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ISRAELI STRATEGY VS HEZBOLLAH'S INCREASING POWER

INTELLIGENCE HAS BECOME THE KEY

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ABSTRACT

Hezbollah's military capabilities never stopped increasing since the Second Lebanon War in summer 2006, when they were already strong enough to hold off the Israeli forces. The militia has accumulated tactical experience in Syria, augmenting its ballistic capacities (precision, range and number of assets), while securing its positions in southern Lebanon. Despite this high threat level, Israeli officials act as if they want to avoid any risk of confrontation. This non-action option is based on a subtle combination of deterrence and containment. For this, the Israelis have a desperate need to know their fiercest enemy although they hardly have any interaction with him. In this regard, they developed an intelligence approach that has become central in their strategy towards Hezbollah. This priority has required huge human and material investments over the past decade. Along came evolutions in military doctrine and technological innovations. In addition, intelligence has outperformed because of Israeli offensive posture, given the high level of tension across the region.

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

The second Lebanese war, which broke out on July 12, 2006, following a clash between Hezbollah and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), came as a real shock for Israel.[1] The IDF, held off by a few thousand soldiers, were incapable of neutralizing their enemy after 33 days of combat. They suffered heavy losses (121 deaths) facing an adversary who resorted to both guerilla warfare and conventional tactics. After the conflict, these numerous shortcomings were carefully recorded by the Winograd commission, mandated by the Israeli government. The report emphasized, among other things, IDF's poor combat readiness, but also the lack of decision-making processes and gross gaps in intelligence.

It is arguably in this latter area where the IDF have come under the most severe criticism. The Israelis have been taken aback by their opponents operational level. This shock effect may have reminded the most senior officers what struck the Israeli leadership at the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War (October 1973), when the Egyptian and Syrian armies managed to advance for two days in Sinai and on the Golan Heights, without any Israeli reaction.

Acknowledging their errors, the Israelis have made far-reaching reforms since 2006, in their doctrine on the use of force, as well as in intelligence. They have also heavily invested in new equipment, providing the IDF with a technology supremacy over its neighbors and rivals. Since 2006, these new capacities have been combat-proven: several campaigns against Hamas in Gaza,[2] thousands of operations carried out in Syria,[3] not to mention law-enforcement and counter terrorism operations in the West Bank. These operational experiences enabled the IDF to maintain their tactical skills and better understand the hybridity of their opponents. However, the IDF have not been engaged in a high intensity conflict since this "Second Lebanese War."[4] Of course, the Israelis have carried out operations against Hezbollah. Yet those operations were mainly localized and covert. In fact, since 2006, they have preferred to avoid direct confrontation with their principal enemy, while maintaining an elevated operational level of preparation. This devised strategy of deterrence is based on a perfect understanding of the enemy. The IDF must be able to detect signs of change in Hezbollah's posture at any moment, and to respond to them promptly and at an appropriate level. Essentially, ever since the Israelis have decided to use to deterrence as a priority strategy, they are, even more than before, dependent on a flawless intelligence apparatus. This appears like a paradox: the IDF must intimately understand an adversary with whom they have almost no direct interaction, unlike for example, armed Palestinian groups. The challenge is all the more daunting if we consider the shortcomings raised by the Winograd Commission regarding the IDF's understanding of their enemy.

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1. Michel Goya, "Fureur et stupeur. Les enseignements psychologiques de la guerre entre Israël et le Hezbollah," *Politique étrangère*, 2008/4, p. 843-855.

2. In addition to three major operations (*Cast Lead* in 2009, *Defense Pillar* in 2012 and *Protective Edge* in 2014), the IDF carried out many small-scale operations.

3. As he stepped down as Chief of Staff, General Eizenkot said in an interview that Israel had "struck thousands of targets in Syria since 2017" (*The New York Times*, January 11, 2019).

4. This is what the Israelis call the 2006 war.

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Since 2006, intelligence has benefitted from considerable investments. As the strategy document published in 2015[5] underlines, it has become central to the strategy against Hezbollah. The question is whether this huge effort now makes it possible to understand and anticipate an adversary who, for their part, has only improved in terms of capacity and stealth. Is intelligence reliable enough to secure peace and security along Israeli northern border?

HEZBOLLAH HAS CHANGED FORM SINCE 2006, BECOMING A VERSATILE MILITARY PLAYER

Change of posture and strategy

Until 2006, Hezbollah was deployed in the southern region of Lebanon. Its troops were openly ruling the area through garrisons, checkpoints, patrols, etc. The militia claimed that this deployment made up for the absence of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) south of the Litani river. The militia served as part of a purely defensive strategy, in addition to or to substitute the regular forces. The Shiite militia made a point of defending southern Lebanon against any Israeli attack.

However, since the "Second Lebanon War" this concept has evolved. Hezbollah is now claiming its intention to target Israeli urban centers with rockets, while bringing combat into Israeli territory through terrorist and guerilla attacks. In this regard, a territorial occupation, even if only for a few days, could be a strategic win.[6] Even for a short sequence, such a move would strike Israeli public opinion, as well as the Arab populations that Hezbollah is courting.[7] Starting in 2011, Hassan Nasrallah began to threaten the Israelis to invade the Galilee region, in the event of a new war against Lebanon.[8] His most important speeches now always contain this threat, which itself is also part of a deterrence strategy[9]. This threat is taken very seriously by the Israelis. In January 2019, General Eizenkot (then IDF Chief of Staff) declared that Hezbollah had elaborated a plan of surprise attack in Israel.[10] A month earlier, Israeli intelligence had uncovered the existence of cross-border tunnels, which had been thoroughly dug and constructed for years.[11]

Thus in Lebanon, the movement has changed from a globally defensive and visible strategy, to a position that is both more covert and more aggressive. At the same time

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5. *The IDF strategy*, unclassified version, July 2016, p. 17. This document enshrines the need to maintain superiority in intelligence and is an early warning on Hezbollah's capabilities and intentions, knowing that it has continued to progress.

6. Kobi Michael and Gabi Siboni, "The First Circle of Military Challenges Facing Israel: Multiple Arenas and Diverse Enemies," in Anat Kurz and Shlomo Brom (eds), *Strategic Survey for Israel 2016-2017*, Tel-Aviv, The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), December 2016, p. 207.

7. High Level Military Group (HLMG), Hizballah's Terror Army: How to Prevent a Third Lebanon War, October 2017, p. 42.

8. For example on May 3, 2019, on the third anniversary of the death of Mustafa Badr ed-Dine, a Hezbollah official.

9. Raphael D. Marcus, *Israel's Long War Against Hezbollah. Military Innovation and Adaptation Under Fire*, Washington, DC, Georgetown University Press, October 2018, p. 276.

10. Interview of January 15, 2019 on the Hadashot news channel.

11. Interview with an Israeli officer 2019.

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in Syria, from 2011, Hezbollah became structured and militarized, favoring engagement against armed opposition groups.

Outstanding progress recorded in Syria

Up until the 1990s, Hezbollah was primarily capable of conducting ambushes and harassment against the IDF. The organization has since gradually shifted from a terrorist militia to a guerrilla army, increasingly capable of striking the IDF from a distance.[12] The military intervention in Syria has been a efficient incubator for tactical developments, much more than the minor clashes Hezbollah had with IDF.

During the Qusayr battles (May-June 2013), Hezbollah simultaneously maneuvered nearly 2,000 soldiers by combining the use of infantry, tanks and special forces units. According to Assaf Orion, coordination with other units (Syrian army, Iranian Quds Force) required the establishment of a brigade-level chain of command.[13]

The engagement in Syria has enabled Hezbollah to improve in various fields: use of armored units, counter-terrorism and 3D coordination, an expertise developed through contact with Russian armed forces.[14] It was also able to engage its units in a very hostile urban environment. The militia accelerated progress in drones, which it had already been using in operations for fifteen years.[15] In Syria, the drones were used for intelligence purposes, but also to carry out attacks. Yet they were not used massively.[16]

Hezbollah is now able to conduct a wide range of tactics relying on an coherent chain of command. It has become a full-fledged hybrid actor.[17] More broadly, the engagement in Syria advanced Hezbollah's status: the militia became a regional player, able to deter or to combat the jihadist threat. It has broadened its support beyond Lebanon and beyond the Shiite community.[18]

Missile deterrence

Starting in the 1990s, Hezbollah began to covertly build rocket arsenals capable of hitting the Israeli population. After the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, it had ample time to improve both rocket performance and quantity. The 2006 war confirmed the effectiveness of this strategy. The IDF were unable to stop or even reduce the number

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12. Raphael D. Marcus, *Israel's Long War Against Hezbollah,* p. 68.
13. Interview with General Assaf Orion, 2019.
14. Brigadier General Muni Katz and Nadav Pollack, "Hezbollah's Russian Military Education in Syria," The Washington Institute, December 2015.
15. Hezbollah has been using drones since 2004, when the group launched Mirsad-1 into Israeli airspace (in 2006, HZB used drones, including armed ones, but these were rudimentary. They were systematically destroyed).
16. Nadav Pollak, "The transformation of Hezbollah by its involvement in Syria," The Washington Institute, Policy Analysis 35, August 2016, p. 8.
17. According to Friends of Israel Initiative, the group has 25,000 fighters, not counting reservists (HLMG, *Hizballah's terror army,* October 2017, p. 11).
18. Abdulrahman al-Masri, Alexander Corbeil, *Hezbollah's branding of its Arsal offensive as a victory for all Lebanese further undermines the Lebanese State*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, August 17, 2017.

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of rockets fired from Lebanon: a daily average of 130 projectiles fell on Israeli territory until the 34th day of the conflict.[19] Maintaining rocket fire capability became the "central pillar of Hezbollah's military paradigm" according to researcher Raphael D. Marcus.[20]

After 2006, Hezbollah continued to invest in its ballistic capacities, working simultaneously on the number, range and accuracy of the missiles. The Israeli estimate of the quantity of rockets is regularly reassessed: it was 40,000 in 2008 according to Ehud Barak, 80,000 in 2009 according to Shimon Peres and then 100,000 in 2014 according to Moshe Yaalon.[21] The arsenal would be around 130,000 missiles today.[22] This combination of number and precision concerns Israeli officials, aware that their small territory does not provide sufficient strategic depth. High precision missiles in such quantity could saturate Israeli defenses and reach critical infrastructures (energy, water,airports, etc.). According to Ofek Riemer, the development of a high-precision missile production capacity enables Hezbollah (and Iran) to achieve a balance of deterrence with Israel.[23] These projectiles can be considered strategic assets because they threaten the country's economic activity. Hassan Nasrallah regularly evokes this threat in his speeches, establishing a "balance of terror" with his enemy.[24]

Concealment among the civilian population

Among the lessons learned during the 2006 war, Hezbollah incorporated the need to further conceal its strategic installations. Its warehouses, caches, and rocket launch sites are often located in or near inhabited areas, so that they are undetectable.[25] Moreover, this choice of urbanized areas would be a major constraint for the IDF in the event of a new war.

Hezbollah has enhanced the land in many parts of the south, in order to prepare a defensive warfare. Networks of roads, as well as underground tunnels, were built to carry out guerilla operations, in the event that the IDF were to invade Lebanon.

Finally, the militia is trying to diversify and expand its settlements to reduce its exposure to Israeli strikes. It shifted some missile launch sites to the north, to take advantage of the reach of the new weapons. This redeployment maneuver would force the IDF to infiltrate deep into Lebanon in case of a land-based operation. Confronted with more and more scattered sites, the IDF would have to conduct a long air campaign, whose results would be uncertain.[26]

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19. Yaakov Katz, "What is Hezbollah planning for the Third Lebanon War?," *The Jerusalem Post*, April 20, 2017. According to the Israelis, 3,917 rockets hit Israeli territory, 23 percent of them in urbanized areas.

20. Raphael D. Markus, *Israel's Long War With Hezbollah*, p. 274.

21. Jean-Loup Samaan, "Missile warfare and violent non-state actors: the case of Hezbollah," *Defence Studies*, 17:2, 2017, p. 5.

22. Shaan Shaikh and Ian Williams, "Hezbollah's Missiles and Rockets," Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), July 2018.

23. Ofek Riemer, "Not by the Media Alone: The Israeli Campaign against the Conversion of Rockets in Lebanon to Precision-Guided Missiles," INSS Insight 1101, October 23, 2018.

24. Jean-Loup Samaan, "Israel-Hezbollah, la nouvelle équation stratégique," *Politique étrangère*, 2015/2, p. 113-123.

25. HLMG, *Hizballah's Terror Army*, p. 40.

26. Jean-Loup Samaan, *From War to Deterrence, Israel-Hezbollah conflict since 2006*, Strategic Studies/US Army War College Press, May 2014, p. 34.

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Securing the environment

Hezbollah is working to make southern Lebanon areas conducive to its activities and challenging for its adversaries. Even ordinary citizens cannotaccess anywhere in the South. The militia has developed creative methods to modify the environment. It acts in the political sphere (conquest of municipalities, strategic alliances etc.) social (economic and charitable actions) property (land acquisition, installing fences, town planning policies etc.) and even environmental (proclamation of "natural reserves" where access is restricted or forbidden). Daniel Meier describes a "multi-layer strategy… building a sense of collective belonging to a defined space with its specific authority."[27] Hezbollah builds roads to link Shiite villages, which among other things, allows it to control mountain ridges and gain freedom of action.[28] It has established a coherent ecosystem in which it is very difficult to distinguish paramilitary activities from socio-economic measures.

Large areas elude the surveillance of UNIFIL units, despite the most recent resolutions recalling the necessity for full UNIFIL freedom of movement.[29] Restrictions of freedom of movement, for various reasons, are regularly reported by the U.N.[30] For Assaf Orion, these incidents are part of a meticulous plan that Hezbollah is implementing in order to limit UN action.[31]

This "sanctuarization" strategy is also applied in the digital information realm. Hezbollah intervenes in cyber space through numerous media (television, social media networks, cyber activities) to gain public favor towards its cause. It works to disqualify any initiative aimed at compromising with Israel. This strategy is also directed towards Israeli infiltration attempts. Hezbollah has developed very strict security procedures to thwart Israeli covert operations, which are known to be as aggressive as they are inventive.[32]

The militia is also trying to settle in the Golan Heights but has not succeeded in securing significant areasy. The environment is not as permissive as South Lebanon, due to the Syrian and Russian military presence, as well as Israeli strikes. Nevertheless, Hezbollah has increased its freedom of action there since the summer of 2018. During this period, opposition groups were driven out of the Golan Heights and the Syrian army regained its position along the demarcation line. The new balance of power allows Hezbollah to continue its establishment by "connecting the Syrian theater to the Lebanese theater."[33]

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27. Daniel Meier, "(B)ordering South of Lebanon: Hizbullah's Identity Building Strategy," *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 30/1, March 23, 2015.

28. Hassane Rifai, "Quand le Hezbollah achetait le Liban," *Outre-terre*, 28, 2011/2, p. 377-383.

29. In resolution 2485 of August 29, 2019, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) "urges all parties to ensure that UNIFIL enjoys full freedom of movement."

30. Report of the Secretary General to the UNSC on the application of resolution 1701 of July 17, 2019, Annex I, p. 17 and 18.

31. Assaf Orion, "Hiding in Plain Sight, Hezbollah's Campaign Against UNIFIL," Policy Notes 71, The Washington Institute, November 2019, p. 6-9.

32. In December 2014, Hezbollah arrested one of its most senior leaders, Mohammed al Shawrabah, for spying for Israel. Camille Verleuw, "Le chiisme paramilitaire. Menace stratégique oubliée ou occultée," *Sécurité globale*, 10, 2017/2, p. 91.

33. According to Jean-Loup Samaan, Hezbollah is building bunkers and tunnels in the Golan Heights in cooperation with the Iranians ("Israël-Hezbollah : la nouvelle équation stratégique").

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THE ISRAELIS, CAREFUL TO AVOID AN ESCALATION, ONLY CONDUCT INDIRECT ACTIONS AGAINST HEZBOLLAH

Beyond a rhetoric regularly stressed by the highest Israeli leaders – Benjamin Netanyahu repeated in July 2019 that Israel would crush Lebanon if it were struck by Hezbollah[34] – there is a feeling widely shared among political officials admitting that a new war against Hezbollah in Lebanon would be detrimental to local and regional equilibrium. According to Israeli experts, any significant action directed against the Lebanese militia would inevitably lead to a military escalation. A high-intensity conflict lasting several weeks would have dramatic repercussions on the Lebanese economy, especially in the south. It would weaken the authority of the state, which would ultimately benefit Hezbollah.[35]

In Israel as well, the population is a key parameter in the decision making process. Any operation planning is made very complex due to the urban density in the vicinity of the northern border. In case of war, towns and cities near Lebanon should be evacuated. However, any changes in security warnings released to residents would be known to Hezbollah. A decision to evacuate would therefore compromise any surprise effect, which is essential for the success of a planned operation.[36]

Moreover, threats to the Israeli population do not only concern the northern regions. Hezbollah would fire loads of rockets and missiles for several weeks. Militia officials made it clear that the whole Israeli territory would be hit by projectiles.[37]

In other words, the prospect of an armed conflict with Lebanon can only be considered today in the event of a response to a Lebanese aggression (attack, hostage-taking, etc.) or if necessary, an Iranian action. The IDF, unable to act on their enemy's center of gravity in Lebanon, are forced to adopt an indirect approach. This schematically takes two forms: containing as much as possible the actions of the Lebanese militia from Lebanon; conducting actions of attrition against Hezbollah outside Lebanese territory (mainly in Syria).

Limited attrition strikes

The Israelis are concerned about Hezbollah's ballistic arsenal, the unyielding development of which they cannot stop. They thus intend to seize every opportunity to carry out actions of attrition aimed at reducing this threat, as they indicate in their national strategy document.[38] This approach has been formalized as the "campaign between the wars"[39] with the precise aim of delaying the next confrontation. This concept provides for a combination

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34. Press statement July 9, 2019 on Nevatim air base.
35. Interviews with former Israeli military personnel.
36. However, in the event of an attack by Hezbollah or Hamas, the *Safe Distance* plan provides for the evacuation of 250,000 Israeli citizens.
37. Interview with Naim Qassem on December 8, 2018 in the Iranian newspaper *al-Wifak*.
38. *Israel Defense Forces Strategy Document* published in August 2015.
39. This concept has been defined in the *Israel Defense Forces Strategy Document*, as a continuum of low-intensity military actions (open or covert) aimed at preventing the adversary from gaining strength in anticipation of an upcoming confrontation.

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of covert operations – in which intelligence is central – and overt actions, intended to maintain deterrence.[40] From January 2013, the IDF began hitting targets in Syria. Via air raids they mainly target equipment and logistical means (depots, convoys) intended, according to Israeli officials, for transfers to Hezbollah. In principal, they do not deliberately target the combatants themselves, even if there are regrettably collateral victims.[41] Targeting requires complex planning and extremely up-to-date intelligence, especially as Hezbollah uses its stealth as a form of protection.

These attrition operations have become even more complex due to the takeover of numerous regions by the Damascus regime. In July 2019, H. Nasrallah himself announced a reduction of troops in Syria. The Lebanese Shiite fighters no longer deploy as part of a tactical device but rather operate as advisors.[42] Israeli attrition strikes have also become more complicated because they have to be precisely coordinated with the Russian military staff. The Israelis want to avoid repeating the incident of September 2018, in order to protect their ally.[43] Limited in their action against Syria, they now extend their zone of action to Iraq to strike Iranian targets.[44]

Deterrence and containment

Deterrence has not been described in any official Israeli doctrine, but its principal has been reaffirmed by politicians since 2006. Some threaten to demand destruction to Lebanese infrastructure, civil and military, in the event of an attack launched by Hezbollah against Israel. The destruction of Lebanon is even evoked by the toughest figures like Naftali Bennet (leader of the Jewish Home party), in the event of war with Hezbollah.[45]

Military and security officials have also taken up these notions of deterrence. As early as 2008, researcher Gabi Siboni mentioned a "disproportionate response" in relation to the possible actions against Hezbollah.[46] In August 2015, the strategic document even established deterrence as the "cornerstone of IDF's strategy."

The promise of mass destruction is defined in short as a "deterrence by punishment."[47] This threat, so often wielded by the Israelis is not – fortunately – carried out in response to every low intensity action by Hezbollah. In reality, as Jean-Loup Samaan demonstrates,

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40. *The IDF Strategy*, p. 28.
41. Interview with an IDF air force officer, 2019.
42. Interview with Pierre Razoux, September 2019.
43. On September 17, 2018, a Russian Ilyushin was shot down by Syrian air defense, causing the deaths of 15 crew members. According to the Russians, the responsibility lies with Israel. Israeli F-16s, who were leading a raid in the area, took cover behind the Ilyushin, leading to the implementation of Syrian air defense.
44. These strikes are not claimed by the Israelis. However, they were attributed to Israel by Iraqi officials. Statement on Al-Jazeera channel by Mr. Adel Abdul Mahdi, Iraqi Prime Minister, September 30, 2019.
45. Lecture by Naftali Bennett at the Herzliya Conference on Global Security, May 9, 2018.
46. Gabi Siboni, "Disproportionate Force: Israel's Concept of Response in Light of the Second Lebanon War," INSS Insight 74, October 2, 2008.
47. Varun Vira distinguishes between the two forms of deterrence (by punishment and by denial) in "An Assessment of Israeli Deterrence against Asymmetric Threats, Blood and Concrete: 21st Century Conflicts in Urban Centers and Megacities," *Small Wars Journal*, January 13, 2019.

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deterrence is not a final state but a cumulative process which includes sporadic confrontations intended to refresh the "rules of the game"[48] and which, in certain cases, contributes to attrition.

The second form of deterrence is arguably, even more convincing. It is to demonstrate that Hezbollah's actions would have no effect. Varun Vira believes that this "deterrence by denial" rests on Israeli defensive capabilities, which are supposed to contain any expansion of the adversary using technological supremacy.[49] When authors refer to this concept of containment, they generally regard Hezbollah as an advanced echelon of Iranian power.[50] Like the Soviet Union during the Cold war, the enemy should be contained as part of a predominately defensive strategy, based on a constant vigilance and a powerful capacity to innovate.

Innovation helps to contain and therefore deter. Whenever Hezbollah develops a new mode of action, IDF buckle down to develop a technological solution that limits its operational interest. Multi-layered anti-missile defense (Arrow, David's Sling and particularly Iron

Dome) which continues to be deployed and improved, has countered the threat of indirect fire projectiles. "Defensive engineering"[51] the deployment of which began in early 2018, aims to protect Jewish border communities against direct fire and threats of incursions. A very advanced technical program has been implemented since the end of 2018 to detect and neutralize cross-border tunnels dug out by Hezbollah.

▶The Iron Dome anti-missile system
([photo on the official IDF website](#)).

Both containment and deterrence have been reinforced by a powerful and repetitive narrative, since the end of the 2000s. In 2008, General Eizenkot, then head of the Northern Command, asserted that the IDF would apply disproportionate force on each village from which Israel would be attacked.[52] This rhetoric is aimed for the Lebanese population of southern Lebanon, which as a whole aspires for peace and fears losing the benefits of economic progress, indisputable since 2006. Hezbollah, totally immersed in the Lebanese social fabric, is concerned about losing its popular support. Incidentally, it also conducts its own information operations (speeches by Hassan Nasrallah, social networks etc.) in order to counter Israeli rhetoric and retain its support.

As a result the Israelis manipulate their different levers very carefully (indirect actions, containment, deterrence) in order to contain their adversary while avoiding escalation. Forced to restrain, they seek the maximum efficiency of each operation undertaken. Intelligence is key in this regard. It provides the best value of all offensive and defensive actions.

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48. Jean-Loup Samaan, "From War to Deterrence, Israel-Hezbollah conflict since 2006", p. 6.

49. Ibid.

50. Amnon Aran, "Containment and territorial transnational actors: Israel, Hezbollah and Hamas," *International Affairs*, Vol. 88, July 2012.

51. The separation wall built along the Blue Line, facing Lebanon, is more generally called the *Protective Engineering Project* by the Israelis. This is a complete project that includes in particular passive and active sensors.

52. Interview "[Israel warns Hizbullah war would invite destruction](#)," *Yedioth Ahronot*, October 3, 2008.

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THE IDF HAVE HEAVILY INVESTED IN INTELLIGENCE, WHICH HAS BECOME THE CORNERSTONE OF THEIR STRATEGY

Intelligence has become central: It is essential to prepare for the next confrontation that the Israelis consider inevitable. It makes it possible to conduct kinetic and non-kinetic operations in the context of the "new cold war" prevailing in the Middle East.[53]

Intelligence has become central, and the northern border a priority

When observing the Israeli posts along the Blue Line, one may be surprised by the low number of military personnel. Yet, nothing that happens on north side of the border seems to escape the IDF. This apparent paradox can be explained by the massive use of ISR sensors.[54] In fact, the downsizing of the IDF, which began in the early 1990s as part of a "revolution in military affairs," has increased the use of technology and the need for intelligence.[55] Equipped with fewer forces, the IDF no longer have the capacity to cover the entire territory along the northern border. The ISR which serves as a "battle space gap compensation factor"[56] is given the priority effort. Intelligence helps prepare for the next war, while also being a condition for the success of the "inter-war campaign" which is reflected in particular in the neutralization of targets in Syria. From an Israeli point of view, these kinetic actions also help prevent a possible conflict.[57]

►The IDF technical fence along the Blue Line, equipped with multiple sensors
(photo on the official IDF website).

This intelligence priority is measured in budgets, capacities and personnel. Between 7,000 and 9,000 people work for Aman (the military intelligence directorate), while the intelligence community as a whole is around 40,000.[58] Serving in intelligence, over the course of an officer's career, is always considered a rewarding experience. General Kochavi, the

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53. F. Gregory Gause, "Beyond Sectarianism: the New Middle East Cold War," Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper, 11, July 2014.

54. Intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance.

55. Raphael D. Markus, *Israel's Long War With Hezbollah*, p. 95.

56. Joseph Henrotin, "Les mutations du renseignement militaire. Dissiper le brouillard de la guerre ?," Focus stratégique, 71, IFRI, January 2017, p. 15.

57. Interview with an Israeli official. According to him, intelligence serves to prevent a conflict when its use eliminates a threat to Israel's security (for example, a convoy carrying guided missile components destined for Hezbollah).

58. Hugues Moutouh and Jérome Poirot, *Dictionnaire du renseignement*, Perrin, 2018, p. 485.

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current army chief of staff, was himself director of Aman. There are few modern armies where intelligence experts reach the highest positions.[59]

In this intelligence-centered approach, the Northern front has become a priority since the 2000s. The distribution of intelligence resources, which is decided during daily central staff meetings, systematically devotes efforts in the north.[60] Every day, countless sensors collect data there, which is analyzed in real time. Among the electronic interception stations of the Unit 8200,[61] two of the most important (Mar-Avital and Mount Hermon) are located in the Northern front.[62] Aircrafts fly over Lebanon daily in order to update databases on critical installations, likely to be targeted.[63]

This hyperactivity of aerial collection (image and electromagnetic) is explained by the IDF's inability to access Lebanese territory – unlike the West Bank, Gaza and Sinai. The intelligence activity therefore relies, facing Hezbollah, on substantial technical means and a very offensive collection process. It is at the cost of these daily overflights, among other things, that the IDF has tens of thousands of targets, ready to be engaged, in the event of a new war.[64]

The Galillee divison is the "Lebanese intelligence hub."[65] It has training facilities, including a replica of a village in southern-Lebanon. IDF units, including reserves, come to train there regularly, usually once per year.[66] Thus, knowledge on Hezbollah is regularly updated within what is akin to a small university (*Beit Midrash*).[67]

The Northern command has a specific organizational structure compared to the other commands. When General Kochavi was its commander, he considered it essential to create a fire support center enrolling air force officers. This fire center is now capable of coordinate close air support at operational level.[68] It also enables young officers to get a joint experience (procedures of fire support), when they start off their career as platoon leaders.

Prominence of the Northern command is also reflected by the positions held by the most brilliant officers. Generals Benny Gantz, Gabi Ashkenazi, Gadi Eizenkot, Aviv Kochavi – the most recent IDF chiefs of staff – all commanded the Patzan[69] after having served there, often, as young officers. In addition, most of the officers who currently hold the highest positions were deployed in Lebanese territory during the occupation period, from 1982 to 2000.

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59. In addition, there are many veterans in high political offices: Ehud Barak and Chaim Herzog have both served as directors of military intelligence. The first was Prime Minister, the second President of the Republic. See Hugues Moutout and Jérôme Poirot, *Dictionnaire du renseignement*, p. 484.

60. Interview with a senior Israeli official.

61. Unit 8200 is a technical intelligence unit specializing in electromagnetic collection.

62. According to Jacques Borde, these two stations are located in Mar-Avital and Mount Hermon (*Les Services secrets israéliens, d'Eichmann à la guerre de Syrie*, V.A. Éditions, 2019, p. 39).

63. In its March 2019 report, UNIFIL recorded an average of 96.5 airspace violations per month, and an average of 262 overflight hours per month (Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 during the period from October 27, 2018 to February 17, 2019).

64. Interview with Assaf Orion, 2019. The public strategy document mentions the number of 10,000 targets.

65. Interview with Assaf Orion, 2019.

66. Interview with a former Israeli soldier.

67. Interview with Assaf Orion, 2019.

68. Interview with an IDF officer, 2019. General Kochavi was head of the northern command from 2014 to 2017.

69. The abbreviation used to denote the northern command, whose staff is located in Tzfat.

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Intelligence would not be as central and as important without the 2006 war. It revealed serious shortcomings pointed out by the Winograd commission, but also by many experts: insufficient intelligence resources, lack of coordination, deficiencies in knowledge sharing. These criticisms have given rise to serious questioning.

Significant intelligence resources invested at the tactical-operational level

In 2006, intelligence was already a priority for the IDF, but it was very compartmentalized. It was mainly a field of specialists, who managed this element from Tel Aviv, without taking sufficient account of operational needs. Major criticism has focused on the insufficient IMINT and SIGINT assets allocated to the commanders in the field.[70] Such insufficiencies were observed during Operation Cast Lead (winter 2008-2009).

From 2009-2010, additional intelligence resources were allocated to the Northern command. Each brigade is equipped with technical (notably electromagnetic) and human sensors, GEOINT and are reinforced by analysts. The upscaling materialized through the creation of a comprehensive tactical intelligence battalion within the Galilee division. This unit offers multi-sensor monitoring capability for collection of information in Lebanon.[71] It also has many analysts, able to provide some understanding to the collected data thanks to their socio-cultural knowledge. While in 2006 these contact units showed an "Ignorance of Hezbollah, its structures and its capabilities"[72] they now have the full technical spectrum to follow their enemy and for their operational needs.

The Northern command no longer needs to send requests to Tel-Aviv to obtain images from strategic drones. It now has eyes all along the Lebanese and Syrian border, which allows it to observe up to nearly 30 kilometers in depth. These cameras provide images that are analyzed in real time by a unit of soldiers – mostly young women – who alternate shifts in front of screens throughout their military service.

Finally, the Northern command took advantage of the war in Syria to reinforce human intelligence. The IDF had the opportunity to update their knowledge of Hezbollah by approaching armed groups fighting against the militia.[73] Between 2012 and 2016, the reports of the United Nations Disengagement Observation Force (UNDOF) detailed regular interactions between IDF and Syrian combatants: discussion, transfers of wounded, passage of vehicles and boxes of unidentified contents.[74] In June 2015, the Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon publicly acknowledged that "it is no secret that border villages (in Syria) are receiving humanitarian aid." For Élisabeth Marteu, these interactions went beyond the humanitarian field, enabling IDF to gather a lot of information about the situation on the

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70. Yoaz Hendel, "Failed Tactical Intelligence in the Lebanon War," *Strategic Assessment*, 9:3, November 2006.

71. The Shahaf Collection Battalion has approximately 750 active personnel plus reserve personnel, within the Galilee Division (Ami Rojkes Dombe, "Feeling Hezbollah's Pulse," *Israel Defense*, June 9, 2018).

72. Michel Goya and Marc-Antoine Brillant, *Israël contre le Hezbollah, chronique d'une défaite annoncée*, Éditions du Rocher, 2013, p. 145.

73. Interview with a Finnish officer who served in UNDOF.

74. Report of the Secretary General on UNDOF, for the period from November 20, 2014 to March 3, 2015.

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ground.[75] This commitment of local groups to improve the situation assessment and conduct influential actions had already been experienced in southern Lebanon at the end of the 1970s.[76] This cultural understanding is particularly useful for an army that hardly ever deploys outside Israel's borders.

A more decentralized and better coordinated decision-making process

The most important transformation since 2006 is undoubtedly not found in the increase of resources allocated to intelligence, but in the revision of procedures. This is part of a general trend towards shortening decision-making. Short loops of decision empower unit commanders and enhance operational gains.

The 2006 war revealed the excessive centralization of decision-making within the IDF. According to Michel Goya, the command of the Land forces brought together so many organizations that it had become "not omnipotent but impotent."[77] As far as the intelligence function, it was mainly run by Air Force, sincemost of the sensors were embedded on air assets. The planning processes were conducted separately from the other components (land, sea, special forces). General coordination was done at the staff level, that is to say, away from the units engaged on the ground.

After 2006, the regional military commands regained some freedom of action. They benefitted from increased intelligence resources, that they could use autonomously, without having to report to the strategic hierarchy. This shift transferred part of the intelligence operation to the tactical commanders, granting them fusion capabilities. General Kochavi emphasized the concept of intelligence-based warfare, when he directed Aman[78]: the tactical leader prepares his operation according to his threat assessment or according to the enemy that he is facing. This transfer of intelligence capabilities to tactical levels is explained by the need for greater responsiveness from their leaders. Faced with an increased and less visible threat, it appeared crucial to provide brigades and battalion commanders with the capabilities associated with greater decision-making autonomy. In other words, this transfer of prerogatives, – including those of intelligence – downwards, has emerged as a means of reducing the effect of surprise.[79]

Aman, which had not been spared by critics after the 2006 war, also took corrective measures. An Operations division was created within it in 2007, to improve intelligence coordination processes. This new entity made it possible to streamline the coordination of sensors and the allocation of resources to match units needs for intelligence.[80]

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75. Élisabeth Marteu, *Israël face à la menace jihadiste*, Consultancy report for the General Directorate of International Relations and Strategy (DGRIS), August 2016, p. 27.

76. Alain Gresh, "Syrie, l'entrée en guerre du Hezbollah," *Le Monde diplomatique*, May 23, 2013.

77. Michel Goya and Marc-Antoine Brillant, *Israël contre le Hezbollah, chronique d'une défaite annoncée*.

78. Eran Ortal, "A Sixth Era in Ground Warfare: The Intelligence Context," *Jointness in Intelligence, Intelligence in Theory and Practice*, 1, May 2017, p. 100.

79. Interview with Bertrand Chandouineau (former defense attaché in Israel), September 2019.

80. Kobi Michael, David Siman-Tov, Oren Yoeli, "The Development of the Jointness Concept in Intelligence Organizations," *Jointness in Intelligence, Intelligence in Theory and Practice*, 1, May 2017, p. 18.

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Massive efforts had been made since 2006 to invest in the digital space. Yossi Cohen, director of Mossad, considers cyber intelligence as "the main tool in the fight against terrorism."[81] Both Mossad and Aman operate in cyber space to gain access to secret information and to carry out attacks. The Aman relies on the prestigious Unit 8200, but also on the vitality and creativity of the private sector. A large number of companies specialize in the field of cyber intelligence. The open internet, dark web and social networks are analyzed to drive predictive surveillance, social analysis and profiling. These methods, initially designed to fight terrorism and crime, are proving to be very effective in monitoring the activities of Hezbollah – who, moreover, is also very successful in this field.[82]

These innovative solutions are developed by young Israelis who have followed a high-level training, and then, for the best, a military service within Unit 8200. While under their thirties, engineers and IT specialists have operational experience and are fully aware of the expectations of the operational staff.[83] Both Aman and Mossad fund these developments in addition to algorithms, that come out of their own incubators. Use of open sources (Lebanese media and social networks) generates extensive knowledge on their enemy. It helps anticipate and monitor of public events, detect changes of land property, or spotting Hezbollah sympathizers in cities and villages in the south.[84]

Finally, a coordination effort at strategic level has been undertaken over the past ten years.[85] Aman focuses on theaters of operation (Southern Lebanon and Syria in particular) while Mossad covers other priorities (relations with countries and entities that do not recognize Israel, counter-proliferation, terrorist threats abroad, Iranian threat in general).[86] The National security coordinator, whose prerogatives were reinforced in 2008, is responsible to the prime minister for questions of coordination within the intelligence community. However as underlined by Ephraim Halevy (former coordinator and former director of Mossad), the influence of the Coordinator highly depends on his personal relation with the Prime minster.[87] In addition, the political leadership fosters competition between the different security apparatuses.[88]

Reforms initiated since 2006, coupled with technological advances, have enabled Israeli intelligence to make considerable progress in understanding Hezbollah "in peacetime." This relates in particular to its ballistic arsenal, the activity of its personnel and installations, and the network of cross-border tunnels.

Knowledge on Hezbollah personnel and installations is updated by a daily surveillance of Shiite regions, through a wide range of sensors. No doubt that the Israelis have developed huge geo-referenced databases (individuals, routes, homes, meeting places, communication networks

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81. Speech delivered on June 24, 2019, during the Cyber Week Tel Aviv University Conference.

82. Hezbollah uses fake Facebook profiles to collect sensitive information from IDF soldiers (Olivier Danino, "L'utilisation stratégique du cyber au Moyen-Orient," Ministry of Defense EPS, 2013, p. 29).

83. Éric Denécé and David Elkaim, *Les Services secrets israéliens, Aman, Mossad et Shin Beth*, Tallandier, 2014, p. 111; Éric Denécé, "Le nouveau paradigme sécuritaire d'Israël," *Géoeconomie*, 74, 2015/2, p. 9-28.

84. For example, it is possible to assess the infiltration rate of Hezbollah through the funeral announcements of Hezbollah fighters killed in Syria (former Israeli intelligence officer).

85. Interview with Pierre Razoux, September 2019.

86. Joshua Krasna, A Guide for the Perplexed: the Israeli National Security Constellation and its Effect on Policy-making, *The Philadelphia Papers*, 17, Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI), February 2018, p. 36.

87. Ibid., p. 41.

88. Ibid., p. 36.

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etc.) analyzed according to multiple criteria. Analysis is no easy task, given the overabundance of data. Another challenge comes from the ingenuity of Hezbollah, who is a master in the art of deception among the population. To identify Hezbollah assets among the natural and human environment requires skills well beyond human capability. There, artificial intelligence (AI) offers huge options to process masses of data and turn them into actionable intelligence.

AI seems to still occupy a modest place in the intelligence cycle.[89] However, the most senior level officials have understood the stakes. Barely appointed as Chief of Staff, General Kochavi decided to create a targeting directorate (March, 2019). This is part of the "Readiness and Change" plan which notably envisions use of AI and big data.

Precise knowledge of Hezbollah's ballistic arsenal

The 2006 war shed light on the inability of Israeli intelligence to detect deliveries of military equipment from Iran and Syria.[90] The Israelis have made a considerable effort in this area, as has been developed above. Relying on the accuracy of their information, they carried out hundreds of kinetic operations beyond their borders. Doing so, the IDF denied any establishment of production sites in the Lebanese territory, which the Israelis consider a red line. They are particularly concerned about Hezbollah mastering the technology of guided systems. If so, their defense systems may be saturated. This fear may explain why the IDF recently intervened in Lebanon (attack in the suburbs of Beirut, August 25, 2019).[91]

The ability to strike in a discriminatory manner in Syria, Lebanon and even in Iraq, suggests that the IDF has real-time feedback on the technical and logistical activities of their enemies. Moreover, kinetic actions and the evaluation carried out afterwards (battle damage assessment), in turn allows them to consolidate knowledge of their enemies' ballistic and logistic capabilities. However, this level of knowledge seems insufficient to allow the IDF to locate all launch sites.[92]

Precise knowledge of cross-border tunnels

In December 2018, the Israelis obtained evidence that tunnels, dug from Lebanon, extended into Israeli territory. Refusing to opt for a massive destruction of the underground networks (which would have had significant consequences for the border populations on each side) they launched Operation Northern Shield. Within a few weeks, at a huge technical, operational and financial costs, the IDF had located several tunnels then neutralized them. This campaign is a successful example of intel search involving all kinds of sensors (seismic, acoustic, optical) in support of operations (engineering and force protection). It made it possible to destroy the known tunnels while limiting the risks of an escalation. If

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89. Israeli officials questioned said that they did not know his role in the process.
90. Mohammad Naved Ferdaus Iqbal, "The Second Lebanon War: Failures, lessons learned and the future," *Small Wars Journal*, May 15, 2015.
91. Drone attacks targeted Hezbollah-owned offices in the southern suburbs of Beirut on August 25, 2019.
92. Interviews with several European diplomats and soldiers who served in Lebanon.

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kinetic destruction of the underground networks was the chosen course of action by IDF, Hezbollah would have been likely to retaliate.[93]

Action on non-military targets

The Israelis also act upon non-military targets within Hezbollah. Their units work to infiltrate its political and financial structures. Several cases that have made headlines in Lebanon suggest that Mossad is actively targeting the leaders of the Shiite movement.[94] Even if they do not necessarily result in the recruitment of Lebanese agents, these operations aim to alter the political credit of Hezbollah, which is trying to appear as an organization of integrity.

Additionally, Israeli intel apparatus are targeting Hezbollah's financial contributors based outside of Lebanon, in cooperation with the American administration, as well as private actors (law firms and NGOs). These activities mainly aim to freeze assets, but also include legal actions in support of victims of terrorism.[95] By attacking Hezbollah's funding from foreign supporters, the Israelis want to reduce the attractiveness of the movement, whose social policy requires large budgets. However, these operations are not easy. Hezbollah relies on a sophisticated financial engineering, including the use of crypto-currency to bypass surveillance devices.[96]

THE PRICE OF SUCCESS: THE USE OF INTELLIGENCE FOR POLITICAL AND INFORMATIVE PURPOSES

During Benjamin Netanyahu's last term, the Israeli executive turned to intelligence to influence perceptions or in some cases, for political gain.

On April 20, 2018, in a spectacular televised intervention, the Israeli Prime Minister announced that Mossad operatives had seized more than 100,000 documents about Iran's nuclear military program, initially stored in archives in Teheran. B. Netanyahu had not disclosed any previously unknown information, as the existence of an Iranian program was no secret. In reality, the Prime Minister led an information operation, intended to influence the international community, at a time when the question of the Vienna Agreement between Iran and the 5+1 was under debate. In hindsight, we can assume that this initiative aimed to prepare people's minds for President Trump's decision to denounce this agreement. Netanyahu had taken the risk of compromising sources and letting Iran know about it.

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93. Already in 2002, the Israelis would have declined the American offer to acquire bunker buster bombs (Michel Goya and Marc-Antoine Brillant, *Israël contre le Hezbollah, chronique d'une défaite annoncée*, p. 150).

94. In 2012, Hezbollah's communications director fled to Israel with $ 5 million. In 2014, the former head of personal security for H. Nasrallah was arrested (Jean-Loup Samaan, "La nouvelle équation stratégique," p. 120).

95. Nitsana Darshan-Leitzer, Samuel M. Katz, *Harpoon: Inside the Covert War Against Terrorism's Money Masters*, Hatchette Books, 2017.

96. Interview with a Lebanese financier, 2018.

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However, Shmuel Even considers that the benefits gained from this exposure were greater than the associated risks.[97]

In September 2018, during his address to the United Nations General Assembly, B. Netanyahu disclosed (according to him) Hezbollah's rocket production and storage capacities around the Beirut airport. He presented images of three sites located near the Beirut airport, taken from an observation satellite. In August 2019, the IDF spokesperson publicly dropped the names of Iranian soldiers responsible for this program. Some biographical details on this matter can be found on the IDF website, under the heading *Hezbollah precision guided missiles project*.[98]

The case of cross-border tunnels dug by Hezbollah, is another example of an intel operation diverted to political gains. Operation Northern Shield received a lot of publicity from the outset, which gradually continued as it unfolded.

As soon as the tunnel was discovered, the Israelis carefully leaked images and videos of irrefutable evidence to the media, as if they wanted to discredit the statements of Lebanese officials, who, at the same time, maintained that this campaign was totally fabricated. The greatest success in this regard took place in December 26, 2018. That day, videos published in Israeli media showed buildings of an abandoned factory located in Lebanese territory several dozen meters form the Blue Line, deluged by an actual flood of cement. The IDF had poured several hundred cubic meters of high pressure cement into the tunnel, from the Israeli territory entrance. Thus an "intelligence product" developed at the end of a technically very daring operation, was transformed into content for the general public, instead of remaining in the sole possession of a few senior officials bound to secrecy.[99]

►Site considered by the IDF as a tunnel entrance. The gray spot is the cement poured into the tunnel by the IDF, which completely submerged the factory (photo published in the *Times of Israel*, December 29, 2018).

In reality, this communication around the tunnels was likely the main objective pursued during Operation Northern Shield. From its launch (December 4, 2018) the Israeli authorities had opted for publicity, breaking with the practices of discretion usually dictated by operational constraints. This singular bias could be explained by the absence of imminent threat linked to the tunnels, contrary to the messages disseminated publicly. It seems that the existence of these tunnels had been known by Israeli intelligence for several years,[100] and that the decision to neutralize them was a political calculation. B. Netanyahu, then in

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97. Shmuel Even, "The Benefit of Exposing the Iranian Nuclear Archive," INSS Insight 1054, May 15, 2018.
98. https://www.idf.il/en/minisites/hezbollah/hezbollahs-precision-guided-missile-project/.
99. https://www.timesofisrael.com/unifil-confirms-tunnel-filled-with-cement-by-idf-crossed-border-broke-un-rules/.
100. Interview with a former Israeli intelligence officer.

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an electoral campaign, undoubtedly intended to capitalize on a military success during the legislative elections. Tzipi Livni, the main opposition leader, accused the Prime Minister of "dramatizing the discovery for political purposes."[101]

However, it would be reductive to only see these operations as electoral or political maneuvers. The dissemination of evidence is part of an informational campaign targeting public opinion. This "marketing campaign"[102] aims to make the Israeli population aware of the reality of the threat, and also to convince the Lebanese population that Hezbollah is exposing the entire country to a war. The particularly visible collection methods (drones flights over Lebanese territory, cameras and antennas all along the Blue Line) are part of this communication campaign. The Israelis do not hide their spying, as if they wanted to proclaim to the Lebanese population "we know everything that is happening in your country."[103] This ostentatious, even offensive, approach requires Hezbollah to make additional efforts to ensure the security of its own operations. Finally, this "coercive disclosure" contributes to deterrence.[104]

CONCLUSION

Even in the absence of a military engagement as a test, the level of performance achieved by the Israeli intelligence apparatus is evident. Relying on open-source information, military analysts admit that the Israelis have highly accurate knowledge about Hezbollah, at least regarding specific fields and geographical areas. The regularity of strikes in Syria on convoys or depots, often without suffering casualties, gives the impression of real-time monitoring of Hezbollah's logistic activities. The tunnels case, cleverly exploited by the political realm, has publicly revealed both Hezbollah's intentions and the quality of information held by the IDF.

This constantly updated knowledge of the enemy, made possible by great agility in the management of information flows, enshrines intelligence dominance and gives decision-makers in Tel-Aviv a head start. The Israeli intelligence apparatus is a central element to the political-military decision and a critical tool to implement it.

However, this Israeli superiority comes at a very high price. It is based on considerable budgetary efforts, but also on an offensive posture, necessary for continuous collection (daily overflights in Lebanon, intensive electromagnetic collection, operations in Syria, combined with interactions with notorious armed groups). In a way, the performance of Israeli intelligence, which is at the heart of the deterrence strategy, is conditioned by the high level of tension that prevails with Lebanon and Syria. It is likely that Israeli intelligence would

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101. Interview on Kan public radio, December 5, 2019.
102. Shmuel Even, "The Benefit of Exposing the Iranian Nuclear Archive."
103. General Halevy, chief of military intelligence, said in 2016: "There has never been an army that knows as much about its enemy as we know about Hezbollah" (Judah Ari Gross, "Intelligence chief warns of growing gaps between Israel, neighbors," *The Times of Israel*, June 15, 2016).
104. Ofek Riemer and Daniel Sobelman, "Coercive Disclosure: Israel's weaponization of Intelligence," *War on the Rocks*, August 30, 2019.

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not achieve the same level effectiveness in a peaceful regional environment. The question is whether geopolitical easing would affect Hezbollah's intelligence efficiency in an identical way.

The current level of tension does not have the same impact on the two adversaries, as they operate in two different socio-political systems. The IDF are a product of an open and connected Israeli society, where it is difficult to control the flow of information. For its part, Hezbollah is taking advantage of the level of tension to hide in an environment, that it has partly succeededin securing. This asymmetry allows them to challenge the intelligence superiority established by their Israeli opponent, according to a phenomenon described by Shay Shabtai.[105] This cover-up, which allows Hezbollah to escape the vigilance of the sensors, will however be difficult to maintain over time, especially if political tensions subside. Over time, as population in South Lebanon becomes more and more connected, Hezbollah will face increasing challenges to impose on population to moderate their digital consumption. A society that produces data is exposed to the surveillance of the technologically strongest. It is likely that in the future, Israelis will rely heavily on artificial intelligence to detect weak signals of Hezbollah, while limiting as much as possible their own exposure to their enemy's ability in this domain.

(Translation by Hannah Maddrey)

From the Marine Troops, Colonel Olivier Passot served in operational units, training officers and staff. The second part of his career has been mainly internationally oriented within the armed forces and the ministry (cooperation, intelligence and strategic issues). He has carried out numerous missions abroad, notably in the Middle East. He was director of the "Strategic Thinking" department at IRSEM from 2017 to 2018. He is now an associate researcher in IRSEM's "Intelligence, Anticipation and Hybrid Threats" department.

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105. Shay Shabtai considers that democracies, by nature open and connected, are in a weak position vis-à-vis actors who control their information in an authoritarian manner. Their Dominant Intelligence is challenged by authoritarian systems (states or armed groups like the Islamic State) ("Intelligence and Strategy: Relationship in Transformation," *Infinity Journal*, 6:1, winter 2018, p. 8-11).

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