



# Israel's National Security Doctrine:

The Report of the Committee on the Formulation of the  
National Security Doctrine (Meridor Committee),  
Ten Years Later

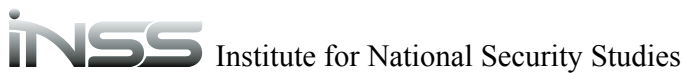
Dan Meridor and Ron Eldadi





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# **Israel's National Security Doctrine:** The Report of the Committee on the Formulation of the National Security Doctrine (Meridor Committee), Ten Years Later

Dan Meridor and Ron Eldadi

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## Preface

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In April 2006, the Committee for Formulating Israel's National Security Doctrine, headed by Dan Meridor, submitted its conclusions and recommendations to Minister of Defense Shaul Mofaz and to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. Minister of Defense Mofaz and the previous prime minister, Ariel Sharon, had requested that the committee analyze the changes and trends in Israel's strategic-military environment, examine the validity of the existing paradigm, and recommend a revised national security doctrine, given the main security challenges expected during the decade of 2006–2016. At the end of a long and exhaustive process, the committee presented a formal written report to Israel's leadership, giving a comprehensive, integrative and long-term national security doctrine.

The minister of defense endorsed the report, which was presented personally to the prime minister and was widely distributed in the defense establishment and outside of it. The report was widely received in respect to both its necessity and content. At the direction of the prime minister, the Ministerial Committee on National Security Affairs (the security cabinet) determined a well-defined approval process for the report and formulated a detailed proposal for decision makers for that purpose. Although the report was submitted to the security cabinet, a vote was never held and therefore it was not formally approved. Nonetheless, in practice some of its recommendations have been adopted. For example, a fourth component (defense) was added to the three components of Israel's traditional national security doctrine: deterrence, warning, and decisive victory ("the security triad").

At the end of a long and exhaustive process, the committee presented a formal written report to Israel's leadership, giving a comprehensive, integrative and long-term national security doctrine.

In the decade following the committee's work, the importance and necessity of a current and relevant national security doctrine, consistent with the

state's objectives and the changes in the strategic environment, have become increasingly clear. A national security doctrine is an essential compass for formulating security responses, ranking the order of priorities, and managing risk in the face of Israel's security challenges in coming years.

Although more than a few changes have occurred in Israel's strategic environment since the completion of the report, the basic model used in formulating the national security doctrine to meet Israel's unique conditions and many of the principles are still relevant and important even in today's changing reality. Therefore, since more than a decade has passed since the committee's report had been submitted, we believe that it is a worthwhile endeavor to present the story of the committee's work, to examine whether its conclusions and recommendations have withstood the test of time and whether they will be relevant in the future, and to emphasize the need to formulate a relevant national security doctrine as soon as possible. This memorandum does not purport to suggest an up-to-date national security doctrine but rather presents the committee's report, in order to underline the importance of updating it and to contribute to the public discussion on national security issues.

This document attempts to reflect the report of the Committee for Formulating Israel's National Security Doctrine as it was written then. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that only a condensed version is presented here as certain parts are not included due to the sensitive nature of the material and due to the security of information. The document has five main chapters: Chapter 1 presents the rationale for establishing the committee and the means of formulating the national security doctrine; Chapter 2 lays down the foundations for the national security doctrine; Chapter 3 presents the principles of the responses to the main security threats; Chapter 4 looks at other security contexts; and Chapter 5 examines the validity of the conclusions and recommendations over a decade later, and in looking to the future.

The committee's report began with a quote from David Ben-Gurion, who was the first to formulate Israel's national security doctrine. He related to the continuous need for self-examination and for adjusting Israel's trajectory according to the changing reality and the challenges it faces. There is no doubt that his words are still relevant today and even more valid:

We must always remember one main rule—even though it is simple and self-evident—if we are forced to fight, we will not fight in the past but in the future. And what was successful in the past will not necessarily be successful and appropriate in the future . . . Alertness requires us to check our means of defense from time to time in light of the changing reality and to keep up with the times.

– David Ben-Gurion, 1952

Dan Meridor and Dr. Brigadier General (res.) Ron Eldadi,  
February 2019



## Chapter 1

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# **The Rationale for Establishing the Committee and the Path to Devising the National Security Doctrine**

### **The Traditional National Security Doctrine and the Developments that Precipitated its Change**

Israel's traditional national security doctrine was formulated during the 1950s. According to General Israel Tal, "Over the years, we added some paint here and some plaster there, we repaired and we improved; we also ruined some things, but the foundations remained the same." The assumptions underlying the traditional national security doctrine were that the state faced an existential threat; there was clear asymmetry in favor of the Arab states (with respect to area, population, economic base, political and military backing, and the ability to decisively resolve the conflict); and that Israel had no allies upon which it could depend.

These basic assumptions led Israel's leaders—first and foremost, David Ben-Gurion—to base Israel's security primarily upon the defense establishment, with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) at its center, and, to a lesser extent, on negotiated agreements and Israel's allies. During this period, a defensive security policy was formulated, which rested on a defensive strategy (preventing harm to Israel) and an offensive military doctrine (moving the war to enemy territory and, if possible, also carrying out a preemptive attack). The practical translation of this concept led to a unique military structure and an original security doctrine. The military structure included a relatively small standing army that relied on a large reserve force and high-quality components that compensated for numerical inferiority. This unique security doctrine was buttressed by the security triad: deterrence in

order to prevent war, sufficient intelligence warning of war, and a fast and decisive victory to quickly end the war.

For many years, Israel's traditional national security doctrine led to many achievements in terms of the security challenges, even though the national security doctrine was never formally and cohesively articulated in writing. Rather, it was partly an orally transmitted law expressed in many statements, comments, speeches, and lectures, and partly a written law, embedded in numerous places, such as laws, Knesset and government decisions, various military standing orders, and so forth.

For the State of Israel, which has faced a unique and complex security challenge since its establishment, the national security doctrine—although not anchored in any single document—is central to its national experience and significantly affects many aspects of the country. Therefore, it is extremely important that the national security doctrine be modified to address the state's goals and its changing strategic environment. The need to update the national security doctrine results, first and foremost, from the significant changes that have occurred in recent decades—both in intensity and depth—in the international, regional, and domestic environments and in the nature of war and conflicts. Furthermore, revising the national security doctrine should take into consideration the future trends and areas of uncertainty.

Increasing globalization, revolutions in media, technology, science and economics, changes in the nature of military conflict, and increasing constraints on the use of force and its legitimacy have characterized the international arena. In the Middle East, the nature and magnitude of the threats have changed; peace treaties have been signed; peace processes have advanced; some components of the asymmetry between Israel and the Arab nations have shifted; and from Israel's vantage point, the accessibility of allies and partners has improved. On the Arab side, the support of superpowers has weakened, as has Arab unity; Islamic fundamentalism has risen significantly; while the question remains of Israel's position and status in the region. Within Israel, deep-rooted social change has influenced fundamental issues, the national agenda, the allocation of resources, and civil-military relations.

### **The Nature of the Committee's Work Process**

Against the backdrop of these far-reaching changes, the increasing complexity of foreign policy and security issues, and the growing feeling that the time had come to reconsider the national security doctrine, Minister of Defense

Mofaz, in coordination with Prime Minister Sharon, decided to establish a committee to formulate a security doctrine. The individuals appointed to the committee had extensive experience in national security matters and represented a broad spectrum of the public sector, academia, and the security establishment (including senior representatives from the IDF). Prime Minister Sharon personally approved the appointment of each committee member (see the list of members in the appendix).

The committee was asked to analyze the strategic-military environment in its broadest sense, to examine the validity of the existing paradigm, and to recommend a national security doctrine appropriate for the main security challenges during that decade (2006–2016). The goal of the committee was to submit a report to the government that outlined Israel’s national security doctrine for the subsequent years.

The report was the result of a thorough and intensive work process that lasted more than eighteen months. Several months of detailed preparatory work preceded the report. A small group, composed of Dan Meridor, Eli Levite, Shlomo Brom, Aviem Sella, Yehuda Ben-Meir, Gideon Hoshen, Mike Herzog, and Ron Eldadi, met to brainstorm about how to optimally formulate a national security doctrine. The preparatory discussion focused on three issues: the lessons from previous attempts over the years to formulate a national security doctrine; an examination of the alternatives to the working model; and the definition of the committee’s final product. The main conclusions of the preparatory process included the need for full cooperation from the defense establishment; the necessity of focusing the committee’s work process on a final, concise product delineating only the context of the security strategy; as well as the methodological element of having one main working group, in contrast to a number of working groups in previous attempts.

As part of the committee’s work process, the committee held fifty-two formal meetings and dozens of additional meetings that were attended by experts from various fields in the security establishment and external to it who were connected to the various issues on the committee’s agenda. Leading members of the

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security establishment, including the chief of the General Staff of the IDF, the head of the Mossad, the head of the General Security Service, the head of the Atomic Energy Commission, and the director-general of the Ministry of Defense, in addition to a long list of IDF generals, and experts from academia, the security establishment, the intelligence community, and the Foreign Ministry all appeared before the committee.

The committee's work process was divided into three main stages:

1. In the first stage, the committee looked at a wide range of issues in order to examine and map the changes, the trends, and the challenges facing Israel in the strategic-military environment during the years 2006–2016. These included the international, regional, domestic, and economic-technological environments; the changing nature of war and the character of conflicts; the operational doctrine of the IDF and the multi-year plan for the IDF's military buildup; intelligence to meet future challenges; and the space dimension.
2. In the second stage, the committee's work focused on more concrete definitions in order to delineate the boundaries of its work, determine its methodological structure, and agree upon the main issues that would be at the core of its work, which included the response to the principle security challenges (non-conventional weapons, terror, and conventional war) and an examination of other important security issues (the Palestinian issue, the international-diplomatic front, resources available for security, the "people's army," the qualitative edge, the decision-making process, and national intelligence).
3. In the third stage, internal working groups were established to separately consider each of the core issues and to formulate the response to the challenges faced by Israel. This included the final discussions by the committee's plenum. The various processes and the products of the discussions led to an integrative and comprehensive approach to the issue, which was presented to the committee members for their reaction and also to senior figures in the defense establishment, including the chief of the General Staff, the head of the Mossad, the head of the General Security Service, the director general of the Ministry of Defense, the head of the Atomic Energy Commission, and generals in the IDF. After the committee received the responses, it held final discussions and completed its report (the continuation of the process from that point onward is presented in the concluding chapter).



## The Logic and Content of the Report

The committee's report presents the insights and fundamental principles according to which the national security policy should be formulated. The goal of this policy is to ensure the existence of the state, protect its essential interests, and facilitate the realization of national goals vis-à-vis the military and political challenges that Israel faces. This is to be accomplished by providing responses to the risks and challenges and by exploiting existing opportunities and creating new ones. Although the report indeed presents insights and guiding principles for national security, it also includes more concrete recommendations on other issues in order to motivate security activity in these contexts.

Using a broad definition of the national security doctrine, the committee chose to focus on a more narrowly defined domain in order to address the structural tension in four main axes:

1. Delineating the boundaries between national security in its broad sense and the security domain in its narrower sense;
2. Delineating the measure of time between the long and short terms;
3. Determining the method between the universal approach and Israeli particularism;
4. Choosing between a responsive approach and a pro-active one.

Between national security in its broad sense and the security domain in its narrow sense, the committee's work focused as a rule on the security domain and did not extend to all the components of national security in the broadest sense. Nonetheless, the committee did consider some of the national security issues that overlap with the security domain, such as the "people's army," relations with Israel's neighbors, the share of gross domestic product (GDP) devoted to security, and so forth.

The committee did not relate to issues with a clear political context and avoided the complex and sensitive issue of Israeli Arabs, which involves citizens of the state and extends beyond the boundaries of the security domain. The Palestinian issue, which is a major component

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of the national security doctrine, was addressed by the committee from a security perspective, although in a broad context.

The report covered one decade from 2006 to 2016. Formulating a national security doctrine by nature requires a long-term perspective. This is particularly problematic in an era of rapid change and unexpected events that amplify uncertainty. The effort to overcome the difficulty of relating to the long term is manifested in the committee's working methodology, by earmarking turning points that could necessitate reexamining the fundamental assumptions and by adopting a mechanism to update the national security doctrine periodically and according to developments.

A large number of white papers published by the United States, Britain, Germany, France, Finland, Canada, Japan, and South Korea in recent years served partially as the basis for the choice of methods and structure of the committee's report. These papers, which are publicly available, present the country's national security doctrine, including its national goals and interests, the changes in the strategic environment, the challenges and opportunities, and the methods of response. The countries chosen included the superpowers, who have a long tradition of strategic thinking, and countries whose perspective is less global and more regional, similar to Israel's.

An analysis of the white papers revealed similarities in their presentation, their internal structure, and the main issues considered even though their contents varied. The committee's report attempted to connect between the universal methodology and the unique Israeli reality. Thus, from the methodological perspective, the report examined the need to change the existing paradigm, analyzed the principle changes and trends in the strategic environment, determined the principles for an updated national security doctrine, and discussed in detail the threat perception and the response to it while relating to the core issues and additional security contexts.

The perspective presented in the report combined the reactive approach to the threats and risks facing Israel with the pro-active approach to identifying risks and opportunities. This combination was intended to influence the developments in the strategic-military environment, to shape them, and improve the balance between risk and opportunity. In order to optimally prepare for future developments, it was necessary to formulate a national security doctrine that would allow for flexibility and adaptation in facing the security circumstances that were likely to change for good or for bad in the following years.

In short, a major part of the committee's work was to modify the traditional national security doctrine according to the changes that had occurred in the domestic and foreign arenas. Naturally, greater emphasis was placed on the necessary changes in the national security doctrine rather than on the traditional concept. Since it was impossible to provide a complete solution that did not involve risks for every possible scenario, the committee gave recommendations regarding priorities in responding to the range of threats and risks. These recommendations are essentially also the basis for taking calculated risks in Israel's security policy.

As the report reflected the insights reached at the time of its writing, the committee therefore emphasized the need to examine its conclusions periodically and in light of strategic developments. It is essential to designate an entity to be responsible for the process of updating the report and reexamining its implications in various domains, and a concrete recommendation in this matter was included in the report.

The report examined security issues for the first time from an overall perspective, including issues that were highly classified. Therefore, the committee found it appropriate to give the document the highest security classification (the full version is 250 pages long). Another version of the report was also published with a "top secret" classification to expand the discussion and promote the committee's recommendations within the defense establishment. It was intended to publish a third unclassified version in order to expand the report's audience and encourage the public discourse on national security issues. The current document is, to a great extent, the realization of that important goal.

The report is comprised of six main chapters:

1. An introduction that includes a detailed executive summary and emphasizes the goal of the report, the circumstances of its writing, its limits, and the process of its creation.
2. The second chapter sets the foundations for the national security doctrine: the national goals that underlie the national security doctrine, the examination of the main changes and trends in Israel's strategic-military environment, an analysis of Israel's strengths and opportunities relative to its weaknesses and risks, and the defining of Israel's security challenges in the following decade.
3. The third chapter presents the principles for formulating the national security doctrine in view of the security challenges and the changes in

the traditional concept. In addition, it presents the outlines of policy vis-à-vis the chief players in the region.

4. The fourth chapter delineates the principles of responding to the main security challenges: terror, unconventional weapons, and the conventional challenge.
5. The fifth chapter examines other important issues that are closely connected to the national security doctrine: the Palestinian challenge, the international-political arena, the defense resources, the “people’s army,” the qualitative edge, the decision-making process, and the national intelligence.
6. The sixth chapter summarizes the report and includes the main recommendations both at the level of the overall national security doctrine and on more concrete issues.

## Chapter 2

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### **The Foundations of the National Security Doctrine**

#### **The National Goals Underlying the National Security Doctrine**

The purpose of the national security doctrine is to serve the state's national goals and to be a central component in their realization. The committee did not discuss the whole range of national goals, but rather it formulated an agreed-upon core number of goals that related to the national security doctrine that would be the basis for its work:

1. Ensuring the survival of the State of Israel and protecting its territorial integrity and the security of its citizens and inhabitants;
2. Protecting the values and national character of the State of Israel, as a Jewish and democratic state and as the home of the Jewish people;
3. Ensuring the State of Israel's ability to maintain its socioeconomic strength, like any other advanced country;
4. Reinforcing the State of Israel's international and regional standing and seeking peace with its neighbors.

#### **The Changes and Trends in Israel's Strategic-Security Environment**

The international environment has undergone major changes at a rapid and intensive rate, including increasing globalization; revolutionary changes in media, technology, science, and economics; transformations in the nature of military conflict; and increasing constraints on the use of force and its legitimacy. The United States, which largely dictates the global agenda, is prepared to use force in order to realize its goals—particularly after the September 11 attack—and seeks to change the face of the Middle East and, in particular, to promote democratization. In addition, non-state players, motivated by religion, economics, culture, or the like, are gaining in strength;

they have transcended national borders and have become the foci of power in the international system.

In the regional environment, changes have occurred in the nature and relative magnitude of the threats. Thus, peace treaties have been signed and peace processes have developed; the strategic balance between Israel and the Arab nations has transformed; and Israel has managed to acquire allies and partners in the region. On the Arab side, the support of superpowers has weakened substantially; Arab unity is not what it once was; the strength of Islamic fundamentalism has grown immensely; and the question of the place and status of Israel in the region remains unresolved. Israel is in a prolonged and complex process of agreements on territorial and security aspects with some of the countries in the region; however, the ideological position that negates Israel's right to exist in the region still has support.

On the domestic front, there is a growing structural tension between the security ethos and the civil-liberal ethos; the necessity of limiting public expenditure has been internalized; the public discourse on security issues has expanded; the order of priorities and the allocation of resources have been transformed; and major shifts in civil-military relations have taken place. These processes have influenced the basic principles underlying the security response and, in turn, have increased the magnitude of the domestic arena in decision-making processes vis-à-vis security and have intensified the tensions between civilian needs (welfare, education, and health) and security

needs. As a result, the significance of security on the national agenda is now being reconsidered and is a topic of public discourse.

The risk of conventional war has diminished while the danger of unconventional conflicts (terror and guerrilla warfare) and non-conventional conflicts (nuclear warfare) has increased.

The changing nature of war has resulted, to a great extent, from developments in globalization, the technological revolution, and the information era and has been manifested in recent years in three main dimensions: political-cultural, technological, and doctrinal-military. The main characteristic of these processes is, to a large extent, the shift of focus from total, symmetric, and conventional war between nations to limited asymmetric conflicts

in which not only states but also organizations participate. The risk of conventional war has diminished while the danger of unconventional conflicts (terror and guerilla warfare) has increased. The risk of a combination of the

two, in the form of non-conventional terror, also could develop. Moreover, the modern battlefield is, to a large degree, an urban and densely populated one. Considerations of domestic and international legitimacy and the efforts to influence public opinion have become increasingly important, as war is essentially waged on the battlefield and in the media (on television and computer screens).

It should be noted that the chapter that analyzes the changes and trends in Israel's strategic-security environment concludes with a general discussion of Israel's weaknesses and the risks it faces as opposed to its strengths and opportunities in the international, regional, and domestic arenas, based on a SWOT analysis.

### **Israel's Main Challenges**

Processes of change in Israel's strategic-military environment have created a complex reality for the coming decade. Israel's status has improved vis-à-vis the classic threats it faced, and several emerging opportunities have enabled Israel to influence its environment and to improve the balance of prospects and risks in the future. In contrast, along with threats that remain valid, even if their strength has diminished, new and different threats have emerged, primarily those of non-conventional weapons and terror.

At the regional level, two threats have emerged at the top of the order of priorities in forming a security response: first, Iran's process of attaining nuclear capability, which has the potential to create an existential threat and to change the strategic balance in the region; and second, the continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its negative effects in the domestic arena and on Israel's reputation in the international and regional arenas, and in maintaining the Jewish and democratic character of the state in the long term, which is beyond the realm of the committee. The challenge of terror has also intensified and requires a specific response.

These changes necessitate creating a different point of balance in the security response that integrates the ability to respond to the classic yet diminishing threats with the reinforcement and development of a sophisticated response to asymmetric conflicts, especially non-conventional weapons and terror. The response must also be flexible enough to deal with unexpected developments due to the changing reality.

Ensuring that Israel continues to advance and flourish both socially and economically is a growing challenge that requires achieving a balance

between the components of the equation of national strength; that is, the right balance between essential security needs on the one hand and the resilience of Israeli society and the welfare of its citizens on the other. The security ethos—particularly the allocation of resources and the realization of the “people’s army” ideal—must be adapted to the changing environment.

The challenge of strengthening Israel’s international and regional status calls upon Israel to take the following steps: achieving greater international legitimacy on a practical level; preserving and reinforcing the peace with Egypt and Jordan; exploiting the potential for regional cooperation; continuing

To deal with the existing and emerging threats, Israel should rely on a mix of prevention, deterrence, defense, and offense. In building its response, Israel should establish an order of priorities between existential and other threats and actual and potential threats.

to strive for peace with its neighbors; to settle the Palestinian issue; and deepening the dialogue and cooperation with key players in the international community, particularly the United States.

### **The Principles of the National Security Doctrine**

The principles of response constitute the compass for the national security doctrine and provide the guidelines for responding to Israel’s security challenges. The components of the national security doctrine will be constructed upon these principles. Naturally, tensions exist between some of the principles; therefore, priorities need to be set between them. The security policy is supposed to

achieve optimal implementation of the goals and the principles in concrete contexts and to express the government’s priorities.

The following principles will underlie the national security doctrine:

1. Israel should focus its efforts—whether independently or with partners—on preventing the various threats against it, while underlining existential threats.
2. To deal with the existing and emerging threats, Israel should rely on a mix of prevention, deterrence, defense, and offense. In building its response, Israel should establish an order of priorities between existential and other threats and actual and potential threats.
3. Israel needs to maintain its military power and to project an image that will achieve deterrence in the region vis-à-vis the various threats it



faces. Its power must be structured in a way that will generate a concrete response to the various threat scenarios at the critical moment.

4. Israel's power will be based primarily on independent national strength, which relies on maintaining its qualitative edge and its ability to exploit that advantage on the political and operational levels. Israel's strength will enable it to take calculated risks in managing its policies in the military-political domain.
5. In addition to maintaining its national strength, Israel should strengthen its special relationship with the United States and develop strategic relations with other key players in the international arena. On the regional level, it is necessary to reinforce the existing peace agreements, to achieve peace with additional countries, and to explore the potential for cooperation with moderate players in the region.
6. The use of force to achieve the objectives must be in the necessary context and to the required extent; it should be subject to Israel's moral and legal foundations, its policy, and legitimacy considerations.
7. It is essential to seek a broad national consensus in security matters, and it is particularly important to maintain the principle of the "people's army" and to strengthen the feeling of security among the population.
8. Promoting the qualitative edge requires that relative advantages be exploited on the national level. To that end, human capital should be nurtured, technological opportunities should be utilized, and organizational ability should be developed.
9. It is essential to achieve balance in the allocation of resources—within a given set of resources—between meeting security needs on the one hand and ensuring economic strength and the welfare of Israel's citizens and inhabitants on the other.

### **Changing the Building Blocks of the National Security Doctrine**

As in the past, Israel's national security doctrine rests on a defensive security strategy, whose goals are to ensure the existence of the state, to create effective deterrence, to remove threats if necessary, and to maintain the principle that force is only to be used to protect the state and ensure the well-being of its citizens and inhabitants (even if this requires taking offensive measures). Nonetheless, the committee recommended that greater efforts be invested in political-security design, including peace and security agreements, the foiling of threats (whether by political, military, or clandestine means), protecting

the home front, and developing independent capabilities, alongside increased regional and international cooperation.

Although the offensive military doctrine remains valid, its focus shifted from large-scale ground maneuvers in enemy territory to the use of precise stand-off fire (preferably from Israel's territory) and limited ground maneuvers. This change was necessary primarily due to the need to reduce the attrition of Israel's forces and to take into account the political considerations before a ground maneuver in the enemy's territory, if there is a need for this complementary measure. Technological developments on the battlefield made this change possible. Another complementary process has been the development and promotion of the defensive element in the various scenarios. Preemptive moves (preventative war and preemptive attack) continue to be a potential component in the security equation, although significant magnitude will be given to political considerations vis-à-vis the military advantages

The changes in the strategic environment and the fact that the extent of the battles had shifted from the conventional battlefield to asymmetric domains required reexamining the fundamental components of the security triad and increased the need to add a fourth component, namely defense, in order to meet the growing threats to the home front.

of a preemptive move (physically crossing the border or counterfire). Therefore, the IDF must be prepared to provide a response without a preemptive border-crossing attack and possibly even without preemptive counterfire.

The traditional national security doctrine relies on the security triad that consists of three fundamental elements: deterrence in order to prevent war, adequate intelligence warning of war, and a decisive victory in an attack to bring about a swift and crushing end of the war. The committee believed that the changes in the strategic environment and the fact that the extent of the battles had shifted from the conventional battlefield to asymmetric domains required reexamining the fundamental components of the security triad and increased the need to add a fourth component, namely defense, in order to meet the growing threats to the home front.

Although deterrence continues to have a central role opposite the array of challenges in the revised national security doctrine, there is also a need to develop concrete models given the threats of terror and non-conventional weapons as it is not possible to rely upon the existing model, which relates primarily to deterrence in

order to prevent total war. Deterrence should be built upon the basis of determination and the willingness to use force, and it requires the buildup of capabilities that will strengthen its credibility. Deterrence must be effective against both state and non-state players and should prevent a conflict or should it fail, at least determine its boundaries by controlling the escalation.

While in the past, the warning capability was primarily used for preventing total war, currently—and looking toward the future—it is essential for a wide variety of threats and scenarios, from warning about changes in fundamental processes (whether positive or negative) to operational warnings of both large-scale conflicts and limited scenarios of the use of force. In this context, warning of various types of terror activity (including by non-state players and regimes without effective governance) and of nuclear development in the region should be emphasized.

In order to reach a decisive victory in every kind of conflict and at all levels of intensity (from a high-intensity conflict to complex conflicts of changing intensity), various mechanisms are needed to reach its end. Alongside the decisive victory in its classic sense (dealing a decisive blow to the enemy's ability and desire to continue fighting and to achieve goals through the use of force), alternatives need to be developed for the different arenas and scenarios, should a decisive victory be impossible or unsuccessful. Following are alternatives to the decisive victory:

1. Management of the conflict until decisive victory occurs, if at all.
2. “A decisive victory” in the context of a political settlement (management of a conflict and its conclusion with a country with which Israel has a peace treaty).
3. An “arrangement” in the face of terror and non-conventional weapons, which require a different kind of decisive victory, in the absence of a clear victory on the battlefield. This involves creating a mechanism for a temporary but not final conclusion of the violence, which will establish a reasonable strategic reality.

The fourth and additional component of the security triad, defense, encompasses all the efforts at the national level to protect the home front, which has become the main arena of fighting and, in particular, to defend the population and the strategic infrastructures. The protection of the home front also implies a potential for strengthened deterrence, expanded room for the government to maneuver, a greater feeling of security, and diminished vulnerability of national infrastructures. Protecting the home front is composed

of active and passive defense, the security of borders (including the defensive barrier), and the protection of sensitive facilities, population centers, public figures, and information.

### **Israel's Policy at the Regional Level**

Israel's policy at the regional level is directed toward three main spheres: its peace partners, the intermediate countries, and the rogue countries and organizations:

1. Israel should adopt a policy of maintaining its peaceful relations and further developing them with its peace partners, Egypt and Jordan. Israel needs to involve them in advancing positive processes in the region and promoting joint efforts to fight terror. In parallel, Israel should preserve its qualitative edge over its peace partners. In addition, Israel should work to expand its relations with moderate nations in the region.
2. As for the relatively moderate countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and Iraq, Israel has an interest in preventing them from becoming rogue countries and should promote relations with them up to the point of peaceful relations. Israel also has an interest in getting international parties to work to neutralize the potential threat of terror and radical Islam originating from these countries.
3. Israel should deal with the rogue countries and organizations—especially Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas, and radical Islamic organizations, whose terror and non-conventional weapons constitute a challenge—by developing international and regional cooperation and by strengthening its own response capability. International cooperation is essential in promoting the war against terror, undermining its legitimacy, and strengthening the states' responsibility in dealing with terror.

The regional and international Islamic terror organizations pose a growing threat to Israel's interests and those of diaspora Jewry. Israel's policy should promote the international war on terror and undermine support for terror and its legitimacy. For the international war on terror, it is essential, among other things, to strengthen state responsibility, in order to destroy the roots of terror and to form regional frameworks for the war on terrorism. In addition, Israel should continue to act directly against terrorism, primarily with offensive measures, in order to block its financial channels and to reinforce moderate players.

Israeli policy must be prepared to face changes, including regional instability, Islamic terror, and adverse changes in the region's moderate regimes. In general, several potential developments could affect Israel, including the future of the Assad regime in Syria, the challenges to the regimes in Egypt and Jordan, the stability of the Saudi monarchy, and the future of US involvement in Iraq.



## Chapter 3

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### The Response to the Main Security Challenges

Over the years, Israel has faced three main challenges: the conventional threat from countries in the region; the threat of terror and various types of low-intensity conflicts; and threats of surface-to-surface missiles and non-conventional weapons from the near and far circles. This mix of threats, which has dictated national security thinking, has undergone significant transformations in recent decades, as described in the previous chapter. In the past, the main challenge was conventional, symmetric war against conventional armies while the threat of surface-to-surface missiles and non-conventional weapons was just a component within it and the magnitude of terror threats and low-intensity conflicts was relatively small. In recent years—and in the coming decade—low-intensity conflicts, terrorism, non-conventional weapons, and especially the nuclear threat have acquired greater significance. In contrast, the threat of conflicts with conventional armies has diminished.

The committee's report describes in detail the characteristics of the threats, the necessary achievements, and the main capabilities required for each type of conflict: a prolonged low-intensity conflict (terror and guerilla warfare), conflict with the more distant circle (with emphasis on the nuclear threat), and conflict with conventional armies (the first circle). It should be mentioned that the committee's report clearly described the achievements and capabilities required by the government for each type of conflict. For obvious reasons, this document describes only briefly and in general terms the challenges of terror, the

The committee's report describes in detail the characteristics of the threats, the necessary achievements, and the main capabilities required for each type of conflict.

conflict with conventional armies, and the main emphasizes in the response policy. The challenge of non-conventional weapons is not described in detail due to its sensitivity.

### **The Challenge of Non-Conventional Weapons**

The challenge of non-conventional weapons is one of the main issues in the committee's report and the focus of the discussion about the response to the main challenges (in particular, the nuclear threat but also the chemical threat and the non-conventional terror threat). Due to the sensitivity of the matter, it was discussed at length in the classified version of the committee's report and therefore we cannot address it in this memorandum. It is worthy only to emphasize in this context that the complicated coping with the challenge of non-conventional weapons relies upon three elements:

1. Foiling (of various types)
2. Defense (especially active defense)
3. Strategic deterrence.

### **The Threat of Terrorism**

Terrorism is increasingly viewed as one of the main security challenges and as requiring both greater attention than in the past and a designated response. Israel deals in parallel with various forms of terrorism—local Palestinian terrorism, cross-border terrorism, and global terrorism. These forms of terrorism have become increasingly coordinated over the years on various levels. The Palestinian terrorism became the main means of continuing the violent struggle against Israel, primarily due to the increasing significance of religious fundamentalism, the guidance and assistance from states that support terrorism, and the immense scale of damage that can be caused, as a result of the willingness for self-sacrifice, access to technology and weapons, and the use of various types of high-trajectory fire. In parallel to the growth in local terrorism, the potential of the threat of global terrorism against Israel has increased. Terror organizations are exploiting the removal of boundaries between countries, increased individual liberties, and the growing access to information and technology, enabling them to cause great damage in order to pose an asymmetric threat to which response is difficult.

Given the changing terror characteristics and the loosening of constraints, four main trends can be discerned in the development of the terror threat in the coming decade:



1. The development of sophisticated terror capabilities in order to bypass increased border protection (on land, sea, and air);
2. The penetration of global terrorism into the Middle East and Israel, especially with efforts to carry out terror attacks in Israel; the strengthening of ties between global and local terrorism; and global jihad's gaining of a foothold in the territories and Israel;
3. A shift to mega-terror and non-conventional terrorism by means of non-conventional weapons or, alternatively, the use of conventional weapons that can result in non-conventional harm;
4. The emergence of cyber terrorism, making it possible to attack essential information systems in Israel—both military and civilian—from afar.

It should be mentioned that Israel, which is an advanced and highly digitized country, is particularly vulnerable to this type of terrorism.

The challenge of the terror threat differs from the traditional battlefield, since it primarily involves asymmetric warfare between states and non-state players. It takes place on a battlefield that has no boundaries, where the rules of the game are unclear, and the home front becomes the front line. The enemy's power and achievements are manifested not only in the terror attacks themselves but also in their cognitive effect, and their impact on national resilience, legitimacy, and local and international public opinion. In this kind of asymmetric conflict, the state sometimes finds it difficult to bring its full military power to bear so as to end the conflict; in contrast, the weak side can create points of strength and can operate wherever convenient.

According to the committee, the goal of the response to terror should be to prevent the various types of terror, and if they are impossible to foil, then the damage should be minimized to the greatest possible extent (by protecting the state's citizens, strengthening the feeling of security, and reducing disruption of the routine); strengthen deterrence; reduce the terror organizations' room to maneuver and deny them political achievements;

The concept of response to the challenge of terror should rest on the cumulative effect of combined multi-dimensional efforts: attacking terror organizations and their infrastructures over the long run; limiting the damage by defensive means and by maintaining national resilience; and weakening the roots of terror by denying any internal and external legitimacy and by reducing the motivation of the terrorists and those who send them.

maintain the capability of achieving national goals and the freedom to act (maintaining the legitimacy to fight terror); and weaken terrorism's sources of strength (by denying its legitimacy and reducing the motivation for terror).

The committee recommended that the concept of response to the challenge of terror should rest on the cumulative effect of combined multi-dimensional efforts: attacking terror organizations and their infrastructures over the long run; limiting the damage by defensive means and by maintaining national resilience; and weakening the roots of terror by denying any internal and external legitimacy and by reducing the motivation of the terrorists and those who send them.

It seems that the offensive efforts against terror are focused more on the operational and logistic framework than on the social-political infrastructure and its relationship to terror organizations. At the defensive level, resources are being invested in the external shell; however, investment in protecting the civilian sphere is insufficient, and there is no national coordinator to direct policy, focus efforts, and allocate resources. Addressing the roots of terrorism has received little attention and few resources are allocated to it, as it is considered secondary relative to the two other elements. From an integrative perspective, balancing and integrating the three elements of the response is essential in order to achieve long-term success in the war against terror.

Dealing with terror is significantly different from the familiar conventional warfare; therefore, special methods and tools need to be developed in using force and military buildup, so that the war on terror can be more efficient. The campaign against terror requires integrating the operational concepts of two different yet closely related levels: first, the operational concept at the local level in Israel (an overall systemic and long-term response that relies on jointness, a unified goal, and centralized coordination); and second, Israel's need to integrate with the war on terror at the regional and international levels, primarily against the growing threat of global jihad and its close ties with terror in the region.

According to the committee, a national configuration to deal with the threat of terror as part of the national security doctrine requires a structure with three layers:

1. A committee of ministers, led by the prime minister, whose goal is to formulate policy on terror, to balance the various efforts, and to allocate the resources needed to deal effectively with the threat of terror;

2. Two parallel coordination mechanisms that maintain close ties between them and report to the ministerial committee: a military-security mechanism for the integration of offensive-preemptive efforts, led by the minister of defense; and a civilian mechanism for the integration of defensive components of the civilian domain, led by the minister of internal security (or a different minister);
3. The National Security Council (by means of the Center for Counter Terrorism), which is an administrative body that assists the ministerial committee in decision-making processes.

### **The Challenge of Conflict with Conventional Armies**

The challenge of conflict with conventional armies still exists although its magnitude has decreased in comparison to other challenges. The conventional threat has diminished not only as a result of the decline in hostile countries through peace treaties, in the case of Egypt and Jordan, and the weakening of hostile countries (partly due to the war in Iraq), but also because of Israel's deterrent ability and the IDF's strength. In order to maintain this situation over time and to prepare for unexpected events, the IDF must maintain its relative advantage over the conventional armies in the region.

Conventional conflict has undergone the following changes: a shift from a doctrine of capturing territory to one of controlling territory; generally prioritizing the use of fire over maneuvering (although maneuvering is still important in the use of force in certain scenarios); giving greater weight to precision attacks and minimizing collateral damage; and preferring the achievement of operational effects by use of fire rather than by massive destruction and "heavy" maneuvering. In addition, the cognitive battle has gained in importance. Thus, conflicts are complex and multi-dimensional and require multi-organizational and multi-service jointness, operational flexibility, and control of information.

Despite that war between conventional armies during the coming decade is unlikely, it should not be completely ruled out. A conflict between conventional armies could occur on several levels, from a low-intensity military operation to a more extended yet still low-intensity conflict, to a large-scale war against one state or a coalition of states. Although the scenario of low-intensity conflict seems more relevant

The worsening of the phenomenon of no-man's land necessitates creating an effective party that can be held responsible.

in the coming years, a full-scale war, primarily due to some unexpected development, needs to be taken into account. In the future, if the Middle East becomes nuclearized, the fighting could take place under the umbrella of nuclear deterrence of the enemy, which is liable to provide the enemy with incentives as well as to place constraints on Israel's use of force.

Israel should maintain permanent readiness for a scenario of military conflict with its potential enemies as developing systematic military capabilities requires a significantly longer period of time than the IDF will have from the moment it receives a strategic warning about a possible turning point. This readiness is the result of several parameters: an up-to-date operational doctrine; an appropriate structure of forces; the integration of advanced military technologies; an efficient organizational infrastructure; well-trained manpower; and a training program for the development of system-wide skills. At its core is the need to maintain components that cannot be developed in a short time, especially the order of battle and the processes of military buildup. These processes take many years since they involve the research and development of new systems, as well as their production and acquisition.

In developing a response to conflict with conventional armies and to a prolonged yet low-intensity conflict, the changes in the nature of war and in the strategic environment need to be considered. A more complicated operational environment now exists, in which the classic boundaries between peace and war have become blurred, such as the existence of low-intensity warfare in an environment of political agreements. The division between periods of calm and emergency has eroded, causing routine security to become the focus of basic security, and similarly, the home front becomes the front line, with terror waged against civilians and damage caused by high-trajectory fire deep behind the lines rather than the classic encounter of armies on the front.

It is worth mentioning the issue of no-man's land—territory in which no effective regime can operate against terrorism—whether the situation is desirable or coerced. This issue has become increasingly problematic in recent years and may be even more difficult in the future (for example, in the territory of the Palestinian Authority and in Southern Lebanon). In this kind of territory, terror organizations seek to distribute their forces within the civilian infrastructures in densely populated areas. They operate in these areas under the protection of human shields and primarily carry out suicide attacks and high-trajectory fire. In this reality, it is particularly difficult to

achieve effective deterrence and to use military leverage against a centralized military or political center of power (with a hierarchy). Thus, on the strategic level, it is necessary to minimize this phenomenon as much as possible and to create a party that can be held responsible. It is essential to develop a system-wide capability to monitor territory over time, to acquire targets in real time, and to close the circuits of fire without causing—to the greatest possible extent—collateral damage.

### **Overview of the Main Points in the Response**

The changing nature of war, the development of a range of conflicts, and the rapid pace of transformation requires not only an appropriate response to the main threats but also the formulation of a system-wide multi-organizational approach based on modifying the concept of the use of force and the military buildup and the reciprocal relations between them. This approach must also internalize the importance of promoting internal jointness in addition to international and regional cooperation.

As for the use of force, the committee supported the direction that the IDF has been taking. In particular, the IDF has been moving toward a doctrine of simultaneous warfare and internalizing the concept of jointness between the corps, branches, and the organization. This doctrine is manifested in the simultaneous action of all the force components, in all forms of warfare (aerial, naval, ground, and electromagnetic) and in all areas of combat (the front and deep in enemy territory; the periphery and the core) in order to achieve the conditions (both physical and cognitive) necessary for a quick and decisive victory with minimal attrition and expending of resources.

The doctrine of military buildup is required for the relatively rapid processes of change, which are the result of uncertainty, the multiplicity of scenarios, and the rapid shift between types of conflicts. The committee recommended changing the mix from developing a concrete response to threat scenarios and toward the buildup of generic capabilities (meaning a change in the mix but not a total change). A generic approach and versatile solutions should provide a relatively swift advantage at any point in time to meet the rapid development of threats and evolving situations. At the same time, specific domains that require unique solutions should be identified.

The doctrine of military buildup needs to integrate the maintaining of the response capability and the relative advantage in high-intensity conflicts with the reinforcement of the response to terror, non-conventional weapons,

and the protection of the home front. The military buildup should cause a shift away from friction at the front and the periphery to a doctrine of decisive victory based on destroying the enemy's core assets deep in their own territory. The multi-service and multi-dimensional use of force requires jointness and connectivity in the force buildup on all levels.

In terms of military buildup, the size of the forces and their composition should be examined given the trends in the development of threats in the region. Israel's strategic goals, the systemic capabilities required to meet the main security threats, and the availability of resources. The committee recommended that the force buildup during the coming decade should relate to the following axes: the development of unmanned capabilities; the reinforcement and development of precision-guided weapons; the preservation and reinforcement of aerial power (and the domain of aerospace); the reinforcement and development of warfare capabilities in urban areas; the development of control systems and advanced technologies for ground warfare;

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the development of weapons systems designed for low-intensity conflicts; the buildup of capabilities for monitoring territory; the concentration of efforts to (urgently) respond to the various types of high-trajectory weapons; the deepening of intelligence capabilities in order to meet the threats of terrorism and non-conventional weapons; the development of capabilities for network and multi-service warfare; the reinforcement of inter-branch and inter-organizational jointness and connectivity; and the development of "soft" capabilities (information, cognitive, and media warfare).

Achieving an optimal outcome in a campaign that involves various organizations from inside and outside the military requires the development of jointness that will lead to a comprehensive systemic ability to deal with the challenges as well as to realizing the relative advantage of each organization. In a reality of jointness, all entities

work in coordination along the way, beginning with analyzing the situation and defining the objectives and their translation to the operational level, and

being included in the execution that is integrated, coordinated, and managed by a unified command and control system.

Military-security cooperation at the regional and international levels is a component of the response to the nation's security challenges, but it must be determined to what extent Israel can rely upon this cooperation and if it should be viewed as complementary to Israel's independent response capability. This primarily refers to the close military-strategic cooperation with the United States and the security arrangements in the regional arena, mainly against shared threats.





## Chapter 4

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### **Main Issues in the Security Context**

The development of the response to the main threats facing Israel requires addressing additional security contexts of several main issues on the security agenda. This includes the Palestinian issue, the international-political arena, resources allocated to defense, the “people’s army,” the qualitative edge, the decision-making processes, and comments to the national intelligence.

#### **The Palestinian Issue**

The relations between Israel and the Palestinians create unique challenges to the national security doctrine, resulting primarily from the conflict’s complexity as a national, territorial, religious, and cultural struggle and from its implications at the various levels: Israeli society, the regional arena, the Arab world, and the international community. Moreover, the proximity of the Palestinian territories to Israel’s population centers, the lack of a border, the mingling of the populations, and the absence of a stable and effective responsible party on the Palestinian side positions the Palestinian challenge as a concrete and day-to-day problem.

The committee recommended that any response to the Palestinian challenge should consider the following interests: preserving Israel’s Jewish and democratic character; a desire for permanent borders that have international legitimacy; a moderate, responsible and effective Palestinian leadership that is prepared for a political solution with Israel; preventing the “territories” from becoming a base for terror against Israel; blocking the “territories” and their airspace from becoming a platform for waging war against Israel; resolving the conflict in a way that will enable the development of positive relations with the Arab world; reducing the Palestinian dependency on Israel; preventing the Palestinians from harming shared resources; and strengthening the strategic partnership with Jordan.

The basic dilemma of the Palestinian challenge is the choice between containing and managing the conflict with the expectation that a positive change will occur on the other side or taking the initiative to change the reality. Examining the national security doctrine will not determine the political debate between the various approaches to resolving the Palestinian problem; nonetheless, it can help to establish guidelines for protecting essential security interests regardless of which approach is chosen.

Following are the guidelines recommended by the committee: demilitarization of the territories west of Jordan that will not be under Israeli control; the creation of an effective physical barrier along the border and efficient control of border crossings; prevention of the entry of foreign forces in territory west of Jordan; support for an effective Palestinian regime that is committed to fighting terror and cooperating with Israel; preventing the development of independent armed militias in territories not controlled by Israel; enabling Israel to have freedom of action in the airspace between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean; preventing direct threats to security assets; and the option of holding onto several security assets in the Palestinian territory (if alternatives cannot be found). In certain scenarios, the deployment

of various international observer systems would be considered.

Israel's national security is based on two complementary foundations: a political infrastructure and physical security. A military operation requires taking into consideration the political dimension, which largely limits operational freedom of action.

### **The International-Political Arena**

Israel's national security is based on two complementary foundations: a political infrastructure and physical security. A military operation requires taking into consideration the political dimension, which largely limits operational freedom of action, because of the need for international legitimacy. The trend of globalization has intensified the mutual dependence between the various players within the international and regional arenas. The international community has strengthened in importance and joint action to counter shared threats has increased in recent years. These issues as they relate to the

Israeli context include global terrorism (with Islamic terror at its core), the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the growing religious/fundamentalist dimension on the international agenda.

The international arena and the trends of the coming decade create both risks and opportunities for Israel. The risks that that require assessment include the possibility of international intervention in containing and managing the conflict with the Palestinians; the increasingly pervasive demand to delegitimize Israel; the imposition of limits on Israel's military freedom of action; the decline of US status in the region, and the significant erosion of American support for Israel. Among Israel's opportunities is an improved international standing, which has the potential of increasing its integration within the international community and giving Israel a reputation as a more stable and democratic player in the Middle East, alongside recognition of its values in various fields. Israel can exploit this development in order to integrate its efforts in the global war on terror, to promote its activity in international forums, to develop possibilities for strategic cooperation with key countries worldwide, and to strengthen its relations with Europe.

The growing importance of the international community represents an opportunity for Israel to achieve its goals, but at the same time, it constrains Israel's actions. Therefore, the committee recommended that Israel should consider its international legitimacy in the process of formulating its security policy; Israel should work to achieve greater integration within international alliances; Israel should examine the possibility of involving the European Union in the peace process in specific areas; Israel should identify domains in which it could expand its relations with Russia; Israel should advance regional alliances and modify the objectives of war, operational planning, and the military buildup to meet political, media, and legal constraints.

As for the special relationship with the United States, which is a crucial element in Israel's national security doctrine, it is essential to nurture and deepen the military-political component of that relationship and to express greater concern for American interests over other interests, even if a price is to be paid in some cases. Israel, however, must protect its basic interests even if it clashes with the US position. With respect to a formal alliance, the committee felt that it is desirable and feasible to upgrade the continuum of existing agreements and protocols without promoting a formal alliance.

## **Defense Resources**

The importance of the economic aspect of the national security doctrine has increased over the years. It includes two main components: the allocation of resources to defense as part of the national priorities and the priorities

for allocating resources within the defense sector itself, given the need to modify them to both internal and external developments. The trend toward reducing the share of defense in the GDP—made possible by the increase in the GDP and the improvement in Israel's strategic situation, as a result of socioeconomic changes and competition in an era of globalization—will continue in the following decade. Therefore, the defense sector should already be managing the defense resources based on a fixed and realistic level of expenditure and should even consider a slight reduction.

As for the defense expenditure, the committee recommended that its share of the GDP be gradually reduced over the next decade to about 5 percent (in contract to 8.5–9 percent today) and the defense sector should adopt a five-year budget. The main part of the reduction should be accomplished by means of the expected growth in the GDP (with the assumption that growth will be about 4 percent per year) and no increase in defense expenditure. The multi-year budget will provide the defense sector with budgetary certainty and the ability to plan and increase efficiency for the long term. The savings that will be generated by the increase in efficiency will be deducted from the defense budget and will help to achieve the economic target, namely a significant reducing of defense spending. If it becomes clear upon reaching the midpoint of the period that growth has been lower than expected, it is recommended that a further cut be made in the defense budget in absolute

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terms, with the government determining the size of the cut and its timing. Unexpected events, whether related to security or the economy, will require that the issue be reexamined.

Total defense expenditure should be viewed from an overall systematic-wide view, such that a change in the mix of threats will be manifested in the appropriate reallocation of the budget within the defense sector. The allocation of budgets will be determined not only on an organizational basis, but it will be primarily based on the relative advantage of each body vis-à-vis the threats. The increasing need for integration between the various bodies

should also be considered when determining the budget. A systematic-wide approach has the potential to increase Israel's military power without increasing the economic resources.

## The “People’s Army”

The principle of the “people’s army” is based on the civilian duty of military service and is a fundamental component of the traditional national security doctrine. The security challenges and the principle of sharing the burden and the security risk require maintaining the “people’s army” model within the framework of the national consensus on security matters. However, given the changing reality, the committee recommended that adjustments be made to implementing the principles of the “people’s army” model; that is, the universal draft, a shared destiny, burden, and risk, creating a shared identity and experience, stateliness and representation of the IDF, and maintaining the IDF’s responsibility.

The committee recommended that the following measures be implemented in order to maintain the principle of the “people’s army”: strengthening the standing army within the IDF, which is the main infrastructure of the “people’s army”; expanding the compulsory draft into the IDF and other security organizations; strengthening the trend of creating a variety of service tracks, in order to provide the possibility of differential service within the army, the defense sector, and the national civilian service, which will be aligned with the defense sector’s needs and will provide a solution to certain civilian needs. The main recommended change is “universal draft and differential service.”

In addition, the committee recommended that the compulsory military service should be gradually shortened; the special service tracks for various populations should be reduced in scope; national service for those who do not serve in the IDF should be expanded; some of the social-national tasks of the army should be transferred to civilian frameworks; that the uniqueness of military service in relation to other types of service should be recognized; and to maintain the stateliness and representation of the IDF. It should be mentioned that the recommendations of the committee on the issue of the “people’s army” aligned with those of the Ben-Basset Committee.

The security challenges and the principle of sharing the burden and the security risk require maintaining the “people’s army” model within the framework of the national consensus on security matters. The change necessary is the “universal draft and differential service.”

## **The Qualitative Edge**

Israel's qualitative edge guarantees clear military superiority over existing and potential enemies. It is based on a combination of factors: nurturing of human capital, the development of advanced technological capabilities, and the strengthening of organizational infrastructure, and strategic cooperation. These factors serve as the basis for effective deterrence, for reducing the damage that can be done to Israel and for achieving Israel's goals in any conflict at minimal cost.

The striving to maintain and strengthen the qualitative edge rests on two main efforts that complement one another: the development of human infrastructure and the creation of a technological base and their practical translation into military power. The creation of a human and technological base depends on the quality of human capital in the IDF, in security research and development (R&D), and in the defense industries; on the advanced infrastructure of security R&D; on the military industries that develop and produce advanced weaponry; and on international collaborations. The translation of this infrastructure into military power is based on the development of advanced weaponry and being equipped with it; on the acquisition of system-wide capabilities based on operational doctrines; on the nurturing of high-quality manpower at the command level, in the use and maintenance of weaponry; and in the creation of an advanced organizational infrastructure for management, knowledge, and information.

In addition, efforts should be made to hinder the arms buildup among Israel's adversaries. To this end, the strategic dialogue with the United States should be exploited in order to limit the sale of weapons, prevent the sale of high-quality weaponry to "rogue" players, and limit as much as possible exposing the regional players to advanced Western operational doctrines.

The committee expressed that national decision-making processes are needed on the issue of the qualitative edge from an interdisciplinary and pan-organizational viewpoint. One body within the defense establishment should be responsible for setting the priorities, for making key decisions, and for ongoing and needed coordination between R&D frameworks, including the war on terror. Given the limits on resources—with respect to budgets and infrastructures, as well as human capital—R&D in Israel should be focused, relevant, and well-timed and should have the potential to translate into an effective response that will provide a significant advantage on the battlefield. An R&D program should be defined with goals for the coming decade (in

some cases, even beyond that) and a long-term program that includes budgets for the coming five years. It is important to increase the R&D budget that is directed toward the special needs of the defense sector and the IDF.

The committee's report identified the security domains that require independent development and the achievement of technological and industrial superiority to whatever extent possible: aerospace, intelligence capabilities, communications, command and control systems, offensive weaponry, unmanned vehicles, and defense against surface-to-surface missiles. The committee sought to emphasize that the domain of aerospace should be considered a project with growing national importance, which is increasingly intertwined with aspects of national security. The aerospace domain will require an appropriate allocation of resources and emphasis on its core elements: an independent launch capability and the development of intelligence and communication satellites. The committee recommended advancing the domain of information warfare and turning it into a central component in the defense activity, on the basis of a single-order idea on the national level and through an appropriate organizational framework.

### **Decision-Making Processes**

The decision-making system in national security matters is becoming increasingly important because of the growing indispensability and complexity of the national management over these matters; the heavy price to be paid in the event of a mistake; and the control of sources of information, the secrecy of the discussions, and the system's lack of transparency. The decisions of the cabinet (the government, the prime minister, ministers, and committees according to the issue) on national security matters should be based, first and foremost, on the background and expertise of the professional bodies that support regularly the decision-making processes. The combination of the cabinet and the supporting professional frameworks is the basis for decision making on matters of national security.

The professional frameworks that regularly and continuously support the government cabinet in the decision-making process on issues of national security with a wide and interdisciplinary perspective are supposed to achieve the following objectives: to assist the cabinet in setting the agenda for discussing national security issues in the different circles; to coordinate and to lead the preparations for the discussions in which the decisions are made and to build professionally the decision-making process itself so

that different opinions will be heard; and to provide oversight and control in executing the cabinet's decisions of national security and to coordinate

The committee recommended that the function of the head of the National Security Council should be formally defined as serving as the national security advisor to the prime minister and the government and that this position should be placed at the center of the professional system that assists in the process of decision making about matters of national security. In parallel, the committee recommended that the National Security Council be strengthened and redesigned in order to allow it to optimally fulfill its mandate and its function.

between the various bodies who are supposed to implement those decisions.

The committee believed that creating new support and advisory bodies to serve decision makers on national security matters was unnecessary. Rather, the committee recommended that they rely upon an existing body that is designed to assist them in the decision-making process and to strengthen it according to the aforementioned guidelines and goals. The committee thought that the National Security Council—which has not been allowed to fulfill its central mandate—would be appropriate for this function.

The committee recommended that the function of the head of the National Security Council should be formally defined as serving as the national security advisor to the prime minister and the government and that this position should be placed at the center of the professional system that assists in the process of decision making about matters of national security. In parallel, the committee recommended that the National Security Council be strengthened and redesigned in order to allow it to optimally fulfill its mandate and its function. Thus, for example, it is worthwhile to formalize the relations between the head of the National Security Council and officials involved in national security matters within the Prime Minister's Office, and especially to clearly

define the relationship, the areas of responsibility, and the coordination between the National Security Council and the defense sector and the minister of defense.

### **Comments to National Intelligence**

The shift of strategic focus from the traditional format of conflicts between states to asymmetric conflicts involving terrorism and non-conventional



weapons (characterized by non-state players, a global deployment, network logic, deception, concealment, evasiveness, and low signature) requires advanced intelligence capabilities of all types. These capabilities form the basis for providing an appropriate response to these complex challenges and for creating a systemic response from a national perspective.

The committee emphasized four areas of activity in which change and modification is needed in order to prepare for the future challenges: national guidelines, which include the priorities of national intelligence and allocation of resources to intelligence as part of the national agenda and within the intelligence community; a community perspective of the intelligence challenges (ensuring jointness and fully exploiting inter-organizational capabilities); promoting and expanding international and regional cooperation, with emphasis on joint design and coordinated administration of cooperative frameworks; and improving the interface between the government and the intelligence organizations in all decision-making processes that involve national security.

Currently, there is no orderly staff work on intelligence matters alongside the cabinet, and thus, there is need for change, including the establishment of a headquarters for national intelligence that will work closely with the cabinet who will be responsible for guiding the intelligence community at the national level and coordinating with it. This headquarters is not meant to replace the direct and unmediated connection between the heads of the intelligence organizations and the cabinet but rather will provide them with support in order to achieve integrative intelligence work at the national level.

Specifically, the committee recommended that a national intelligence headquarters be established in proximity to the cabinet, according to the following guidelines: the headquarters will focus on assisting the cabinet in steering national intelligence, determining the priorities, allocating resources, coordinating the intelligence bodies, and creating a comprehensive intelligence picture based on the assessments of the intelligence bodies. The headquarters will be a major component in the renewed National Security Council, as suggested by the committee in the chapter on decision making on national security issues. Furthermore, the head of the center will maintain direct contact with the cabinet on security matters.

## The Process for Implementing and Updating the National Security Doctrine

The committee emphasized that its report reflected its understanding at the time of writing and therefore its conclusions should be reexamined both periodically and concerning developments in the dynamic strategic environment. The committee's report should be comprehensively examined once every five years, and its main points should be reexamined about every two years. The government should designate an entity to be responsible for the process of updating the report and to examine its implications at the various levels.

Once the security sector and the government have adopted the committee's report, a well-defined and closely-controlled process should be initiated in order to implement its conclusions and recommendations at the various levels, and an oversight mechanism should be established. The process of implementation should be managed according to milestones and timetables and according to the responsible of each ministerial rank in their specific domain and by the cabinet when the issues cut across domains.

As part of the preparations for the cabinet discussions to consider and approve the report, the government secretaries and the National Security Council prepared a detailed proposal for decision makers, the core of which was a well-

The committee emphasized that its report reflected the understanding at the time and therefore its conclusions should be reexamined both periodically and in terms of the dynamic strategic environment.

defined process for implementing the committee's conclusions and recommendations. This process included the creation of a committee of ministers for implementing the process, headed by the prime minister and composed of the relevant ministers. The ministerial committee would appoint five working groups that would formulate systemic responses to issues that traverse domains and organizations, such as the challenge of non-conventional weapons; terrorism and guerilla warfare; defense, including of the home front; the decision-making process, including the field of national intelligence; and

the qualitative edge. The National Security Council would serve as the administrative body of the ministerial committee. Furthermore, each body connected to the various aspects of the national security doctrine would be responsible for implementing an internal examination of the implications raised by the committee's report in its specific domain and to present its recommendations to the ministerial committee.

## Chapter 5

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### **The Validity of the Recommendations over Time**

This chapter will examine the validity of the committee's conclusions and recommendations over time and in the future. It is divided into four sections: the basic conclusions, the main conclusions regarding the responses to Israel's challenges, the recommended responses in other contexts, and in the future. The first three sections highlight the report's conclusions and recommendations, followed by a discussion of how they have endured over time and will endure in the future.

#### **Basic Conclusions**

##### ***In the committee's report***

1. A review of Israel's security situation given the changes and trends in the strategic environment indicates that as long as major strategic shifts do not occur, Israel's existence or its territorial integrity is not endangered. The exception is Iran's development of nuclear capability, which, if achieved, potentially will pose an existential threat and represent a change in the strategic balance of the region.
2. Israel is a Jewish and democratic state within the family of nations; however, in maintaining its values and character that stem from its unique identity, Israel faces a complex challenge. The continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the violent nature of the conflict, and demographic issues adversely affect Israel's domestic situation and its image within the international community and exacerbate the state's challenge of maintaining its values and character in the long run, which is beyond the considerations of the committee.

3. Ensuring Israel's ability to remain an advanced and flourishing nation from a socioeconomic perspective is an increasingly difficult challenge and requires achieving an appropriate balance between the components of the equation of national strength—between the essential security needs and the strength of Israeli society and the welfare of its citizens and residents.
4. Improving Israel's international and regional status requires strengthening its international legitimacy in a practical way; continuing to strive for peace with its neighbors; and making a determined effort to settle the Palestinian issue.

### *The recommendations over time*

It appears that the main conclusions of the committee have remained valid over time. Israel does not face any existential danger from a conventional army in the near future. This is primarily due to Israel's military strength and superiority in the region and to the increasing weakness of the Arab world as a result of ongoing upheavals in the region whose end is not foreseen. Nonetheless, although Israel does not face any existential threat, in the past years, its adversaries have become capable of significant damage, both physical and cognitive. Although Israel undoubtedly can harm its enemies, the heavy damage will be mutual, with all that this implies for Israel.

Israel must not give up recruiting international support in a determined effort to thwart Iran's desire for nuclear weapons. Moreover, Israel must continue to develop its ability to deter, to foil, and to defend itself against any future development.

The one exception to the claim that Israel does not face an existential threat is the danger of Iran's nuclear armament. Although this trend has been arrested for the time being, while the signing of a nuclear agreement between Iran and the superpowers diminished the immediacy of the threat, the recent US withdrawal from the agreement raises a number of questions and Israel must closely watch Iran's response. Israel must not give up recruiting international support in a determined effort to thwart Iran's desire for nuclear weapons. Moreover, Israel must continue to develop its ability to deter, to foil, and to defend itself against any future development.

With respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the committee's conclusions have been confirmed over the years, given the failure of efforts to advance the peace process and to resolve the conflict. The peace process is dependent

not only on Israel but also on the Palestinians, who have played a major part in failing to advance the process. The continued Israeli control in Judea and Samaria and its even tighter hold on the territory (without distinguishing between the settlement blocs and the rest of the territory), and the lack of progress in the peace process and the absence of another solution are liable to adversely affect the nature of Israeli society and its fundamental values and to block any option of a future agreement.

It seems that the developing reality has elevated this challenge and has made it the highest priority on the national agenda, as it creates growing dilemmas for Israel vis-à-vis the rift within Israeli society over values and morals; the damage to its international image, which is manifested partly by the efforts to delegitimize its existence; the preservation of the state's character and values in the long term; and preventing the deterioration into the extreme scenario of one state. Continuing the present trend is dangerous, and initiative should be taken—even if it is unilateral—in order to shift toward a better future.

## **The Main Recommendation for a Response to the Challenges**

### ***In the committee's report***

1. There has been a major transformation in the security challenge and the response to it: a decline in the magnitude of the conventional challenge (a conflict with conventional armies) and an increase in the significance of evolving asymmetric threats (non-conventional and sub-conventional conflicts), which call for concentrated efforts to face the threats of terror and non-conventional weapons while maintaining the relative advantage in a conflict between armies.
2. Israel must maintain a strong and independent military capability and an image of deterrence in the region. At the same time, it must increase security cooperation on the regional and international levels, including its special relationship with the United States.
3. The use of force to achieve security objectives should be contextual and proportionate. It should be subject to Israel's moral and legal values and to policy considerations and legitimacy and should be accompanied by efforts to reach a broad national consensus on security issues.
4. As part of the security strategy, it is recommended that greater effort be invested in formulating a defense-security policy: political and security

arrangements should be advanced and in parallel, threats should be foiled through combined efforts, which include deterrence, defense, and attack, after the order of priority between actual threats and potential threats has been determined.

5. In terms of military doctrine, it is essential to shift the center of gravity from broad ground maneuvering in enemy territory to precise counterfire and limited ground movements. As for preemptive actions, a response should be formulated that does not include a preemptive cross-border ground incursion and perhaps not even preemptive counterfire.
6. The basic components of the security triad need to be adapted to the development of the asymmetric challenges: Models of deterrence in the face of the threats of terror and non-conventional weapons should be developed; the credibility of deterrence should be strengthened; a move from warning to prevent total war to deterrence from a wide variety of threats and scenarios needs to be made, and alternatives to a decisive victory in which a decisive victory in the classic sense is impossible need to be developed. In addition, defense should be added as a fourth component in the security triad, given the increasing threat against the home front (military threat, terrorism, and non-conventional weapons).
7. The policy of the response with respect to the military buildup and its operation to meet the three challenges—conventional threats, terrorism, and non-conventional threats—should focus on the following objectives: continued development of simultaneous warfare and the principle of jointness (between corps, branches, and organizations); the assimilation of the doctrine of the use of force; and a change in the mix of the military buildup; moving away from developing response to concrete scenarios toward building generic capabilities and versatile solutions. At the same time, specific areas should be identified that require the creation of unique solutions.
8. The multi-year plan of the military buildup should focus on the following domains: unmanned weapons and capabilities; precision-guided weapons; aerial power and aerospace; the capability of combat in a built-up area; a monitoring and control system; advanced technologies for ground warfare; specific weapons for low-intensity conflicts; advanced means of monitoring territory; concentration of efforts in the development of responses to high-trajectory weapons; intelligence capabilities to be used against threats of terror and non-conventional weapons; development of

networking and multi-service warfare; and “soft” warfare (information, cognitive, and media).

### *The recommendations over time*

Over the course of time, it appears that the changes in Israel’s strategic environment and the conflicts in recent years have reinforced the committee’s recommendations, which have been implemented in part. Israel must continue to maintain its strong military capability and to project an image of deterrence in the region opposite the array of threats. Israel must have the capability to independently utilize its power (both politically and operationally) when one of the various threats is realized. Furthermore, there is a growing need to strengthen the unique relationship with the United States and to develop strategic relations with other key regional and international bodies and to exploit the cooperation with moderate entities in the region.

The operation of force in the complicated asymmetric conflicts and the continuing friction with a civilian population obligates Israel to requires strict observance of the appropriate context and the right proportion and also of the subordination to the moral and legal system. This is essential not only due to considerations of policy and legitimacy both at home and abroad but also because this observance of the moral and legal values underlie Israel’s strength.

Although Israel’s national security doctrine is based on a defensive security strategy that primarily involves ensuring the state’s existence, creating effective deterrence, and removing threats when necessary, the complex reality now requires proactive initiatives to shape the strategic reality and to promote Israel’s goals and interests. Such initiatives must make greater use than in the past of non-military leverage in various domains and must wisely combine those initiatives with military leverage.

With respect to military doctrine, there remains a difference in opinion over the committee’s recommendation (“IDF Strategy”). The offensive doctrine remains valid, but the center of gravity must shift from large-scale ground maneuvers in enemy territory to precise counterfire and limited ground maneuvers as

The operation of force in the complicated asymmetric conflicts and the continuing friction with a civilian population obligates Israel to requires strict observance of the appropriate context and the right proportion and also of the subordination to the moral and legal system.

support for the counterfire. This change is necessary due to the new threats, the technological developments, the need to minimize attrition, and the taking into account of political considerations. Preemptive attacks will continue to be a potential component in the security equation, but significant weight will be given to political considerations, notwithstanding the military advantages.

As for the fundamental components of the security triad (deterrence, warning, and decisive victory), efforts should be made to continue to adapt them to the shifting reality and particularly to asymmetric adversaries and the changing battlefield. This adaptation is essential for strengthening deterrence and creating new rules of the game in the face of new threats in the various arenas, for facilitating effective warning of the various scenarios and

With respect to a decisive victory, it is important that the government define clearly and unambiguously the objectives of the conflict after having considered all the military and political aspects and set objectives that can reasonably be achieved.

threats—from strategic warning of changing trends to operational warning in the various domains—and for giving new meaning and relevance to the concept of decisive victory in the various scenarios of the changing reality.

With respect to a decisive victory, it is important that the government define clearly and unambiguously the objectives of the conflict after having considered all the military and political aspects and set objectives that can reasonably be achieved. At the same time, it is essential to continue assimilating the fourth component, namely defense—and the practical shift from the security triad to a “security tetrad.” Nonetheless,

it is imperative to strengthen the relations between the components of the security tetrad and to integrate them in an optimal manner, in order to improve the response to the various threats.

## **The Recommendations for Response to Other Contexts**

### ***In the committee's report***

1. With respect to the Palestinian issue, it is recommended that any policy adopted should maintain the following security interests and guidelines: preserving the Jewish and democratic character of Israel; preventing the territories from becoming a base for terror and a platform for waging



war against Israel; and striving to create permanent borders that will gain international legitimacy.

2. As for the international-political domain, the factor of legitimacy should be considered when determining security policy. Israel should work toward its integration in international frameworks and should consider political, media, and legal constraints in the international arena when deciding on the use of force. Regarding its special relationship with the United States, Israel should strengthen its military-political ties with the United States by upgrading existing agreements and protocols but without signing a formal defense treaty, at least at this stage.
3. With respect to security resources, the share of defense expenditure within GDP should be gradually reduced during the coming decade to about 5 percent and a five-year budget format should be adopted for the defense system. The savings that will accrue from the shift to a multi-year budget will be deducted from the defense budget and will help reduce the share of defense expenditure. If it emerges that the forecast for growth is less than expected, appropriate modifications should be made.
4. As for the “people’s army,” all citizens of Israel should share the burden and the security risk. To this end, the compulsory service, which is the backbone of the IDF, should be strengthened; the draft into the military should be expanded as much as possible as well as to other security organizations; a variety of service tracks (with appropriate compensation) should be created according to the principle of “universal draft and differential service.” In addition, the compulsory military service should be gradually shortened, the number of special service tracks for the various populations should be reduced, and some of the social tasks of the army should be transferred to civilian frameworks.
5. As for the qualitative edge, the following steps should be taken: the decision-making process in this domain should be formalized so that decisions are made on the basis of a national and system-wide perspective; the human infrastructure in the development, manufacturing, and operation of military systems should be nurtured; a military R&D program with defined goals for the coming decade should be instituted, and a fixed and expanded budget should be ensured for the next five years; the R&D budget specifically for the needs of the defense sector should be increased; technological and industrial independence and superiority in specialized domains should be developed; and the domains of aerospace

and information warfare should be considered national projects and they should be designated an appropriate amount of resources.

6. The decision-making process in the area of national security must be strengthened by reinforcing the status and function of the National Security Council and by expanding its abilities and powers. In this context, it is proposed that the head of the National Security Council serve as the national security advisor to the prime minister and the government and that this position should be at the center of the professional support system to the decision-making process on issues of national security.
7. The national intelligence system should be modified by creating a national intelligence center that will work closely with the prime minister and the government and serve as a central component in the redesigned structure of the National Security Council. Its main function will be to assist the cabinet in the following domains: directing the efforts of national intelligence; setting the priorities; allocating resources; coordinating between intelligence bodies; and creating a full intelligence picture based on evaluations by intelligence bodies.

### *The recommendations over time*

The recommendations for response to the other contexts on the security agenda are still relevant today and some of them have been implemented or have been manifested in one way or another over the years. Two of the recommendations, which are intertwined and are concerned with the decision-making processes in areas of national security, require rethinking so that they can be realized in the most efficient manner possible.

Advancing decision making processes in the national security fields necessitates strengthening the position and role of the National Security Council and building the intelligence community in order to exploit the capacities of the intelligence and to strengthen the guidance and control of the political echelon.

The first is the recommendation to formalize and strengthen the position and function of the National Security Council as the focus of the decision-making processes on national security issues (in accordance with the National Security Law of 2008). The practical way to accomplish this is to meticulously implement the National Security Law and to actively enforce the decision-making processes in areas of national security. In

this context, the function and duties of the National Security Council in formulating and updating the national security doctrine should be emphasized.

The second, which has become even more important given the changes taking place in the region and that is closely related to the strengthening of the National Security Council and the decision-making processes, is the recommendation to change the national intelligence system. The growing importance of intelligence requires building an intelligence community that will use the intelligence capabilities and will strengthen the guidance and control of the political echelon. Although the committee recommended the establishment of a national intelligence center that would work closely with the prime minister and the government, the Ministry for Intelligence Services was created in the meantime, which should be provided with the powers and capabilities to coalesce the intelligence community and to assist the prime minister and the government in directing national intelligence, in setting the appropriate priorities, and in the complex task of coordinating between the intelligence bodies.

The committee's recommendation to gradually reduce the proportion of military expenditure during the subsequent decade to about 5 percent of GDP and to shift to a five-year defense budget has also withstood the test of time. Thus, in 2016, the proportion of defense expenditure within GDP stood at 5.4 percent according to the figures of the Central Bureau of Statistics.

### **A Look to the Future**

The efforts to reformulate the national security doctrine are largely based on the model constructed by the committee, but these efforts clearly require that the numerous changes over the years in the different domains be considered. Some of the processes of change are still ongoing and it is difficult to know when they will end. The rapid pace of change and its scope present a complex challenge in timely identifying the changes and understanding their implications, in addition to quickly adapting to them within a relevant time period. As part of these efforts, the dramatic changes that have occurred in the Middle East and the new trends in Israel's strategic-military environment will need to be examined. These changes are creating a reality that is complex, dynamic, and fragile, and as a result, Israel now faces a number of serious challenges and dilemmas.

In this context, the following developments, among others, should be evaluated: the far-reaching changes that have occurred in the international

arena, which affect the region as a whole and Israel in particular; the sweeping changes in the Middle East as a result of the regional upheaval, including the undermining of the political order, which has changed the face of the region for many years to come; the emerging shift in the nature of international involvement in the Middle East, particularly the weakening of American influence and Russia's return to the region; and the growing influence of Iran in the region in general and along the northern border of Israel in particular. Similarly, there is a need to assess the major changes in the nature and magnitude of the threats and the conflicts as well as of the changes in the battlefield and the "rules of the game" regarding the use of force, all which Israel will face in the various domains in both the short and long term.

These efforts primarily need to relate to the growing threats to Israel, firstly, the nuclearization of Iran, which is working to achieve the status of a country on the brink of having nuclear capability. Although this threat, which is liable to become existential and to change the strategic balance in the region, has been halted as a result of the nuclear agreement, the recent US withdrawal from the agreement has raised questions, increased uncertainty, and necessitates that Israel must prepare for every possible future development. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that many other threats are looming, including Iran's growing influence in the region, and its attempts to strengthen its foothold in Syria and to develop another front against Israel; efforts by Hezbollah, which is closely allied with Iran, to build up its presence in Syria and to increase its strength in Lebanon, which poses a growing threat to Israel, especially to the home front; and the threats by Hamas in Gaza (alongside the rapid deterioration in the living conditions there) and terrorist groups in Sinai.

From a broader and more long-term perspective, it is worth noting the threats that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict pose to Israel's domestic situation, its legitimacy in the regional and international arenas, the preservation of the state's character and values, and its ability to prevent deteriorating into a bi-national state.

The domestic environment is another key factor that has undergone sweeping changes in recent years, from the growing threat to the home front, which has become a major target, to fundamental questions of civil-military relations (the principle of the "people's army" and its practical implementation and the changes in priorities and in the allocation of resources), to the growing magnitude of the domestic environment in the security context.

All these factors affect to a great degree the design of the security response and exacerbate the inherent tensions between civilian needs (social welfare, health, and infrastructure) and defense needs.

Next to these, other issues need to be addressed—some have been around for a long time but have assumed a different meaning over the years and others have recently emerged and require original thinking from a different perspective. These issues are central to formulating the national security doctrine and designing the security response to the various threats, and they include:

1. The potential of the cyber dimension, which has been revolutionary and has become a key factor in the national security doctrine on the various levels (deterrence, defense, and offense).
2. The central role of the war between the wars in the doctrine of the use of force (the goals of the war between the wars are to strengthen the credibility of deterrence, to disrupt the enemy's military buildup, and to create optimal conditions for a future conflict).
3. The significant improvement in intelligence capabilities, firepower, and closing attack circles in a relatively short time and with high precision, which provide the IDF with new and extensive capabilities to destroy enemy targets without having to employ ground maneuvering.
4. The growing importance of considerations of legitimacy both at home and abroad in the use of force in the various contexts (greater legitimacy for Israel and the expansion of its freedom of operation and delegitimization of the enemy and reducing its room to maneuver).
5. Increased magnitude of the various “soft” components (cognitive, media, legal, diplomacy, and so forth), which have become essential and complementary components of military maneuvering and sometimes even a central component on their own.
6. The growing need to strengthen cooperation with key entities in the international arena, the main players in the regional arena, especially the countries that have signed peace treaties with Israel, and the moderate players in the region, in order to meet shared threats and challenges.

The potential of the cyber dimension, which has been revolutionary and has become a key factor in the national security doctrine on the various levels (deterrence, defense, and offense).



## Conclusion

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After the committee's report was submitted to the minister of defense and the prime minister in April 2006, the minister of defense announced that he was adopting its main points and recommended that it be presented to the defense sector and the Ministerial Committee on National Security Affairs (the security cabinet) and that it would form the basis for defense policy and the military buildup for the next decade. The committee's report was subsequently presented in many forums and to many members of the defense establishment and outside it, (including the prime minister, the minister of defense, the foreign minister, the Security and Foreign Affairs Committee and its subcommittees, the director general of the Ministry of Defense and the ministry's senior officials, the chief of the General Staff, the forum of the IDF General Staff, senior members of the Mossad, the General Security Service, the Atomic Energy Commission, senior officials in the National Security Council, the Winograd Committee for examining the Second Lebanon War, the Brodet Committee on the defense budget, and others), before it was discussed and approved by the Ministerial Committee on National Security Affairs, the most appropriate body to approve a national security doctrine for Israel.

In order to approve and implement the committee's report, a proposal for decision makers was prepared at the instruction of the prime minister for the Ministerial Committee on National Security Affairs, which included a defined process for implementing the committee's conclusions and recommendations in the various systems. The implementation process included creating a ministerial committee headed by the prime minister, which was given the task of translating the conclusions and recommendations into practical guidelines for executing a systemic response in the relevant organizations and for issues that cut across domains and organizations. On three different occasions, the Ministerial Committee on National Security Affairs discussed the committee's report in depth. Although the proposal had the support of

Prime Minister Olmert, a vote was never held, and, as a result, the proposal was never formally approved.

The proposal was not approved partly because of the outbreak of the Second Lebanon War and the difficult feeling as a result. The Second Lebanon War erupted as the committee's report was about to be submitted and it necessitated a review of the national security doctrine that had been formulated only a short time before, even though that war was not the main factor and did not necessarily characterize the challenges in the other circles of conflict. The committee's report was examined on a non-formal basis, in consultation with some of the committee members. It seems that the main points of the report, the conclusions, and the recommendations remained valid after the war and others were further validated by the war. Several issues were also sharpened by the war, as was expected, and required clarification and further consideration.

In the decade since the committee's report was written, many changes have occurred in the various domains, and it is beyond any doubt that a

Renewed efforts to determine Israel's national security doctrine should set its security challenges for the next decade, determine the principles of the security doctrine in the areas of the security strategy and military doctrine, and define the principles of the response doctrine for the array of challenges in the use of force and military buildup.

revised and relevant national security doctrine has become only more acute given the challenges and dilemmas facing the State of Israel. The national security doctrine should ensure the existence of the state, protect its essential interests, and facilitate achieving its national goals in a changing strategic environment. Renewed efforts to determine Israel's national security doctrine should set its security challenges for the next decade, determine the principles of the security doctrine in the areas of the security strategy and military doctrine, and define the principles of the response doctrine for the array of challenges in the use of force and military buildup.

These efforts should examine Israel's complex reality from the perspective of not only threats and risks but also opportunities and prospects. It should look at the order of priorities of the response relative to the array of threats and risks, and with the lack of a possibility to give a complete solution to each scenario. These efforts should, in practice, form the basis for managing the calculated risks in Israel's security policy.



The “IDF Strategy,” which was published in 2015, also illustrates the essential need for a national security doctrine. It presents the changes that need to be carried out in the IDF, given the future challenges and the changes in the nature of the enemy; it underlies the processes that are taking place as part of the multi-year plan and serves as a compass for the use and military buildup. The “IDF Strategy” is supposed to develop from a national security doctrine that does not formally exist, and thus, a strategic framework is presented at the beginning of the document (national goals, threat factors, the principles of the national security doctrine, and the connection between the national goals and the use of force) as a substitute for the national security doctrine that the government is supposed to provide to the army.

As part of the committee’s report, a mechanism for implementing and updating the national security doctrine was established. The report reflects a wide variety of insights that were current at the time of writing, and therefore its conclusions should be examined both periodically and in consideration of developments in the strategic environment. Furthermore, the committee stated explicitly that the report should be comprehensively examined every five years. More than ten years have gone by since the writing of the report (the time period considered in the committee’s report was one decade ahead, namely up to 2016), during which Israel’s strategic environment and the nature of the challenges it faces have changed significantly. Therefore, the time has come to formulate an up-to-date and relevant national security doctrine for the coming decade.



## Appendix

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### **Members of the Committee\***

I. **Chairman of the committee:** Dan Meridor

II. **Members of the committee** (as they appear in the committee's report):

1. Major General (res.) Giora Eiland (head of the National Security Council)
2. Major General (res.) Gabi Ashkenazi (took part in the committee's work up until spring 2005)
3. Ambassador Yoav Biran (former chief executive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
4. Dr. Yehuda Ben-Meir (former deputy foreign minister)
5. David Brodet (former chief executive of the Ministry of Finance)
6. Brigadier General (res.) Shlomo Brom (The Jaffe Institute; participated in the committee's work up until spring 2005)
7. Major General (res.) Amos Gilead (head of the Political-Military Affairs Branch of the Ministry of Defense)
8. Attorney Tsvia Gross (legal counsel to the Ministry of Defense)
9. Professor Yadin Dudai (The Department of Neurobiology at the Weizmann Institute)
10. Yuval Diskin (head of the General Security Services; participated in the work of the committee up until spring 2005)
11. Brigadier General Udi Dekel (head of the Division for Strategic Planning and Foreign Relations in the IDF)
12. Yehiel Horev (Director of Security of the Defense Establishment)
13. Colonel (res.) Gideon Hoshen (CEO of the Hoshen-Eliav Company)

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\* The titles and ranks were correct when the committee's report was written.

14. Dr. Eli Levite (deputy chief executive of the Atomic Energy Commission)
15. Colonel (res.) Shmuel Limone (the Political-Military Branch of the Ministry of Defense)
16. Colonel (res.) Dr. Aviem Sella
17. Major General (res.) Yaakov Amidror (vice-president of the Lander Institute)
18. The late Professor Emeritus Amnon Pazi (Department of Mathematics at the Hebrew University)
19. Brigadier General (res.) Uzi Rosen (deputy chief executive for strategic planning in Israel Aircraft Industries)
20. Major General (res.) Gideon Sheffer (vice-president for strategic planning at Elbit)

III. **Secretary of the Committee:** Colonel Ron Eldadi (the Military-Political Branch of the Ministry of Defense)

IV. Contributing to the committee's work were Colonel (res.) Itamar Yaar, Brigadier General Yohanan Locker, Lieutenant Colonel Ayala Hanegbi, Lieutenant Colonel Avgad Meiri, Lieutenant Colonel Shai Shabtai, Captain Uri Vesler, and Captain Dima Adamsky.

## INSS Memoranda, April 2018–Present

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- No. 186, December 2018, Udi Dekel and Kobi Michael, eds., *Scenarios in the Israeli-Palestinian Arena: Strategic Challenges and Possible Responses*.
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This special memorandum presents the report of the Committee for the Formulation of Israel's National Security Doctrine (Meridor Committee, 2006) and examines the conclusions and recommendations of the committee's report a decade later. The committee was asked by the minister of defense and the prime minister to assess the validity of the existing national security doctrine and to recommend a revised version, given the main security challenges of the coming decade. At the end of a long and comprehensive process, the committee submitted to government leaders, for the first time, a formal and written document that set out a comprehensive, integrative, and long-term national security doctrine. This memorandum presents only a condensed version of the report due to its sensitive nature.

The committee's report was adopted by the minister of defense and was presented to the prime minister, the Ministerial Committee on National Security Affairs (the security cabinet), the heads of the defense establishment, the forum of the IDF General Staff, and other officials. The report gained widespread approval with respect to both its necessity and its content. Although the security cabinet did not have a formal vote to approve the report, in practice some of its recommendations have been adopted. For example, a fourth component (defense) was added to the security triad (deterrence, warning, and decisive victory). In the decade since the committee completed its work, the importance has only increased for an updated and relevant national security doctrine, which can serve as an essential compass for the formulation of principles that will guide the response, for the establishment of an order of priorities, and for the management of risk in the face of Israel's security challenges.

Since the writing of the report, Israel's strategic environment has undergone a few more changes; nonetheless, the basic model for the formulation of a security doctrine for Israel's unique conditions, as well as many of the principles underlying the concept, are still relevant and important, even in today's changing reality. Therefore, this memorandum presents the story of the committee's work and examines whether its conclusions and recommendation have withstood the test of time, and if they will in the future. Finally, this memorandum emphasizes that a relevant security doctrine needs to be formulated as soon as possible and will contribute to the important public discussion of Israel's national security issues.

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**Dan Meridor** has been the deputy prime minister and the minister for Intelligence Services, the minister of finance and the minister of justice, as well as the chairperson of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee of the Knesset and the government secretary. He headed the Subcommittee for the Security Concept (in the Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee of the Knesset), which submitted its report in 1987; he led the Committee to Formulate Israel's National Security Doctrine, which submitted its report to the government in 2006; and he was the deputy chairperson of the Institute for National Security Studies (2006–2009). He serves as the chairperson of the board of Bezalel Academy in Jerusalem, president of the Israel Council on Foreign Relations, and the chairperson of the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace.

**Dr. Brigadier-General (res.) Ron Eldadi** has been the director general of the Ministry of Intelligence Services and the Atomic Energy Commission, the head of the Division for Policy and Strategic Planning in the Ministry of Defense, and the secretary of the Committee for the Formulation of Israel's National Security Doctrine (2006). He has a doctorate in national security affairs from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and is a graduate of the National Security College of the IDF. Currently, he lectures at the Lauder School for Governance, Diplomacy, and Strategy at the Herzliya Interdisciplinary Center and is a strategic consultant to the defense establishment and a senior active officer in the reserves.

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