actively prevent any territorial changes as a result of the enemy's resort to force (chapter 3, paragraph 20). The need to incorporate a defensive element represents a substantial psychological and moral shift from the decades-old prevalence of the offensive as being the essence of Israel's overall strategic deterrent posture (see chapter 5, paragraphs 10–18, for the balance between defense and offense).

Another relatively new development is the emphasis on integration between what the ED describes as "the various nonmilitary kinetic dimensions," having to do with "legitimizing" Israel's military actions, where the document maintains that "the enemy" has made gains that have managed to offset the IDF's past successes (chapter 3, paragraph 16). This requires a comprehensive effort to carry out legal and public diplomacy so as to allow the IDF to attain its objectives, "including legitimacy for its action" and "taking into account the media's power" as part of its force buildup (chapter 5, paragraph 34).

The ED has two striking omissions. Perhaps most interesting from a Palestinian perspective is the absence of any mention of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's central doctrinal plank based on "defensible borders" (as per Yigal Allon's first post-1967 articulation).[10] This doctrine precludes the acceptance of the 1967 lines as a basis for any territorial compromise. The ED naturally mentions the need to defend borders and protect the civilian population, but there is no doctrinal invocation of defensible borders as such or any indication that Israel's strategic concept

allows for a full or limited withdrawal from the West Bank. One may assume that this has been deliberately lifted from the strategic domain and handed over to the political authorities as a matter of principle, or that Eisenkot (with a possible political future in mind) has simply taken a decision not to take sides in the longstanding Israeli debate over this issue for the moment.

The other notable omission that relates to an equally significant plank of the current prime minister's global offensive has to do with Iran. Although it is named in the document as a potential source of threat, Iran's *nuclear* program gets no mention or analysis at all. This may have to do with the desire to avoid any mention of Israel's own nuclear strategy and options,[11] which unsurprisingly remain firmly outside the ED's remit. It may also reflect Eisenkot's assessment that the putative Iranian threat can be adequately addressed via a combination of deterrence, early warning, and preemption if necessary (chapter 5, paragraph 36).

Much of the ED is a matter of commonsense classification, even if the proliferation of concepts and categories occasionally appears to challenge Occam's razor.[12] While seeking to escape the thick cloudbank arising from the aftereffects of SOD, the new strategy document offers a very wide and often overlapping list of imperatives (see, for instance, chapters 4 and 5). Yet all this appears in something of a vacuum. Despite the emphasis on initiative and action, the most obvious question remains: Initiative and action to what end? This is not a question for the military echelon to answer but is, at heart, a grand strategic question relating to the goals of the state and the means available to attain them.

In this context, Israel's broader political goals remain unclear. The recent history of its resort to force does not bode well for the marriage between means and ends; indeed, one could claim that this has been characteristic of almost all Israeli military adventures since 1967. As for now and tomorrow: What does Israel really seek on the Palestinian front and how does the ED help to achieve it? What is the *political* horizon for dealing with sub-state actors, and is the military tool meant to serve a political goal or is it purely a matter of matching force against force? Besides preempting or defending against so-called far off threats, what is the long-term strategic focus for dealing with Iran: Is Tehran (or is the current regime at least) an implacable and unrelenting enemy, a possible regional neutral balancing factor, or even a long-term potential partner, if not ally?

Part of any serious military doctrine is that it should be malleable and adaptable both to changes in the geostrategic environment and to the priorities and goals of the political authority—and government. The ED may be seen in this light to a certain degree. But without a clear overriding *political* context, the IDF's military strategy will continue to fail the Clausewitzian test of means and ends. Despite the stinging lessons of the 2006 Lebanon War and the limitations of Israel's overwhelming superiority as exposed by successive bouts of Gaza warfare, the problems Israel faces have less to do with the techniques and conditions of applying force, and more to do with the limits of force itself in addressing its political dilemmas.

About the Author

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IDF Strategy, August 2015 (excerpts)

This document was especially translated for JPS *by Ayelet Hanfling. Below are substantial excerpts of the English text that is available in full at www.palestine-studies.org/jps. The original Hebrew document can be found at go.ynet.co.il/pic/news/16919.pdf.*

In recent years the strategic environment has witnessed numerous developments that have led to a change in the nature and intensity of the threat to the State of Israel, expanding from "first-circle" threats [from Israel's immediate neighbors] to remote ones. The concept developed in this document is based on an understanding that first-circle conventional and unconventional threats are in decline, while a rise is detected in subconventional threats (terrorist organizations, underground warfare, high-trajectory fire, and so forth) and cyber threats. In addition, as we write these lines we recognize the need to build up the IDF's force through the advancement of the multiyear plan, ultimately preparing for both multitheater, multidimensional defense and a simultaneous attack on multiple fronts.

IDF Strategy presents the changes required in the IDF to confront future challenges and changes in the enemy's characteristics. These include improving and strengthening the effectiveness of ground maneuver, diversifying operational capabilities during the campaign between wars, reinforcing the cyber dimension, and maintaining clear intelligence, and air and naval superiority. In terms of force deployment, the strategy is based on enduring fundamental principles— deterrence, early warning, defense, military decision,* and victory. In addition, in order to permit effective use of IDF capabilities throughout the war theater, this document regulates the Command and Control approach for battle.

Working on the "IDF Strategy" document has been a part of IDF operational activity for many years now. The concept developed in this document will serve as the foundation for processes the IDF will pursue in the framework of the "Gideon" Multiyear Plan, and act as a guiding compass for IDF force deployment and buildup. This, with the intent of fully utilizing capabilities, and while studying the changes in enemy characteristics and recognizing the power of the IDF.

Formulating this strategy is not the ultimate test. The burden of proof lays in carrying out missions during routine, emergency, and war times. The IDF will successfully face any mission and overcome any challenge on its way to realize its mission—to defend and win.

August 2015   Lieutenant General Gadi Eisenkot
                                                      Chief of General Staff

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* [Military decision refers to a decisive win against the enemy within the context of a limited campaign or battle, with a limited strategic objective. Rather than achieving total victory in an ongoing conflict, it is "designed to eliminate the enemy's will to fight and achieve long-term deterrence. The term . . . assumes a more relative character [than victory] . . . [and is] consistent with the Israeli goal of fighting short conflicts." See Michael Hertzog, "New IDF Strategy Goes Public," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 28 August 2015, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/new-idf-strategy-goes-public. —Trans.]

CHAPTER I: THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

1. IDF Strategy is the conceptual and practical foundation for all core military documents. As such, it is based on the vital national interests, the basic conventions of national security, and the foundations of military thought and practice. It offers guidance on how to integrate the basic conventions of national security with the principles and rules of military theories.

The National Goals

2. The following are the national goals of the State of Israel:[1]

   a. Securing Israel's existence, and safeguarding its territorial integrity and the security of its citizens and residents.

   b. Preserving the values of the State of Israel and its character as a Jewish and democratic state, and as a national home for the Jewish people.

   c. Securing Israel's social and economic resilience.

   d. Strengthening Israel's international and regional standing, while striving for peace with its neighbors.

Sources of Threat

3. The following are the sources of threat to the State of Israel: **Countries**—distant (Iran) and near (Lebanon), failing states, or in the process of breaking down (Syria); **sub-state organizations** (Hezbollah, Hamas); or **terrorist groups unaffiliated with a particular state or community** (Global Jihad, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, ISIS [Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham], and others).

National Security Principles

4. The military aspect of the national security concept—deterrence, early warning, defense, and military decision—is embodied in the following principles:

   a. Reliance on a **defensive security strategy** aimed at securing Israel's existence, generating effective deterrence, neutralizing threats when necessary, and deferring confrontation.

   b. **Offensive military strategy**—the basic premise is that the enemy cannot be defeated via defensive tactics. Therefore, offensive force deployment is required to produce decisive military outcomes. Force shall be deployed with determination, with the objective of securing the political goals, while following the rules of international law, with an emphasis on the laws of warfare[2] and preserving Israel's legitimacy.

   c. **Strategic cooperation**—strengthening the relationship with the United States and developing strategic relationships with other key countries. In addition, strengthening and reinforcing epicenters of support around the world.

   d. **Strengthening Israel's regional standing**—maintenance of peace accords, and fully utilizing potential for cooperation with moderate forces in the region.

   e. **Preserving the IDF's relative advantage** that is based on human quality, advanced technological capabilities (weapons), and various intelligence capabilities.

5. The national security concept's organizing principle is:

   a. **Long peaceful interim periods** to enable the development of society, science, and the economy, as well as improve the country's readiness for emergency and war.

   b. **Creating deterrence** vis-à-vis the regional environment and against forces that might generate threats. Relies on possessing strong and relevant military power, and a firm willingness to fully exercise military force as needed.

   c. **Routine**—attaining, deepening, and maintaining deterrence through force buildup, and creating a credible threat regarding Israel's willingness and ability to use its military force. Simultaneously, coordinating activities of all Israeli security forces to undermine the enemy's capabilities and force buildup.

   d. **During emergency and war**—quickly remove threat, while reducing the damage to Israel and in order to bolster Israel's deterrence in the region.

Link between National Goals and Force Deployment

6. When deployment of the military is necessary, the civilian-political echelon should formulate instruction for the military as follows:

   a. What are the goals and what are the required strategic end states?

   b. What is the military's role and how does it fit with achieving these goals?

   c. What are the constraints on the use of military force?

   d. Definition of additional efforts (diplomatic, economic, media, social) and the IDF's role in their context.

7. The civilian-political echelon's instructions require constant clarification and communication with the senior military echelon (the chief of staff). Civilian guidance is the foundation for the strategic thinking processes taking place at the General Staff level, but is also informed by them— the influence is mutual.

CHAPTER II: THE STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

1. In recent years the threat to the State of Israel has transformed. In the past, the enemy strove to promote a vision emphasizing Arab nationalism, and mainly sought to overpower Israel using regular armies. Nowadays, the enemy waves a local, sectarian, and religious flag, and has switched to a modus operandi that combines regular military operations, guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and a "soft" campaign.

International and Strategic Environment Characteristics

2. **The following strategic logics can be observed within Israel's external environment:**

   a. The enemy strives to impose Islamic rule across the Middle East, including in Israel. The enemy seeks to wear down and exhaust Israeli society, operating under the assumption that it will prove to have little resilience.

   b. Islamic "resistance" movements aspire to replace regimes and try to establish themselves in remote regions characterized by weak governance.

    c. Difficulties vis-à-vis Western countries, affecting Israel's international legitimacy.

3. **Within Israel's domestic environment:**

    a. Israel is a peaceful country, striving to avoid conflicts.

    b. Should Israel be forced into confrontation, it will consolidate its capabilities and prevail.

    c. Changes in the national agenda lead to reduced investment in defense, in favor of socioeconomic development. Simultaneously, the IDF is still expected to secure swift military decision and defend against all threats.

Operational Environment Characteristics

4. **The enemy's force deployment characteristics have changed and pose new challenges for the IDF:**

    a. A decline of threats posed by regular state armies and a rise of threats from sub-state organizations, irregular or semi-regular, supported by Iran and aspiring to become governing entities themselves (threat of enemy invasion has declined, while threat of limited infiltration from terrorist attacks or propaganda victories has remained).

    b. Rise in threat of rocket fire on Israel's heartland (perimeter, output, accuracy, warhead size, survivability), and attempt to pose a strategic threat to vulnerable national interests and the Israeli economy. Simultaneously, ongoing efforts to guarantee the survivability of rocket units through decentralization, concealment, fortification, and the use of the civilian environment for bargaining leverage and to create the semblance of victory.

    c. The enemy's deployment and assimilation within populated civilian areas aims at imposing difficulties on IDF combat operations, increasing harm to noncombatants and restricting the IDF's freedom of action.

    d. Combat capabilities (IEDs, short-range rockets, antitank missiles, SAM, AShM, EW, underground warfare)* designed to deter and disrupt IDF ground, air, and naval operations, offset its technological edge, maximize civilian and military casualties, and increase strategic pressure on Israel.

    e. A multidisciplinary approach during and between campaigns, including cyberattacks, propaganda and legal efforts, and terrorist attacks in Israel and abroad, such as kidnapping civilians and soldiers for bargaining purposes, and so forth.

5. **Regarding operational capabilities:**

    a. The IDF's costs of arms, intelligence, and defense skyrocket in light of the operational challenge the enemy poses, at significantly lower costs.

    b. The IDF's technological edge is put to the test due to the spread of some technologies, previously only available to defense and government industries, to the civilian market.

6. In fire campaigns against sub-state Islamic organizations the IDF will need to:

    a. End the campaign with victory and dictate the terms for ending hostilities.

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* [The acronyms IEDs, SAM, AShM, and EW refer to, respectively, improvised explosive devices, surface-to-air missile, anti-ship missile, and electronic warfare. – Ed.]

b. Significantly minimize damage to the home front.

c. Ensure an improved security reality postbellum, undermining the enemy's ability to rebuild its power.

d. Preserve force deployment legitimacy.

7. Militarily, confrontation will require a decision on the best combination and prioritization of efforts—defensive, offensive, special operations and other supporting efforts—in order to run a campaign that best supports the political-strategic goal and is compatible with the allocated resources.

Additional Outlines Not at the Heart of the Concept

8. When performing risk and opportunity assessments, potential shifts should be taken into account given the high level of uncertainty in the region.

CHAPTER III: IDF FORCE DEPLOYMENT

1. This chapter will present the general principles for IDF deployment during routine, emergency, and war times, the central political and strategic goals of the IDF, the IDF's basic operating statuses, and the methods and logics of operation in each of these.

General Principles for IDF Force Deployment

2. The following are the general principles for IDF force deployment:

a. **Preventing conflict and deterring the enemy:**

i. Campaign to weaken negative elements of powers, undermine enemy's capabilities, and demonstrate high and immediate readiness to fulfill military's mission—**to defend and win.**

ii. Extending and deepening regional and international cooperation against enemies.

b. **Early warning and intelligence[3] regarding enemy's capabilities and intentions:**

i. Preserving intelligence superiority that enables sufficient early warning on enemy's capabilities and intentions.

ii. Preserving early-warning capabilities vis-à-vis countries, sub-state military organizations, and terrorist organizations, including identification of shifts—in all levels: strategic, campaign, and tactical.

iii. Intelligence that enables operational planning and dealing critical blows to the enemy.

c. **Defense and protection:**

i. Defense in all four dimensions (land, sea, air, and cyber).

ii. Protecting Israel's citizens and residents, its infrastructure, and its territorial integrity (maintaining sovereignty).

iii. Denying the enemy any territorial gain in the aftermath of confrontation, and minimizing its gains in all other dimensions.

d. **Victory and military decision:**

i. Realizing the IDF's military superiority in order to achieve operation's goals, as defined by the political echelon, so as to improve Israel's strategic position.

ii. Maintaining ongoing war and economic efforts through effective and multidimensional (ground, sea, air, and cyber) defense.

iii. On the tactical level—achieving military decision over the enemy in every encounter.

The Objective of Military Action during IDF Operating Statuses

3. One can define a number of key strategies and political objectives for force deployment:

   a. **Deferring the next confrontation** by exercising force during routine periods.

   b. **Preserving or improving the strategic status quo** after the enemy has initiated violent operations characterized by changing operating patterns and targets.

   c. **Fundamentally changing the status quo**, to the extent of changing the strategic balance. This entails either neutralizing actors or fundamentally altering their capabilities or standing.

4. Alongside the operations continuum we define a continuum of IDF operating statuses, distinguishing between three possible statuses: **routine, emergency, and war (REW)**. The operating status is defined by the chief of staff's analysis of the required military modus operandi. This definition helps articulate the IDF's judgment of the conflict's regional context, sustain a dialogue with the political echelon, define the basic political situation, and make decisions on mobilizing national resources:

   a. **Routine** status includes routine security measures, the ongoing limited conflict, and the campaign between wars (CBW).

   b. **Emergency** refers to limited operations and campaigns not in the framework of a war.

   c. **War**.

5. IDF Strategy is based on operations that enable the achievement of required goals through organizing missions, resources, and the command chain in a way that enables optimal operation.

6. The IDF will effectively respond to any surprise moves initiated by the enemy, and work to identify strategic opportunities in the region.

7. Methods and logics of actions in each operating status:

   a. **Routine**—defensive and offensive operations, generation of legitimacy, and nonmilitary operations aimed at reducing enemy's freedom of action and increasing that of Israel.[4]

   b. **Emergency**—limited (compared to war) use of military power, aimed at demonstrating the futility of using force against Israel, and at restoring peace and quiet without seeking an immediate strategic change. Disruption of daily life on the home front shall be as limited as possible. Additionally, campaign will focus on limited/delimited objective.[5]

   c. **War**—force deployment during war is characterized by substantial mobilization of military and national resources, readiness to take great risks, and high levels of ongoing force deployment in order to **secure victory**.

Campaigns during Emergency and War

8. The basic scenario this paragraph refers to is **a confrontation with sub-state military organizations** (such as Hezbollah and Hamas, as characterized above). Though this scenario

is specific, the response—the force deployment concepts and the capabilities to be developed during force buildup—is also largely suitable for campaigns vis-à-vis armies and countries.

9. Any use of force is within unique context, logic, and operating patterns. This document will present two central patterns with clearly distinct logics, both politically and militarily, and these will serve as the basis for developing concrete operational concepts suitable for the different battlefields.

10. **On the strategic level**, in all types of campaigns, the IDF must seek **victory**, defined as **achieving the political goals set for the campaign**, leading to a postbellum improved security situation.

11. The IDF will meet **two types of demands outlined by the political echelon:** the first—to secure **full and clear military decision** over the adversary military organization.[6] Second—to **strike the enemy in a limited and focused manner**.

12. **Campaign to secure military decision:**

   a. **Strategically**, in this operating logic the IDF must seek victory by creating a situation where a cease-fire or political settlement can be forced on the enemy, from a **position of power based on its military defeat**, or its inability or unwillingness to continue fighting. Victory based on military decision significantly contributes to creating or renewing deterrence.

   b. In the operational theater and in force deployment, the IDF must achieve clear tactical decision, defined as removing the enemy's will and ability to continue fighting and to operate against our forces. The primary achievements for securing military decision over an enemy such as Hezbollah and Hamas are:

      i. Depriving the enemy of capabilities by destroying its forces.

      ii. Limiting effectiveness of capabilities targeting the Israeli home front.

      iii. Reaching targets considered by the enemy as valuable.

      iv. Undermining the enemy's will to continue fighting.

   c. Furthermore, in any offensive campaign, significant weight shall be given to protection and border defense as a central element, meant to reduce enemy gains and expand the IDF's freedom of action.

   d. The IDF's main approach to achieving military decision is **the "Cunning" or Maneuver Approach**.[7] This approach is based on focused offensive elements of operation that target enemy weak points. It utilizes relative advantages, with an emphasis on momentum, operating speed, and initiative, the combination of which produces the effect of shock and surprise. These target the enemy's decision-making process in order to disrupt its operational effectiveness as early as possible, in terms of both time and resources available for its operations, with minimal resources used by the IDF.

13. **Limited campaign:**

   a. Occasionally, the IDF will need to fight campaigns with limited required objectives. Usually, this kind of campaign will result in limited damage to the enemy, with the goal of restoring peace and deterrence again in the future.

   b. The operating logic is characterized by focused and limited operations, targeting objectives of strategic value, combined with defensive efforts and demonstration of potential to secure military decision. These actions will demonstrate to the enemy the potential level of damage

to expect should the situation deteriorate and the futility of its actions should it not abandon its policy, as well as pressure it to cease operation.[8]

c. The operational achievements in such a campaign are based on the combination of:

    i. Partially eliminating specific enemy capabilities.

    ii. Significantly damaging targets of strategic value and government institutions that contribute to war effort.

    iii. Reducing the effectiveness of capabilities targeting the Israeli home front.

    iv. Deterring the enemy from using certain weapons or military methods; preventing escalation by threatening to respond.

d. Demonstrating the potential damage the enemy should expect if it continues fighting requires a combination of perception elements that deviate from the enemy's expectations.

Force Deployment Principles for Emergency and War

14. The IDF operates in accordance with the principles of war and the values of the IDF Code of Ethics, with an emphasis on perseverance in mission, realization of force potential, and dedication to the pursuit of victory.

15. The key elements of IDF force deployment, with an emphasis on emergency and war, shall be based on:

    a. **Quality** of decisions and initiative taken by commanders.

    b. Full and expedient **completion of missions**, using minimal resources.

    c. **Fighting spirit** of commanders and forces.

16. During emergency and war, the IDF will operate in accordance with several basic principles that shall guide force deployment planning in all scenarios. Nevertheless, the level and extent of the offensive effort will vary (based on objective of force deployment—a limited or decision-seeking campaign), while the defensive effort on all levels shall be fully and broadly activated in any types of campaign:

    a. **A simultaneous, immediate, and integrated strike**, using two basic elements: the first— **immediate maneuver**, aimed at striking the enemy, capturing territory, curtailing enemy fire from seized territory, capturing and destroying military infrastructures, and undermining survivability of the enemy's governing bodies. The second—extensive **strategic-systemic use of firepower**, relying on aerial freedom of operation and high-quality intelligence.

    b. **Special operations efforts**.

    c. High-quality **intelligence** for delivering critical blows to the enemy. From the onset of, and throughout the entire confrontation, supporting both defensive efforts to neutralize the enemy's offensive capabilities, and offensive counterefforts (firepower) and maneuvers.

    d. **Effective defense against high-trajectory fire**.

    e. **War economy** that supports full utilization of IDF capabilities throughout all combat stages, guaranteeing optimal efficiency in mission accomplishment.

f. **Interconnectivity** between wide array of capabilities, tools, and knowledge.

g. **Interbranch jointness** that maximizes IDF capabilities.

h. **Flexibility** in all force deployment areas. This factor enables effective transition between the necessary operating statuses and between theaters, and allows the IDF to adjust operations to developments at all levels of war.

Principal Capabilities and Efforts during Emergency and War

17. The strategic level specializes in overseeing multidisciplinary and multitheater operations, and in effort integration.[9] The primary efforts and capabilities employed in emergency and war, to support the two objectives and two operating logics described above, are (in no particular order of importance):

a. **Simultaneous defense** in all operational theaters and all dimensions.

b. Simultaneous **offensive capabilities** in multiple fronts through:

   i. Immediate ground **maneuver**—rapid, lethal, durable, and flexible for transition between theaters and fronts.

   ii. Effective, powerful, high-quality, precise, and multidimensional use of **firepower** throughout the warzone, at any time, and using the element of surprise.

   iii. Striking and operating **deep** in enemy territory by using firepower, focused maneuver, and special operations.

c. **High-quality intelligence** on all levels—for formulating national security strategy, designing and planning operations, and tactical and campaign-level force deployment.

d. Guaranteeing the **continuity of military and economic (home front) efforts**, through multilayered defense (intelligence for attack, detection for early warning, obstruction and disruption, air defense, fortification, and so forth).

e. Full **jointness**, based on **cyber warfare** capabilities, of all IDF force elements.

f. A flexible multibranch (military and economic) **logistics response** capability, throughout the war zone.

g. Constant **investigation and study** of the strategic and operational environment, while implementing adjustments necessary for the IDF.

h. Ability to **carry out effective legal and public diplomacy efforts** during and following combat in order to generate legitimacy for operation.

Effort Specifications

18. **Intelligence effort for early warning before confrontation and for operation planning**

a. Identifying dangers or threats that may materialize and require deployment.

b. Providing early warning for surprise attack on the Israeli home front, using high-trajectory fire and ground incursions in the border region, early warning for substantial changes in environment, and early warning for technological and conceptual surprises the enemy is preparing.

c. Intelligence for planning and running operations. Required in all levels of operation.

19. **Offensive efforts: maneuver, firepower, special, and cyber**

Deployment of offensive forces during war and emergency, for the two objectives and in the two operating logics detailed above, shall be based on deployment of offensive forces through: maneuver, firepower, and special operations, side-by-side with an immediate and simultaneous defensive effort. This, while fully utilizing intelligence, command and control, and cyber capabilities. The basic operation elements shall be:

a. **Maneuver effort—toward the frontline and deep into enemy territory:** an offensive ground operation, focused on the centers of power, while seeking to quickly reach final battle lines. Upon reaching final battle lines, forces will work to stabilize defensive lines and clear the area.

b. **Firepower effort:** systemic use of firepower from onset of confrontation, continuously and reaching maximum output, on the frontlines and deep into enemy territory. Use of firepower shall be examined against the principles of proportionality and morality, and legitimacy considerations shall be secondary to these. Running a "munition economy" and fully utilizing varied munitions in various combinations shall be a key element of planning the firepower effort from the onset of combat.

c. **Special operations effort.**

d. **Cyber effort in the context of** a war or emergency situation shall support defensive and offensive efforts on all levels of combat—strategic, operational, and tactical.

20. **Defensive efforts**

a. **Defense** aimed at denying the enemy territorial gains in border regions:[10] vis-à-vis organizations at the heart of the concept, this entails defense against incursions, attacks, and complex terrorist attacks, including ones with aerial and naval dimensions. This defensive capability shall rely on:

   i. Flexibility in deploying IDF forces in border regions.

   ii. Limiting civilian vulnerabilities (including evacuation of civilians from targeted localities) in border region.

   iii. Intelligence collection and early-warning systems.

b. **Home-front defense:** Defense of civilian and military rear from high-trajectory fire, along with enabling uninterrupted offensive efforts, in light of which defense priorities shall be:

   i. Defense that enables uninterrupted force deployment for both defense and offense— including core units in military and civilian rear.

   ii. Defense of vital national infrastructures and government institutions in order to secure uninterrupted functioning of the state.

   iii. Defense of population centers.

   iv. In campaigns with a limited required objective, the need to prioritize direct defense of the civilian home front shall be examined.

   v. Active defense, early-warning systems and physical fortification are the main elements of defending the military and civilian rear.

    c.   Cyber defense during war and emergency is vital for enabling both the operation of state institutions during confrontation, and the effective, interconnectivity-based operation of the IDF.

21. **Enabling efforts** aimed at supporting the offensive and defensive efforts, such as logistics and teleprocessing efforts.

22. **The diplomatic, perception-shaping, and legal effort to preserve and enhance the operation's legitimacy** shall begin in the preparations stage, and continue throughout campaign. This, in order to generate, preserve, and improve operation legitimacy in both Israel itself and the international community. Internal and external perception-shaping efforts and diplomatic efforts in the international, media, and legal arenas shall be employed.

Principles of Force Deployment in Routine Times

23. As mentioned, the objective during routine periods is preserving security, deterring the enemy from acting against Israel, and deferring confrontation as much as possible through a combination of covert and overt operations.

24. Routine force deployment includes the following operations:

    a.   Continuous effort to defend Israel, allowing the population to lead normal lives (routine security efforts, defense of borders and within them, cyber defense).

    b.   Deterrence through a continuous uninterrupted offensive effort (the CBW). This effort is largely covert and clandestine, and integrates perception-shaping operations.

    c.   Civilian aid operations.

    d.   Generating legitimacy that allows the IDF to initiate confrontation, and creates freedom of action for our forces and denies it from the enemy, during routine, emergency, and war times.

Deterrence

25. Deterrence is generated within consciousness, but is also based on physical, tangible elements that the enemy includes in its calculations. These include outcomes of previous rounds of confrontation, routine activities that demonstrate the futility of confrontation, and a constant threat to use force.

26. **Israel's basic deterrence**, which relies on the IDF's edge and power, remains intact. Nonetheless, because the threat has changed, its relevance is limited in comparison with the past.

27. Deterrence must be **targeted and tailored for each enemy**; it must rely on continuous analysis of enemy characteristics, considerations, capabilities, identity, and decision-making process.

28. Deterrence of any enemy must be:

    a.   Without specific context—**general and cumulative over time**, in order to preserve status quo and shape the rules of the game in a favorable manner for Israel.

    b.   In the context of a specific crisis—**specific and focused**, in order to force the enemy to act or avoid action, and thus end deterioration of situation, and prevent war.

   c. The components of deterrence:

      i. Credible threat of strong offensive actions that will cost the enemy dearly, if it attacks us. This component relies on:

         1) **Force buildup**, partly visible to the enemy, which demonstrates ability and willingness to cause it damage.

         2) **Perception-shaping operations**, demonstrating the IDF's readiness to accept risks.

         3) **Limited offensive actions**, to signal deviation from the rules of the game and readiness to accept risks.

      ii. **Force buildup** that demonstrates to the enemy the futility [of its plans] (for example, defense systems).

      iii. **Impeding and disrupting** capabilities.

29. A significant number of deterrence activities shall be carried out during CBW.

The Campaign between Wars (CBW)

30. The force deployment logic during the CBW is preserving and enhancing the achievements gained in the previous campaign in a series of objectives or secondary targets, aimed at distancing the prospect of war:

   a. Weakening negative elements of power in the area.

   b. Minimizing enemy force buildup.

   c. Creating optimal conditions for winning a future war.

   d. Generating legitimacy for Israeli actions and delegitimizing the enemy's action.

31. During CBW, operations are carried out in accordance with a multidisciplinary organizing principle (military, economic, legal, media, and political). In other words, the CBW represents the idea of operations with a single unified strategic logic.

32. The idea at the base of offensive force deployment during CBW is a combination of:

   a. **Covert and clandestine action**[11] in all theaters and dimensions outside Israel's borders; this policy relies on intelligence, and targets enemy's efforts and initiatives.

   b. **Overt action to create deterrence**—demonstrates the limits of Israel's restraint.

33. **The guiding principles** of CBW force deployment in the **covert and clandestine campaigns** are:

   a. Deliberate, controlled and uninterrupted operation, in which forces are employed in a covert and clandestine manner for short periods of time.

   b. Interorganizational, operational, and intelligence cooperation.

   c. International cooperation for intelligence and prevention, as well as for preserving the legitimacy of IDF actions and minimizing the legitimacy of enemy actions.

   d. Operations in the perception-shaping, economic, and legal fields, as part of the effort to restrict the enemy's capabilities and legitimacy.

   e. Need for accessible, accurate intelligence in all necessary dimensions of operation.

Achieving and Preserving Legitimacy

34. The enemy is also active in nonmilitary-kinetic dimensions, and in the past has managed to offset IDF gains in these fields. There are defensive and offensive aspects to this campaign. It seeks to generate legitimacy for Israel (including freedom of action for the IDF), while simultaneously delegitimizing the enemy (and thus restricting its actions).

35. The modus operandi in this campaign requires us to utilize the expertise of various IDF and non-IDF bodies, and ensure information flow and synergy between them. These methods include, inter alia: intelligence, public diplomacy, press service, psychological warfare, diplomatic and political channels, legal processes, and so forth. Furthermore, it is necessary to consider the status of legitimacy in the overall situation evaluation, and correspondingly adjust relevant elements of force buildup and deployment.

36. There are three possible secondary efforts to the perception-shaping effort, corresponding with the IDF's three operating statuses:

    a. **The routine effort** aims at creating optimal conditions for generating legitimacy for the IDF and for generating international support. This is an infrastructure-level effort that focuses on long-term influence. It changes and improves the IDF's position and modus operandi in light of challenges posed by arguments delegitimizing Israeli military action, which are primarily based on critical analysis of Israel's actions.

    b. **The contextual effort** includes operations taking place during routine periods, in the framework of the CBW, and focuses on medium-term influence. This effort boosts legitimacy for IDF military activity in a specific theater, outline, or operation.

    c. **A supplemental or follow-up effort in emergency or war** that accompanies the campaign and its subsequent efforts. This effort seeks to influence in both the short-term—boosting legitimacy for continuing and completing the military operation in optimal conditions—and the medium- and long-term—preserving the campaign's strategic gains and freedom of operation to reemploy forces in theater as needed.

Campaigns against Countries with No Joint Border

37. This operational outline is not at the center of the concept. Nonetheless, it appears in this document due to its unique nature.

38. The required achievement against countries with no joint border [with Israel] will mainly rely on uninterrupted, multidisciplinary activity in all situations. Operation shall be oriented toward limited and tangible goals, aimed at deterring escalation.

39. The organizing principle is based on air-based operations during the CBW, supported by a continuous intelligence effort, and involving Special Forces. This operation shall be based on covert and clandestine activities, to the extent of a strike, vis-à-vis enemy's buildup efforts and offensive initiatives in its territory, and on limiting the enemy's freedom of operation in ways that disrupt and thwart its intentions and capabilities.

40. The guiding principles for force deployment:

    a. Enabling accessible and accurate intelligence in all required dimensions of operation.

b. Deliberate and controlled operational activity, below the threshold of war, lasting short periods of time.

c. Offensive operation in target country.

d. Operational and intelligence interorganizational cooperation.

e. International cooperation for intelligence purposes.

f. International cooperation for preserving legitimacy of IDF operation and limiting that of the enemy.

g. Continuous perception-shaping activity, aimed at limiting the enemy's operation legitimacy and freedom of action, to the extent of thwarting and disrupting its initiatives. [. . .]

SUMMARY

1. Regional developments confront the IDF with a wide range of threats that challenge its operating concept, as well as the force buildup processes based on this concept. The essence of this change is manifested in the development of sub-state enemies such as Hezbollah and Hamas, and threats from states without a joint border with Israel.

2. This document presents the principal approach for force deployment in contexts common to all theaters of operation where the IDF faces a semi-state enemy, and in all IDF operating statuses: routine, emergency, and war.

3. Based on these force deployment principles, this document prescribes principles for force buildup. The IDF's force buildup authorities must adhere to these principles when planning the IDF's buildup in the coming years.

4. This document requires several follow-up actions—primarily, developing special operational concepts for the war theater, as well as developing operational concepts for the operational theaters and the force deployment commands. Simultaneously, the IDF's force buildup authorities must formulate the special force buildup concepts dictated by this document.

5. The IDF has always drawn its strength from the quality of its personnel and a deep understanding that the IDF is the guarantor of Israel's national existence. Thus, the IDF will defend Israel's security under any circumstance, while exhausting the core characteristics of its commanders and soldiers, primarily: fighting spirit, initiative and quality of operation, and full and uncompromising completion of missions.

ENDNOTES

Introduction: On the Limitations of Military Doctrine

1   See Matt M. Matthews's balanced and thorough analysis, *We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War*, The Long War Series Occasional Paper 26 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008). See also Matthews's interview with SOD's principal author, Brig. Gen. Shimon Naveh, who describes Halutz as an "idiot" who signed onto SOD "without really bothering to read it." "Interview with BG (Ret.) Shimon Naveh," (Fort

Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2007) is available at www.smallwarsjournal.com/documents/mattmatthews.pdf.

2   Matthews, *We Were Caught Unprepared*, pp. 24–28, 62–64.

3   See former IDF head of planning and chief of staff to the minister of defense, Brig. Gen. Michael Herzog, summary and comments: "New IDF Strategy Goes Public," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 28 August 2015, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/new-idf-strategy-goes-public. See also Gabi Siboni for a brief analysis of the document: "'The IDF Strategy': A Focused Action Approach," The Institute for National Security Studies, *INSS Insight* no. 739, 27 August 2015, http://www.inss.org.il/uploadImages/systemFiles/No.%20739%20-%20Gabi%20for%20web.pdf.

4   Much has been written about this; see for instance Avner Golov, Ory Vishkin, Ran Michaelis, and Rony Kakon, "A National Security Doctrine for Israel" (paper, Lauder School of Government, IDC, Herzliya, Israel, 23 May 2010), http://portal.idc.ac.il/en/argov/documents/a_national_security_doctrine_for_israel_-_avner_golov_ran_michaelis_ory_vishkin_rony_kakon.pdf.

5   Herzog, "New IDF Strategy Goes Public."

6   Maj.-Gen. Moshe Dayan, "Israel's Border and Security Problems," *Foreign Affairs* 33, no. 2 (1955), https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/israel/1955-01-01/israels-border-and-security-problems.

7   At the INSS annual conference in Tel Aviv in January 2016. Interestingly, Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon described Iran rather than Hezbollah as the main threat. See Udi Dekel and Omer Einav, "New Directions for Enabling Israel to Overcome its 'Strategic Confusion': Insights from the INSS Annual Conference," The Institute for National Security Studies, 31 January 2016, http://www.inss.org.il/index.aspx?id=4538&articleid=11373.

8   Herzog, "New IDF Strategy Goes Public."

9   The use of maximum force in urban areas as derived from the lessons of 2006. There is no direct allusion to the doctrine in the ED but it suffuses its prescribed offensive spirit. See "The Dahiya Doctrine, Proportionality, and War Crimes," *JPS* 44, no. 1 (Autumn 2014): pp. 5–13.

10 Yigal Allon, "Israel: The Case for Defensible Borders," *Foreign Affairs* 55, no. 1 (1976), https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/israel/1976-10-01/israel-case-defensible-borders.

11 Victor Gilinsky, "Israel's Sea-Based Nukes Pose Risks," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 8 February 2016, http://thebulletin.org/israel%E2%80%99s-sea-based-nukes-pose-risks9151.

12 The philosophical principle according to which all other things being equal, simpler explanations are generally better than more complex ones.

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1   From the work of the Commission for the Development of the National Security Concept (*Meridor Report*, 2007). [This commission, appointed by Ariel Sharon in 2004 and headed by Dan Meridor, presented its work in the top-secret *Meridor Report*, in 2006. For more on the *Meridor Report*, see Ze'ev Schiff, "Top Secret Report: Iran Could Tempt Other Mideast States to Go Nuclear," *Haaretz*, 24 April 2006, http://www.haaretz.com/top-secret-report-iran-could-tempt-other-mideast-states-to-go-nuclear-1.185926. —Ed.]

2   The laws of warfare are grounded in four fundamental principles that should be implemented based on context: military necessity, distinction, proportionality, and humanity.

3   **National intelligence:** enables the formulation of national security strategy; the determination of reference threats and scenarios for force buildup that allows optimal use of resources at any given time, based on developments in theater, and permits resource shifting between readiness and buildup, as well as identification of shifts requiring the IDF to prepare differently, including the ability to identify shifts and address issues on all levels related to national security (not just military). **Strategic intelligence:** enables system design and planning, articulation of an attainable

strategic objective in a measurable military language that reflects and matches the political echelon's goals in war. **Campaign intelligence:** enables campaign-level (based on analysis of enemy's centers of power) and tactical force deployment, aimed at maximizing damage to the enemy and gaining tactical advantage in all dimensions. This intelligence shall come from all gathering agencies, including sources as small as the battalion, and single-plane or single-ship levels (based on relevance).

4   This campaign shall include all efforts and be carried out on the national level, including legal and economic, and perception-shaping and public diplomacy campaigns.

5   **Delimited:** in relation to the highest achievable decisive victory. Achievement is delimited on strategic and campaign levels. On tactical level, units are required to achieve full tactical military decision.

6   Usually in order to secure a clear and distinct political goal, or to destroy or gravely harm the organization or country's military capabilities.

7   As in outmaneuvering the enemy.

8   This modus operandi is called enforcement.

9   **Effort** (see Operations Directorate/ TOHAD order 1.22, 1 October 2014): (on the military strategy and campaign levels) in the operations field, a term used to describe the temporary consolidation of forces and resources under a single authority, in order to complete a mission. Effort has three elements: **mission:** the task given to effort commander; **military resources:** resources and military force sources (order of battle [ORBAT], commands and weapons from the various branches) allocated to effort commander in order to complete mission; **authority:** legal power of effort commander to command subordinates, delegate them his authorities, and instill in them a sense of responsibility for allocated resources.

10   Success in preventing such gains shall be measured at the end of the defensive battle.

11   **Covert operations:** while the results of these operations are apparent to the enemy, they are so planned and executed as to conceal the identity of or permit plausible denial by the sponsor. **Clandestine operations:** operations conducted in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment. A clandestine operation differs from a covert operation in that emphasis is placed on concealment of operation rather than on concealment of the identity of the sponsor.