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[Kuntar Killed for Future Plot Rather than Past Attack](#): Yaakov Lappin, *Jerusalem Post*, Dec. 20, 2015 — Lebanese terrorist Samir Kuntar on Saturday night was not an act of revenge for his brutal past acts of murder, according to Western sources.

[To Strike or Not to Strike, That is the Question](#): Paul Alster, *IPT News*, Dec. 16, 2015 — Israeli estimates of the number of missiles terrorist powerhouse Hizballah has in Lebanon increased last summer from 100,000 to 150,000.

[David's Sling System Shows Ability To Destroy Rockets, Missiles](#): Barbara Opall-Rome, *Defense News*, Dec. 21, 2015— With hit-to-kill precision, the joint US-Israel David's Sling Weapon System (DSWS) demonstrated Monday its ability to destroy salvos of heavy long-range rockets and short-range ballistic missiles during a series of developmental tests.

[Falling Towers](#): Louis René Beres, *Arutz Sheva*, Dec. 21, 2015— Israel must brace itself against intermittent waves of more-or-less orchestrated Palestinian terror.

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KUNTAR KILLED FOR FUTURE PLOT

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RATHER THAN PAST ATTACK

Yaakov Lappin

[*Jerusalem Post*](#), Dec. 20, 2015

Lebanese terrorist Samir Kuntar[’s assassination] on Saturday night was not an act of revenge for his brutal past acts of murder, according to Western sources. Prior to his assassination, Kuntar had become a full-fledged Iranian operative, and went against Hezbollah’s attempt to downgrade its anti-Israel operations from Syria. The alleged Israeli targeted assassination, reportedly using long-range precision-guided missiles, was designed to disrupt future terrorist activities planned by Kuntar - plots that were directly supported and funded by Iran, though, somewhat surprisingly, not by Hezbollah, according to Lebanese reports.

Iran can be expected to feel the need to respond to the assassination, and it is not clear whether Hezbollah will be able to avoid being part of any retaliation. If Iran orders Hezbollah to respond, the Lebanese organization may try to comply while refraining from escalating the situation into a wider clash. After sustaining some 1,300 casualties and 5,000 wounded from its bloody intervention in neighboring Syria, Hezbollah is licking its wounds and not seeking a confrontation with Israel.

That, together with Israel’s alleged air strike in January on a convoy of Hezbollah and Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps operatives near Quneitra, significantly decreased the Lebanese Shi’ite organization’s appetite for a clash with Israel. But Iran remains committed to attacking Israel from Syria, and its IRGC operatives helped Kuntar set up an operations room in greater Damascus, from which he coordinated plots against Israel. It is in that operations room where Kuntar was killed, together with his PR man, Farhan Sha’alan.

Kuntar’s cross-border terrorism plots against Israel posed the risk of opening a second front against Hezbollah at a time when the organization is keen to deal

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with its costly intervention in Syria. Last month, while up on Mount Hermon overlooking Syria and the Druse village of Khadr, where Kuntar helped recruit attackers in the past, a senior security source told *The Jerusalem Post*: “There is someone who gets up every morning and asks, how can I carry out an attack on Israel? Most of the time, they run into great difficulties.”

Indeed, Kuntar was one of those people. He had been active in Syria, working at Iran’s behest to establish cells that can plant border bombs, fire rockets or carry out cross-border infiltrations across the Syria-Israel border. Any decision to launch an air strike against Kuntar would be guided by intelligence about his future intentions, not by any desire to take revenge for his past barbaric crimes in 1979, when he and fellow terrorists arrived from Lebanon by sea and murdered a father and his young daughter.

Yet Kuntar was only one part of a wider Iranian effort to set up a platform in southern Syria, according to Ely Karmon, senior researcher at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism in Herzliya. “I think his main goal was to draft Syrian Druse who were close to the fence. He could have also dealt with intelligence activities aimed at infiltrating our side of the Golan. I assume this was also part of his role,” Karmon said. If reports that the air strike brought down a multi-story building are true, Karmon added, “maybe Iranians were also there.”

Karmon drew attention to an important aspect of alleged Israeli operations in Syria at a time when Russia is heavily involved in the region. Referring to reports that long-range Israeli missiles were allegedly used in the attack, Karmon said standoff weapons could help Israel strike a target in the heart of Syria without IAF jets entering Syrian airspace, thereby ensuring there would be no confrontation with the Russian air force.

“The Russians have the S-400 battery in Syria. I assume it can detect this type of aerial activity. Using long-range missiles could be a sign of hitting the target with

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extra care, without the need for the planes to approach [Syrian airspace],” he added. Yet, as Karmon indicated, the strike underscores Israel’s commitment to maintain full operational freedom and disrupt imminent threats to its security.

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**TO STRIKE OR NOT TO STRIKE, THAT IS THE
QUESTION**

Paul Alster

[*IPT News, Dec. 16, 2015*](#)

Israeli estimates of the number of missiles terrorist powerhouse Hizballah has in Lebanon increased last summer from 100,000 to 150,000. The Shi'ite army continues to gain strength, unhindered by the token presence of United Nations troops in what was supposed to be a de-militarized zone following the 2006 Second Lebanon War.

Hizballah's promises of capturing the Galilee - that have inspired a feature-length Lebanese movie on the subject - are oft-repeated. The imminent release (as a result of the P5+1 nuclear deal) of billions of dollars to its guardian angel and guiding hand, the Islamic Republic of Iran, promise more money and materiel will be placed at the disposal of an organization that has already fought two vicious wars against the Jewish state, a state whose existence it refuses to recognize.

Hizballah's growing strength, and its acquisition of advanced weapons, (undoubtedly aided of late by Russian air strikes in support of the Syrian army), has Israeli leaders thinking hard about how long they can allow such a build-up to go unchecked, and whether there is a growing case for something more than

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sporadic cross-border interventions to temporarily stem Hizballah's growing firepower. "We operate in Syria from time to time to prevent it turning into another front against us," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu acknowledged Dec. 1 at the Galilee Conference in Acre. "We act, of course, to prevent the transfer of deadly weaponry from Syria to Lebanon." His surprise comments came on the back of two reported airstrikes on Syrian weapons convoys - attributed to the IAF - apparently destined for Hizballah.

Two days later, Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon again highlighted the increasing danger posed by Iran's overt support of the Hizballah, telling members of the U.S. Congress, "We are very worried about Iran's presence in Syria... This regime generates terrorism and undermines many of the regimes in the Middle East, and this is not good news for the region, not only Israel."

Reports last week of Iran completing a second medium-range ballistic missile test in contravention of U.N. Security Council resolutions did little to ease Israeli fears. On Dec. 10, in another indication of the urgency with which it views the Iran-Hizballah threat, Israel successfully tested its Arrow 3 missile defense system, an extra layer of defense on top of the Iron Dome, David's Sling, and the Arrow 2 system that may well prove critical in defending against the Iranian-made Shihab 3 longer ranger missiles.

In an exclusive interview with the Investigative Project on Terrorism, a senior IDF official - who for security reason must remain anonymous - spelled out the likely scenario should Hizballah live up to its promises and attack Israel from the north. He did not discuss the likelihood of an Israeli pre-emptive strike against Hizballah, but painted a sometimes grim assessment of what the Israeli public can expect. "The next war will be different. As an Israeli citizen, father to two boys in the army, I really hope we will find a solution to peace in the area... but we have to deal with this," the IDF official explained. "I believe that in the next war we will see that Hizballah and Hamas will both launch missiles. They have the same interest here."

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Earlier this month, subsequent to this interview taking place, Israel's Channel 2 news reported that Shadi el-Meni, the Islamic State leader in the Sinai Peninsula, met with Hamas leaders to discuss increased weapons supplies to the Gaza-based terrorists. The ideological differences between the two sides seemingly set aside in the pursuit of preparing an enhanced assault on Israel.

The IDF officer suggested that during the 2014 Gaza War more than 70 percent of the Israeli population was covered by the Iron Dome as it intercepted missiles coming from the Hamas-controlled enclave. But with rockets raining down from Israel's north and south, Iron Dome's use would be limited. There will be occasions when civilians will not be protected when defending strategic installations take priority. "We understand that Iron Dome next time will not do the same work," he said, "because you will not always put it on populations; you will put it in strategic locations that we need to defend like chemical factories, and gas [installations], of course."

Israel's third largest metropolitan area, Haifa, is home to a huge Mediterranean port and a major Israeli naval base. Defending such a massive target will be "very hard" he said. "We have Iron Dome, the Arrow and the Patriot as well, but when you have 150,000 missiles from Lebanon, you cannot assume that every missile they will launch will [be intercepted]. This is what we need to explain to the Israeli population. A lot of [apartment blocks], a lot of industrial zones, a lot of factories will be targeted, and at the same time Hamas will launch from Gaza. This is our understanding."

He suggested there will be sustained bouts of simultaneous rocket attacks in the north, although there is no doubt that Hizballah's arsenal offers the capability to reach as far as Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. "I think the enemy has [learned] very well. Today we see Hizballah fighting in Syria. Hizballah a few years ago said they are just defensive, now we see they are an offensive force. After the [2014] operations near Israel's Gaza border, we understand that kibbutzim near the [Lebanese]

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border may be 'evacuated and moved back.' We think it is possible [Haifa] will be without electricity for 72 hours," he continued. "No phones. No talking to your family. We have practiced evacuations to shelters and built civilians rescue teams in the towns and villages."

Civilian teams have trained to help get people into shelters and in emergency response in Jewish towns and Arab villages alike. Haifa, for example, is home to a wide variety of communities, including around 30,000 Israeli Arabs, (both Muslim and Christian), Druze, and followers of the Baha'i faith. "We assume everything Hizballah sees in Syria they can try to bring into Lebanon, so I assume that they will try to bring missiles such as Scuds and try and launch them all over Israel. In [the Haifa] district what we will see is the 122mm - they have thousands of these Katyushas that have a range of up to 45 kms - and that would take them from the [Lebanese] border to Tirat HaCarmel [on the south side of Haifa]. This is the main problem for the first days of the war."

"Hizballah has advanced weapons. You don't need to be in uniform to know that if they take the C-802 that they launched at Eilat in 2006 they will try launching it [again]. They have very good, advanced weapons, anti-tank missiles - a huge stockpile." And, under the cover of missile fire, the senior IDF officer said he has little doubt Hizballah will attempt some degree of land invasion...

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DAVID'S SLING SYSTEM SHOWS ABILITY TO DESTROY ROCKETS, MISSILES

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Barbara Opall-Rome

[Defense News](#), Dec. 21, 2015

With hit-to-kill precision, the joint US-Israel David's Sling Weapon System (DSWS) demonstrated Monday its ability to destroy salvos of heavy long-range rockets and short-range ballistic missiles during a series of developmental tests. The tests, conducted at the Negev Desert test range of Rafael Systems Ltd., prime contractor for the DSWS, marked the fourth and final series of developmental tests before the operational system is slated for delivery to the Israeli Air Force in the first quarter of 2016.

Hundreds of Israeli and American industry developers, program officials and uniformed operators from Israel's Air Defense Force participated in Monday's tests, which put the system through several operational scenarios against multiple targets representing "representative and relevant threats," said Shlomo Hess, Rafael program manager. "Today, all these unique technologies that comprise the David's Sling Weapon System became operational," said Hess. "It's very rare to achieve all the goals in such a complex test series ... against long-range targets with heavy warheads capable of sustaining very big collateral damage. We are all in a very high level of excitement," he said.

While Israel's MoD declined to state which targets were employed in the tests, it noted that the system's highly maneuverable, hit-to-kill Stunner interceptor was employed successfully against "multiple threat representative targets ... in realistic, real-time engagements." According to an MoD statement, the system's multi-mission radar designed by Elta Systems detected the target after launch and transferred flight information to the Golden Almond Battle Management Center by Elbit Systems Elisra during each test.

The Stunner interceptor, developed by Rafael with support from its US partner, Raytheon Missile Systems, "was successfully launched, performed all flight phases,

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and engaged the target as planned," MoD reported.

Designed to bridge the lower and upper tiers of Israel's four-layer active defense network, DSWS will be deployed above Israel's Iron Dome system and below the upper-atmospheric Arrow-2 and exo-atmospheric Arrow-3.

Israel expects DSWS to be particularly useful in defending against the vast and increasingly precise arsenal of Syrian 302 mm rockets and Iranian half-ton warhead Fatah-110 rockets in the hands of Lebanon-based Hezbollah. It also is designed to defend against Scud B-class ballistic missiles, which can deliver one-ton warheads at ranges of some 300 km (186 miles). "With David's Sling, the gap between our upper- and lower-tier defenses is closing," said Uzi Rubin, a prominent missile expert and founding director of the Israel Missile Defense Organization.

Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon said the country's four-tier active defense network of Iron Dome, DSWS and Arrow-2 and Arrow-3 represent world-leading interception capabilities. He credited Israel's "rare-quality capabilities," the ongoing US-Israel government-to-government and industry-to-industry partnership and generous funding from Washington for building up the nation's strategic capabilities.

Monday's test concludes development of the first block of DSWS. Two additional blocks are planned, including a version optimized to defend against cruise missiles.

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FALLING TOWERS

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Louis René Beres

[*Arutz Sheva*](#), Dec. 21, 2015

Israel must brace itself against intermittent waves of more-or-less orchestrated Palestinian terror. It would first seem sensible, therefore, to orient the country's national security attention toward most effectively limiting these ongoing and still-anticipated crimes of violence. Nonetheless, terrorism and war are never mutually exclusive, and Jerusalem must also be careful not to deflect any core planning attention from more plainly existential perils.

In essence, authentically core survival dangers stem from a prospectively expanding prospect of regional conflict, involving weapons of mass destruction. Such a daunting and many-sided scenario could involve both state and sub-state adversaries, perhaps in calculated concert with one another. At some point, these fundamentally different types of enemy could collaborate in unorthodox fashion, including even a determined attack on Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor. Already, in 1991 and 2014, Dimona came under missile and rocket fire from Iraqi and Hamas aggressions, respectively.

Now, the key question arises: How shall Israel best respond? While pertinent security threats could be intersecting, interpenetrating, or even synergistic, there will still remain a decipherable hierarchy of plausible dangers. Once this particular rank-ordering has been expressly identified, as indeed it must, Israel's policy planners will then need to ensure that the Jewish state remains situated in an optimal position to control escalation - if need be, from any one level of possible engagement, to any other. In the more usual strategic military parlance, this means that Jerusalem must always seek to preserve a conspicuously viable posture of escalation dominance.

There is more. As part of this essential preservation process, Israel's defense officials should consciously ensure that the country's various "layered" systems of

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deterrence, defense, preemption, and war-fighting protections are: 1) mutually reinforcing, and 2) simultaneously oriented toward both national and terror-group foes.

These officials must also learn to recognize the myriad and complex or cross-cutting alignments already being forged between Israel's diverse enemies. For example, at present, Jerusalem might still prefer the proximity of ISIS-related foes in the region, to Syrian and Iranian-supported Hezbollah, backed by Moscow. But this preference could sometime change in short order, especially if the ISIS-brand fighters should begin to more actively vie with Hamas, Fatah, and/or Islamic Jihad terrorists over Jordan and "Palestine." Further, in rendering all such preference calculations, Jerusalem will also need to take into account the hardening new bipolarity of "Cold War II."

For the moment, Israel has correctly cast its security lot with Egypt's General al-Sisi, acting (singly or cooperatively) against Jihadists in the Sinai. Over time, however, there could be yet another change of power in Cairo, and perhaps even at a moment when Egypt had embarked upon acquiring nuclear weapons status. Then, looking back at the evolution of nuclear weapons development in Shiite Iran, from the Shah to the ayatollahs, Egypt could begin to look very much like "déjà vu all over again."

For Israel, the overriding security mandate is not hard to figure out. Security planning officials must consistently look in several different strategic directions at once, and to make further and continuous judgments about (1) expected axes of conflict, and (2) corresponding opportunities to create "force multipliers." These vital judgments, in turn, would involve mutually supportive applications of technology, both for maximizing Israeli deterrent effectiveness, and for ensuring Israel's indispensable superiority in cyber-defense and cyber-war. IDF and MOD planners are already keenly aware of these responsibilities, and are likely well ahead of Israel's adversaries on such competitive dimensions of military progress.

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What is not altogether certain, inter alia, is that the critical intellectual resources needed to combat existential threats are being directed in suitably existential policy directions. In the final analysis, Israel's physical survival will demand a substantial triumph of "mind over mind," not just of "mind over matter." This notion of a required primacy of intellect in war is not in any way new or contemporary. It was, in fact, already understood by Greek and Macedonian armies more than two thousand years ago.

"In a dark time," says the American poet, Theodore Roethke, "the eye begins to see." Today, in threatening an insidiously encroaching "darkness," the enemy nuclear challenge should be starkly visualized and fully acknowledged in Israel. Israel's preemption prospects are essentially disappearing, and Jerusalem also understands that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) of 14 July 2015 (the Iran Pact) was little more than a combined American and European strategic failure.

Every state's first obligation is the assurance of protection. Always, following Hugo Grotius, the seventeenth-century founder of modern international law, innocent civilian life must be preserved. From the moment that Iranian leaders first proclaimed their unwavering belief in a Shiite apocalypse, a series of final battles believed to be a sine qua non for transforming the profane "world of war" (Dar al-Harb) into the sacred "world of Islam," (Dar al-Islam), Jerusalem has had to affirm and confront every conceivable military peril, and, reciprocally, to consider every conceivably purposeful remedy.

Israel should continue to remind the world that nuclear weapons states are not created equal. Israel's nuclear forces remain deliberately ambiguous and undeclared. This is not for any reasons of legal deception or subterfuge. On the contrary, these "bombs in the basement" have never been brandished in any threatening fashion by Israel's civilian or military leaders. This non-belligerent national strategic posture is evident, prima facie. It is, therefore, incontestable. Israel is not Iran. Israel has never called for wiping any other state "off the map." Israel's nuclear weapons exist only to protect the Jewish state from certain

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extraordinary forms of aggression...

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On Topic

[Hezbollah: The Israeli Enemy Will Regret Assassinating Samir Kuntar: Jerusalem Post, Dec. 21, 2015](#)—A day after he was assassinated in an attack that Hezbollah attributed to Israel, Samir Kuntar was laid to rest in Beirut on Monday.

[Israel's Newest Submarine Leaves Germany, Bound for Haifa: Judah Ari Gross, Times of Israel, Dec. 17, 2015](#)—The latest and one of the most expensive weapons in the IDF's arsenal, the Dolphin-class submarine INS Rahav, set out for Haifa from the German port of Kiel on Thursday, according to a senior naval official.

[Defense Experts Back IDF's 2014 Gaza Campaign, Claim Critics are Invoking Wrong Set of Laws: Judah Ari Gross, Times of Israel, Dec. 13, 2015](#)—Armies of the world would be rendered far less effective if they were forced to operate under the same restrictions as the IDF during last summer's Gaza campaign, a group of former military and defense leaders from nine countries claim in a new report released Friday.

[Close-Quarter Combat in the IDF: IDF Blog, Dec. 16, 2015](#)—In response to the recent wave of terror, the IDF has launched a new crash course in counter-terrorism, teaching our soldiers a variety of techniques to thwart infiltrations and fend off terrorists.

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