

**IDF AIMS TO NEUTRALIZE FUTURE HEZBOLLAH & HAMAS
THREATS WITH MINIMAL COLLATERAL DAMAGE**

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Isranet Daily Briefing, September 28, 2017

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[IDF: Israel Prepared to ‘Neutralise’ Hezbollah with ‘Overwhelming’ Force in Next War: Adam Abrams, JNS, Sept. 19, 2017](#)— Despite the raging civil war to Israel’s north and east in Syria, the Jewish state’s northern border has remained precariously quiet over the last decade.

[Victory, Not Deterrence, Will be the Goal if There is Another Gaza War: Yaakov Lappin, Arutz Sheva, Aug. 29, 2017](#)— In past models of conflict, Israel responded to Hamas aggression through the use of force in a way that was designed to punish Hamas and convince it to return to a state of calm.

[Israel Unveils New Defense Technology That Can Predict Future Battlefields: Anna Ahronheim, Jerusalem Post, Sept. 5, 2017](#)— As the nation’s enemies continue to develop their military capabilities, Israel works to stay at least one step ahead, predicting what types of technology will be needed in future wars.

[Israel Has a Playbook for Dealing With North Korea: Zev Chafets, Bloomberg, Sept. 7, 2017](#) — Israel and North Korea are on opposite sides of the Asian landmass, separated by 5,000 miles as the ICBM flies.

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[Israel vs. Iran and Hezbollah: Towards a Military Clash?: Ehud Eilam, Israel Defense, Sept. 14, 2017](#)

[Cyber Warfare — Reasons Why Israel Leads The Charge: Christopher P. Skroupa, Forbes, Sept. 7, 2017](#)

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**IDF: ISRAEL PREPARED TO 'NEUTRALISE' HEZBOLLAH
WITH 'OVERWHELMING' FORCE IN NEXT WAR**

Adam Abrams

[*JNS*](#), Sept. 19, 2017

Despite the raging civil war to Israel's north and east in Syria, the Jewish state's northern border has remained precariously quiet over the last decade. No stranger to looming threats, Israeli officials are planning and ready for several worst-case scenarios in the north as Iran and its terror proxy Hezbollah continue to forge their stranglehold on the region...

In a possible war scenario with Hezbollah, the Israeli military can launch a "massive and overwhelming" operation that would effectively "neutralize" a significant part of the Lebanese terror organization's military capability, Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus, the head of the International Media Branch for the IDF Spokesperson's Unit, told JNS.org. The IDF's operation would be based on "very accurate intelligence" collected "relentlessly" and "would minimize to the greatest extent possible, harm to non-combatants.... by using the most precise guided munitions that strike only at the legitimate military targets," Conricus said.

Striking only Hezbollah targets without collateral damage will be a challenging military feat because Hezbollah is deliberately "deployed in order to maximize collateral damage" to civilians, he added. One-third of the homes in southern Lebanon's 130 villages are known to house military components belonging to Hezbollah. "Hezbollah's strategic choice of the battlefield, embedding its military assets in Shiite villages and towns, has put the majority of the Shiite population in Lebanon in harm's way, using it as human shields...." Brigadier general (Res.) Assaf Orion, a senior research fellow at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), told JNS.org.

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Defeating the terror group would likely involve “significant IDF ground incursions into Lebanon as well as taking out Hezbollah rocket positions located in high-density population areas,” in hospitals, schools and apartment buildings, Dr. Jonathan Schanzer, senior vice president of research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies think tank, told JNS.org. In a future conflict, one could expect “significant damage to Israel,” Orion said, but simultaneously “a devastating and unprecedented destruction in Lebanon, including a significant victory against Hezbollah’s military forces and destruction of most infrastructure enabling its war fighting capacity.”

Due to Hezbollah’s deep entrenchment within civilian infrastructure, the IDF has narrow windows of opportunity to engage “legitimate military targets,” Conricus said. However, the IDF is prepared for this scenario and recently completed its largest drill in two decades in Israel’s northern region, simulating cross-border Hezbollah attacks on Israeli towns in which the terror group aims to commit massacres and take hostages.

The exercise was planned over a year and half in advance and tens of thousands of soldiers from all branches of the IDF participated. During the initial stage of the drill, soldiers simulated rooting out Hezbollah terrorists from Israeli towns and defending the Jewish state’s sovereignty. The drill’s second stage simulated “decisive maneuver warfare” into the depths of Hezbollah’s territory, Conricus said. The exercise sought to enhance “coordination and synchronization” between the IDF’s ground forces, air force, navy, intelligence and cyber units, and shorten “the intelligence cycle” from when a “target is identified to any type of munition meeting that target,” he added.

The IDF has acknowledged that since the 2006 Second Lebanon War, Hezbollah has matured from a guerilla organization to a fighting force equipped with heavy artillery, high-precision missiles and drones. The terror group also receives about \$800 million a year in funding from Iran. A third of Hezbollah’s forces are currently

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entrenched in Syria's ongoing civil war — becoming battle-hardened, but simultaneously overstretched, losing some 2,000 fighters in the conflict.

Hezbollah and Iran have established weapons factories in Lebanon that can produce powerful missiles and, according to the IDF official, "more than 120,000 rocket launchers and rockets" are positioned in southern Lebanon, "in clear violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701." Iran and Hezbollah are also constructing permanent military facilities in southern Syria to establish a land bridge stretching from Tehran to Beirut along Israel's northern border.

According to Schanzer, this indicates the next war with Hezbollah "would likely be a two-front battle in Lebanon and Syria," which could also include other Iranian terror proxies in the region. The IDF official confirmed, "it is definitely possible and plausible" that the Israeli military will be required to fight on more than one front, which the military is prepared for.

Using its "networked intelligence," the IDF is prepared to implement "a massive precision strike... on a scale which far exceeds the assessed growth in Hezbollah's military [capability]," Orion said. Since 2006, Hezbollah has occasionally been given a glimpse of the "quality, scope and intimacy" of Israeli intelligence collected against it, the IDF official said, which has created a deterrence and quiet for the past 11 years. A recent purported Israeli airstrike against a Syrian chemical weapons facility Sept. 7, which occurred during the massive IDF exercise, may have served as one such glimpse into Israel's intelligence capability directed against the terror group and its allies.

Israel is "far better prepared for the next war with Hezbollah" than it was in the 2006, Schanzer said. "We see now the appearance of stealth tank technology, the preparation for ground warfare and the possibility of tunnels into Israel... as well as the preparation for mass volleys of rockets launched by Hezbollah into Israel." The Israeli Air Force has also acquired several new state-of-the-art F-35 "Adir"

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stealth fighter jets, and in recent weeks the military unveiled multiple revolutionary defense technologies that will soon be added to its arsenal.

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VICTORY, NOT DETERRENCE, WILL BE THE GOAL

IF THERE IS ANOTHER GAZA WAR

Yaakov Lappin

[Arutz Sheva](#), Aug. 29, 2017

In past models of conflict, Israel responded to Hamas aggression through the use of force in a way that was designed to punish Hamas and convince it to return to a state of calm. Systematically destroying Hamas's military capabilities was not an Israeli objective. Today, while Israel hopes to avoid war, it is preparing for the possibility of a new conflict. War could erupt again in Gaza for a wide range of reasons.

Should hostilities resume, the Israel Defense Force (IDF) plans to make sure the end stage of that clash will be an unmistakable Israeli victory, and that no one will be able to mistake it for a tie or stalemate. This change in approach has been brewing over the past three years, ever since the end of Operation Protective Edge in 2014. That operation was launched by Israel to defend itself against large-scale projectile attacks and cross-border tunnel threats from Gaza. At two months' duration, it was one of Israel's most protracted conflicts. It was also the third large-scale clash fought with Hamas since 2009. At the end of each round of fighting, the military wing of Hamas remained intact, and was able to quickly begin rearming and preparing new capabilities for the next outbreak of hostilities.

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Should Hamas initiate another conflict with Israel, Jerusalem should not be expected to return to the deterrence model. It will not make do with the goal of returning calm to the area, as it did in 2014, 2012, and 2009. Instead, Israel would likely seek to destroy Hamas's military wing, including its underground labyrinth of tunnels under Gaza City, built to enable operations out of Israel's sight. Hamas's decision to embed many of its offensive capabilities in Gaza's civilian areas will not immunize it to Israeli strikes. The IDF would, however, make every effort to minimize harm to noncombatants.

After 2014, the IDF's Southern Command began moving away from the "frequent rounds" model, concluding that Israel should not be dragged into major armed conflicts with Hamas every two to three years. The Southern Command identified three alternatives for Israel and Gaza. Under the first, Israel would continue to experience short, temporary truces - an option deemed unacceptable. In the second scenario, Israel would conquer Gaza and topple the Hamas regime completely. In such a scenario, Israel would either rule the Strip and its two million Palestinian inhabitants or find someone who would. It is unlikely that the Palestinian Authority (PA) would take over Gaza after an Israeli "handoff." Not only would the PA lose domestic legitimacy, but its ability to retain Gaza without IDF assistance would be in serious doubt.

As a result of these calculations, the defense establishment identified a long-term truce, fueled by Israeli deterrence, as the best option. That is the current situation between the combatants: a long-term truce. During the time the truce has lasted, the idea of facing two bad choices - occupying Gaza or accepting the "frequent rounds" model - has evolved. One possibility, in the event of a new conflict, is that the IDF takes out Hamas's military wing but leaves in place its political wing and police force, thereby creating a feasible Israeli exit from Gaza that does not depend on Jerusalem's finding new rulers for the Strip.

Today, three years after Operation Protective Edge, Hamas continues to rebuild

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itself. Its domestic arms industry is producing rockets, mortar shells, and tunnels. Tunnels under Gaza City are designed to enable Hamas battalions to launch hit-and-run attacks on the IDF and to move weapons and logistics out of Israel's sight. The other kind of tunnel threat, the network of cross-border tunnels, is on borrowed time. Israel is building an underground wall along the 65-kilometer Gazan border, and it progresses with each passing day. Israel has invested billions of shekels in that project, and an anti-tunnel detection system is also operational.

Hamas is not sitting idle during the truce. It is looking for new assault tactics. It seeks to be able to flood southern Israel with short-range projectiles that can carry a warhead as big as a half-ton, which would pose a major threat to any built-up area near the Strip. Hamas can also try to paralyze central Israel with medium-range projectiles, even if these are intercepted by the Iron Dome air defense system. Air raid sirens and interceptions are severely disruptive for Israel even without significant projectile damage.

Hamas continues to work on its naval commando cells, which are designed to infiltrate Israel via the coast. It is also continuing to pursue its drone program, with which it hopes to send explosives at targets in a guided manner. Israel is well aware of these capabilities. Hamas remains a serious combat challenge, and has proven its ability to adapt to Israel's progress. But Hamas is also under intense, unremitting Israeli intelligence surveillance. Hamas is likely aware that any new clash would involve upgraded Israeli combat capabilities that are better suited for the Gazan arena.

Israel has been using the truce to build up its force and study the Gazan battlefield. It is building a growing fleet of armored personnel carriers and tanks that can defend themselves with active protection systems. In Gaza, where practically every Hamas fighter is armed with an armor-piercing RPG, that kind of protection is a game changer.

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Israel's ability to strike Hamas's underground city has also been enhanced significantly in recent years. Hamas will have nowhere to hide if war resumes. Hamas is likely aware that although it can pose serious challenges to the IDF and to the Israeli home front, Israel has changed its end game. For the time being, Hamas's cost benefit analysis has led it to conclude that a lengthy truce is in its own best interest.

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ISRAEL UNVEILS NEW DEFENSE TECHNOLOGY THAT CAN PREDICT FUTURE BATTLEFIELDS

Anna Ahronheim

[Jerusalem Post](#), Sept. 5, 2017

As the nation's enemies continue to develop their military capabilities, Israel works to stay at least one step ahead, predicting what types of technology will be needed in future wars. "MAFAT is trying to predict the future battlefield, both in terms of threat and technologically," Brig.-Gen. (res.) Dr. Danny Gold, head of the Defense Ministry's Administration for the Development of Weapons and Technological Infrastructure (MAFAT), said on Monday during a briefing for military correspondents at the Kirya army headquarters in Tel Aviv.

MAFAT, which works with the IDF and civilian companies and engages in extensive cooperation with many countries around the world, is critical in providing the technology that make it possible for the IDF to outflank its enemies in all areas. Gold outlined several systems expected to be used by the IDF, including advanced

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facial-recognition technology, an armed, lightweight quadcopter developed by an Israeli start-up company and a new armored fighting vehicle.

Drawing lessons from 2014's Operation Protective Edge, where IDF soldiers fought in narrow streets and alleys in the Gaza Strip, the 35-ton, tracked AVF is designed to be simple to operate, relatively inexpensive, agile and lethal with firepower designed for close and urban combat. The AFV, called Carmel (a Hebrew acronym for Advanced Ground Combat Vehicle), is under development by MAFAT and the Defense Ministry's Merkava Tank Administration and will "constitute a quantum leap" in the field of armored vehicles, Gold said.

As part of the multi-year project, breakthrough technologies are being developed for the Carmel, including modular transparent armor, next-generation cooperative active protection, an IED alert and neutralization system, and a hybrid engine. While MAFAT expects the development and demonstration testing of the Carmel to extend over the coming decade or more, the first stage of the development plan is proof of its feasibility, Gold said. Israel is staying one step ahead of her enemies such as Iran and other countries that have "dramatically improved" their military capabilities, he said.

Gold, who took up his post last year, added that even beyond the Islamic Republic, there has been an expansion of the threats facing Israel, including the continued transfer of advanced weapons to the Middle East, the increase in the intensity and accuracy of firepower by enemy states and sub-state groups, and threats in the cyber domain. "We want total protection and intelligence control in cyberspace," Gold said, explaining that the use of advanced cameras and other technological advancements were of significant help in the early prevention of terrorist attacks during the recent wave of Palestinian violence in the West Bank.

MAFAT is investing significant effort and funds into safeguarding the borders from existing and future threats, be they from missiles or drones, cyberattacks, and

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threats from underwater and underground, he said. One project currently in the works to protect Israel from naval threats are two unmanned submarines. One, named Caesar, is a small submarine that would be used primarily for reconnaissance and mapping missions. Developed in cooperation with Ben-Gurion University, the Caesar is at the forefront of global technology, characterized by its ability to dive rapidly and almost vertically.

“What do we need to have in order to be ahead of our enemy? It’s very complicated to think ahead of time how each solution will fit everything,” Gold said, explaining that Israel need robustness and flexibility in all defense systems in order to locate and eliminate any and all possible targets. “For example, the threat posed by precision missiles, it was clear to me that 10 years ago this type of threat would eventuate,” Gold said. Another system developed with the help of MAFAT is the Barak-8 radar, which has since been sold for billions of dollars to international clients. “This was built on the technology that we invested in when no one else believed in it,” he said.

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ISRAEL HAS A PLAYBOOK FOR DEALING WITH NORTH KOREA

Zev Chafets

[Bloomberg](#), Sept. 7, 2017

Israel and North Korea are on opposite sides of the Asian landmass, separated by 5,000 miles as the ICBM flies. But Israelis feels close to the nuclear standoff between Washington and Pyongyang. They have faced this sort of crisis before, and may again.

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Some history: In the mid-1970s, it became clear to Israel that Iraq's Saddam Hussein was working on acquiring nuclear weapons and missiles to deliver them. Saddam had already demonstrated an uninhibited brutality in dealing with his internal enemies and his neighbors. He aspired to be the leader of the Arab world. Defeating Israel was at the top of his to-do list. After coming to office in 1977, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin tried to convince the U.S. and Europe that Saddam was a clear and present danger to the Jewish state, and that action had to be taken. Begin was not taken seriously.

But Begin was serious, and in 1981 he decided that Israel would have to stop the Iraqi dictator all by itself. His political opponents, led by the estimable Shimon Peres, considered this to be dangerous folly. Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, the legendary former military chief of staff, voted against unilateral action on the grounds that it would hurt Israel's international standing. Defense Minister Ezer Weizmann, the former head of the air force (and Dayan's brother-in-law) was also against a military option. He thought the mission would be unacceptably risky. Begin had no military expertise. But his family had been wiped out in the Holocaust. He looked at Saddam, who was openly threatening Israel, and saw Hitler. To Begin, sitting around hoping for the best was not a strategy; it was an invitation to aggression. If there was going to be a cost — political, diplomatic, military — better to pay before, not after, the Iraqis had the bomb.

In the summer of 1981, Begin gave the order. The Israeli air force destroyed the Osirak reactor. The United Nations Security Council condemned the attack. The Europeans went bonkers. The *New York Times* called it "inexcusable." But the Israeli prime minister wasn't looking to be excused by the *Times* or the Europeans or even the usually friendly Ronald Reagan administration. He enunciated a simple rationale that would come to be known as the Begin Doctrine: Israel will not allow its avowed enemies to obtain the means of its destruction. The wisdom of this doctrine became clear a decade later, during the Gulf War, when Saddam Hussein made good on his threat to fire Russian-made SCUD missiles at Israeli cities. The SCUDs landed, and caused some damage and a fair amount of panic, but they were not armed with unconventional warheads. Israel had taken that option off the

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table.

Similarly, in 2007, Israel confirmed what it had suspected for five years: Syria, with North Korean help, was trying to build a nuclear reactor. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, a Begin disciple, sent Mossad chief Meir Dagan to Washington, to ask for American intervention. The CIA chief, Michael Hayden, agreed with Israel's contention that Damascus (with Iranian financing) was constructing the reactor. But Hayden convinced President George W. Bush that bombing the site would result in all-out war, and who wants that?

Acting on its own, Israel destroyed the Syrian site (reportedly killing a group of North Korean experts in the process). Hayden was wrong about how Syria would react, as he later admitted. If Israel had been reasonable and listened to the CIA, Bashar al-Assad would have nuclear weapons right now. A few years later, Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak spent billions of dollars preparing and training to take out the Iranian nuclear program. Barak, not a member of Netanyahu's right-wing Likud Party, explained: "There are instances where it appears it is not necessary to attack now, but you know that you won't be able to attack later." In such cases, he said, the "consequences of inaction are grave, and you have to act." ...*[To Read the Full Article Click the Following [Link—Ed.\]](#)*

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[As Syrian War Winds Down, Israel Sets Sights on Hezbollah](#): *National Post*, Sept. 20, 2017—With President Bashar Assad seemingly poised to survive the Syrian civil war, Israeli leaders are growing nervous about the intentions of his Iranian

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patrons and their emerging corridor of influence across the region.

[Israel vs. Iran and Hezbollah: Towards a Military Clash?](#) **Ehud Eilam, *Israel Defense*, Sept. 14, 2017**—Since 1979, Israel and Iran have been in a state of cold war, a conflict which has intensified since the early 2000s with the development of Iran’s nuclear program.

[Cyber Warfare — Reasons Why Israel Leads The Charge](#): **Christopher P. Skroupa , *Forbes*, Sept. 7, 2017**—Cyber warfare is a relatively new kind of war that transcends the typical “declaration” that previous wars have had in the past. The war never officially started, yet its investment began more than a decade ago.

[‘Killer Robots’ Can Make War Less Awful](#): **Jeremy Rabkin and John Yoo, *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 2, 2017**—On Aug. 20, Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk and dozens of other tech leaders wrote an open letter sounding the alarm about “lethal autonomous weapons,” the combination of robotics and artificial intelligence that is likely to define the battlefield of the future.