Evolution of Israeli Military Doctrine: Adaptability in Response to Shifting Strategic Environments

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Evolution of Israeli Military Doctrine: Adaptability in Response to Shifting Strategic Environments

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Abstract

This research explores the evolution of Israeli military doctrine, tracing its development from classical to contemporary strategies. The study begins with an overview of military doctrine, elucidating its definition and pivotal role in guiding military operations. Focusing on Israel, the research delves into the components and objectives of its military doctrine, highlighting its adaptability and responsiveness to changing strategic landscapes. Through an analysis of ground, air, navy, and cyber security strategies, the study demonstrates Israel's capacity for doctrinal evolution and development. Moreover, it examines how shifts in strategic environments have influenced the modification of military doctrines over time. By scrutinizing the challenges faced by Israel, including the persistent threat landscape, the research underscores the imperative for continuous adaptation and innovation within its military doctrine to ensure national security in an ever-changing geopolitical landscape.

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Introduction

In light of war scenes volitation where strategic environments change with the development and speed of technology, the difficulty of being able to predict geopolitical factors, military doctrine stands as a guiding beacon that guides governments and countries to victory. It's a tool summarizes many centuries of conflict to provide governments and states with a comprehensive framework for decision-making, planning, and implementation. Despite the ambiguity surrounding military doctrine concept , according to Jackson military doctrine can simply be defined as a concrete picture of the military institutional belief system regarding how the army understood, prepared and managing the military activities. (Jackson, 2017) While Spencer defines military doctrine as a military term that describes states fundamental principles upon which forces and military elements actions are directed in support of national goals. These principles are considered as army's views reflection that stemming and learned from previous experiences and previous wars. In fact, it is a set of ideas that represents an integrated reference frame including the intellectual tools used by army leaders to solve military problems. Military doctrine is also considered to have a cognitive nature that allows it to acquire, distribute and evaluate knowledge beside the flexibility and ability to change and modify. Moreover it is an important tool that provides a formal representation of tactical, strategic and operational realities. (Spencer, WHAT IS ARMY DOCTRINE?, 2017)

It is worth to mention that doctrine takes two different forms: classical unwritten doctrine and contemporary written doctrine; Firstly, the unwritten classic doctrine could takes many forms such as educational curricula, power structure development, acquisition preferences or it may also be genes passed down through the tongues. (Eldadi, 2019) On the other hand, the contemporary written doctrine takes forms of written booklets and folders, However the contemporary written doctrine considered the most effective and is most commonly used by western military, due to its clarity and ease of understanding compared to the unwritten classical doctrine, in addition to containing a better explanation of advanced international relations, militias, the relations between states and their populations. it also includes scientific and intellectual trends in a broader way. (Jackson, 2017)

With regard to the main role military doctrine, essentially the main function of military doctrine is to protect the state sovereignty, interests and state's national security from any external threat and achieve success in conflicts and wars. To attain those security objectives, military doctrine primarily contributes to the advancement of military strategy though out offering expertise, educational resources, vocational training and military instruction. Moreover, military doctrine involves analyzing operational challenges and providing guidance for tactical and operational endeavors. Nevertheless there are many factors may influence military doctrine such as historical analysis and military concepts, policies and strategic environments, technology, lessons learned from previous wars and battles, political circumstances, national culture, tactical and operational requirements, in addition to collective and individual experiences. The state's internal and foreign policy contributes fundamentally to determine the doctrine's directions and structure, if the

doctrine is affected by any of the previous factors, this may require a change or development of the doctrine. (Jackson, 2017)

The purpose of this paper is to is to define the objectives and principles of Israeli military doctrine. Why does it exist? To what extent does the doctrine strategy adapt to regional threats? How flexible is the doctrine to face changes in strategic environments over time? The extent of the strategic level's significance and how it affects the other levels of the doctrine are also covered in this paper. Light has been highlighted in The study looks at how much military strategy has changed in the land, air, and sea forces, in addition defense army's organizational structure, and the cyberspace domain to keep up with the opponents' and wars' transition from powerful nations fighting traditional conflicts to not effective groups like Hamas and Hezboallah which can differ depending on various unconventional wars.

Israeli military doctrine in the light of changing strategic environments:

The Classical Doctrine

In 1950 the prime minister David Ben-Gurin developed the fundamentals of Israeli military doctrine which can be defined as a classic military doctrine. This doctrine was comprised of three main components which are deterrence, Early warning and rapid wars with decisive victory it is worth noting that these components are known as the security triad. However the major security challenge after Israel's independence was the Arab hostility especially neighboring countries such as Egypt, Syria and Jordan. (Freilich, 2018)

Since military doctrine is flexible and changes depending on the challenges facing nations, Israel had many challenges that forced it to develop a doctrine in order to protect its national security. At that time, Israel was geographically a small country with no natural borders and surrounded by hostile countries which making it vulnerable to any sudden attack, in addition to that the regional size of Israel at that time was relatively small compared to the regional size of the hostile countries as the Arab armies were organized and large. Israel, on the other hand, suffered from a lack of tactical and strategic depth as well as small size army due to its small population. Beside the emergence of oil, Arabs were able to provide economic resources to maintain their armies and strengthen their economic structure this led to create discrepancy between the two parties and pushed the adoption of a military doctrine built on the Israel assumptions that the conflicts between Israel and the Arab countries will not end using the military means also it is difficult to force the Arabs to accept Israel's existence and it is not easy for Israel to achieve any meaningful long-term political gains.

Therefore Israel maintained the status quo while attempting to secure its borders with an iron wall strategy in order to protect the borders from enemies, In fact, the Iron Wall strategy is considered one of the doctrine's effective long-term strategies, this was regarding internal strategy. (Freilich,

2018) Despite the importance of the alliance with external powers, Israel has realized that its military doctrine must be strategically independent and defend itself with the possibility of relying on temporary alliances if necessary in order to maintain a balance between deterrence and wars provided that external forces are not directly involved.

Moreover alliances Israel adopted the term of "political time" which refers to determining the appropriate periods for carrying out military operations before external intervention imposes a ceasefire, Actually Israel relied on this strategy after several frustrating situations Perhaps the closest example of this is France's arms embargo in 1967 and the United States forcing Israel to withdraw from Sinai twice, once in 1949 and again in 1967. (Freilich, 2018)

 As for the discrepancy between the confrontation countries and Israel, Israel resorted to comprehensive military recruitment to fill this discrepancy and focused on professionals with military experience, especially in areas that require high degrees of expertise, such as training reserve soldiers and formulating military doctrine. (Eilam, 2018) Nevertheless The classical military doctrine was more like an unofficial doctrine and was transmitted orally through lectures, laws, speeches, and Knesset decisions.

Contemporary Doctrine

In 2006, several studies were conducted of the challenges expected to face Israel during the years 2006 and 2016, the military doctrine for Israeli national security was formulated based on these studies by Dan Modiron where the doctrine was officially adopted as an integrated long-term national security doctrine. A fourth element has been added to the classic military doctrine, which is the element of defense, The classical doctrine was developed due to the type of wars transformation from conventional wars to unconventional wars.

 In the past, Israel was able to succeed in confronting conventional wars and improved its ability to anticipate future events. Still, the processes of change in the strategic environment require further development of the doctrine, especially with the emergence of Terrorism and unconventional weapons, doctrine must always be reviewed periodically. (Eldadi, 2019, p. 11)

Despite the peace treaties signed by neighboring countries with Israel, such as Egypt and Jordan followed by the fall of Syria and Iraq, Actually this led to reducing the traditional security challenges resulting from Arab hostility size against Israel, Expect in light of the Arab Spring uprisings and of the Arab regimes fall that witnessed the second phase of transformation of the strategic environments, that led to the emergence of stronger smaller factions and ineffective groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas, which posing a new and different security risks to Israel. (Rodman, 2019)

The Arab uprisings in the Arab Spring caused many changes in the strategic environments. In a case study conducted by Muhammad Badry Eid on the impact extent of internal political changes on Israeli military doctrine in light of the Arab Spring uprisings 2011 which is a critical period of transformation that cannot be skipped, the results revealed that the Arab uprisings changed the structure of security threats and risks, affecting the Israel's military doctrine , It had a direct long-term impact on the overall regional strategic environment.

The Arab uprisings created an unstable Middle Eastern strategic environment, which affected Israel's security. There are also some challenges arising from the uprisings that may lead to a shift in doctrine, some of which is the Israel loss of regional allies, given Syria's geographical location north of Israel Iran's presence in the country under the pretext of supporting the Syrian regime poses a threat to Israel itself. Furthermore, the emergence of new leaders following the fall of the previous regimes' presidents would make it difficult to restore strong relations and friendships between those countries and Israel, which were previously strained due to fear of retaliation, the uprisings also have changed the regional balance of power. (Eid, 2019)

Over the decades, there have been many changes to the components of the Israeli military doctrine due to changes in the strategic environment, starting with traditional wars such as the Arab Israeli-war in 1967 and 1973 wars, the Palestinian Intifada and wars against Hezbollah in Lebanon, leading to the Arab uprisings and emergence of unconventional wars, such as the increase in the probability of strange military strikes as a result of the political Islam arrival in light of the Arab Spring, as well as the expansion of the Syrian opposition into many areas of the regime which allowed Russia and Iran to put their military weight to insure survival of the Assad regime. (Eid, 2019)

However, the components of the military doctrine expanded over decades to include:

1) **Deterrence**: to prevent opponents from waging any open wars against Israel and defeating opponents with the least amount of human losses.
2) **Early warning**: refers to warning the military leadership of any possible attack as soon as possible.
3) **Adversary**: refers to the importance of punishing enemies and preventing them from threatening Israel's security once again. (transferring the battle to the enemy's territory is considered one of the strategies of this component)
4) **Offensive war of maneuver.**
5) **Priority is always for short wars:** to reduce the possibility of external forces intervention militarily and diplomatically to put pressure on Israel (the use of political term strategy).
6) **Great powers sponsorship** : is an essential element that serves the deterrence component. Such as Israel's currently relationship with the United States .

Israel's military doctrine objective :

The basic Objective of Israel's doctrine is to serve Israeli's security interests, Actually Israel's military doctrine is an essential tool for achieving many goals, including:

1) Ensuring the State of Israel survival
2) Protecting Israel's citizens and territorial integrity
3) Preserving Israel's values and national character.
4) Preserving Israel's social and economic strength as a developed country.
5) Strengthening Israel's international and regional standing.
6) Seeking to achieve peace with neighboring countries.

Isael's military doctrine evolving during environmental changes :

The strategic level could be considered as cornerstone of military doctrine. Therefore, military strategy is an integral part of the doctrine, which in turn enhances nation's political goals achievement . This is through its important role in defining doctrine's goals, ensuring doctrine's adaptability and scalability according to changing circumstances, Maintaining logistical support, military coordination, Ensuring the implementation of military operations in the right time and place, coordination between allies and partners at the international level regarding a wide range of naval, air, and land military activities, in addition to technology and cyber security in order to avoid any failure in doctrine. (Tianliang, Science of military strategy , 2020)

Owing to the military strategy flexibility, it can smoothly develops to be adapted with strategic environments changes. However, The Israeli military strategy has experienced many changes and developments in order to be adapted to strategic environments changes, especially in the military fields of land, air, naval, and special forces, in addition to the cyber security technology fields.

- **Military Ground strategy**

Israel has demonstrated its ability to effectively address conventional military challenges, showcasing the flexibility and adaptability of its military doctrine. However, navigating non-strategic environments presents a multifaceted challenge. Formative experiences gleaned from conflicts such as the Second Lebanon War in 2006 and the Cast Lead War in 2008 have profoundly influenced Israel's ground military strategy, particularly in response to the emergence of hybrid warfare involving non-state actors and terrorist organizations.

The "Merkava tanks" serve as linchpins within the Israeli Defense Forces, particularly at the tactical level. An in-depth examination of their role in contemporary and hybrid warfare illuminates the evolution of Israel's military strategy. Following the suboptimal performance of Merkava tanks during the Second Lebanon War, the IDF embarked on structural reforms and the integration of advanced weapon systems to better align with the exigencies of modern conflicts, notably those involving Hezbollah and Hamas. Recognizing the necessity for a comprehensive approach encompassing combined arms tactics, especially in challenging terrains, enhancements were made to Merkava armored vehicles, including reinforced armor, radar and laser detection systems, and the adoption of sophisticated ammunition like the Kalanit 120-mm shell and the Hatzav 120-mm shell. These adaptations were aimed at enhancing the vehicle's resilience against anti-tank threats. The refinement of the Israeli Defense Forces' organizational structure yielded tangible results during Operation Cast Lead in 2008, underscoring the effective assimilation of lessons learned from prior conflicts. Subsequent iterations of military strategy and force structure development further underscored Israel's capacity for adaptation and flexibility, exemplified by Operation Protective Edge in 2014. In this context, the upgraded Merkava tanks, equipped with the Trophy Active Protection System, played a pivotal role in securing urban perimeters and tunnel networks. These advancements, coupled with comprehensive post-conflict assessments, underscore Israel's ongoing commitment to refining its military capabilities in response to evolving threats. (Kim, 2016)

In the foreseeable future, adversaries are anticipated to persist in employing underground warfare or tunnel warfare to exploit the vulnerabilities of conventional forces, Despite the longstanding historical precedent of ground warfare. Notably, in the context of World War II, the conflict between the United States and Japan in the Pacific theater witnessed significant casualties among American forces due to tunnel warfare tactics. However, underground warfare is undergoing strategic evolutions, increasingly embraced by non-state actors and terrorist entities, thereby amplifying its threat to global security . (Daphné Richemond-Barak and Stefan Voiculescu-Holvad, 2023)

Given the complexities posed by underground warfare, the Israeli military doctrine has sought to implement countermeasures commensurate with contemporary threats. As Israel has superior capabilities in finding tunnels. This is due to its development of specialized units such as the Yahalom unit, which specializes in dealing with secret wars and its possession of the latest radars, sensors and other modern systems, in addition to munitions capable of penetrating the ground and explosives that help it find tunnels.

However, addressing the fiscal challenges associated with hybrid warfare against Hamas is anticipated to necessitate considerable time and resources, particularly given the disparate geographical contexts of each conflict scenario. Effective engagement in asymmetric warfare demands specialized capabilities adaptable to diverse terrains and circumstances. Consequently, the military doctrine will persist in refining its strategic, operational, and tactical frameworks to ensure adaptability to evolving exigencies, informed by comprehensive analyses of present

conditions to inform future force structure development. (Spencer, UNDERGROUND NIGHTMARE: HAMAS TUNNELS AND THE WICKED PROBLEM FACING THE IDF, 2023)

- **Air Force Strategy**

The Israeli Air Force has played a crucial role in ensuring the nation's survival and achieving victory. With each battle, the reliance on air power grows, alongside advancements in military tactics and technology.

While air power may be perceived as crude due to its destructive nature, it remains a potent tool for the IDF. It enables the strict enforcement of deterrence and offers protection to Israeli ground forces, thus minimizing soldier casualties. The Israeli Air Force has demonstrated its effectiveness in conventional warfare, notably during the 1967 conflict with the Egyptian Air Force. This success highlights the adaptability and rapid development of Israeli military doctrine through learning from past setbacks. (Carter, John R., 1998)

In light of shifting strategic landscapes, there is a pressing need for continued development in force structure and doctrine. In irregular warfare, ineffective actors or terrorists often exploit urban and densely populated areas deliberately. This necessitates countries to strategically employ air power as a primary force against them, albeit to a limited extent. (Major General Amikam Norkin and Abraham Katsman, 2023)

As gathering intelligence is crucial for air force success, Israel has embraced the development of air force strategy through technological advancements and innovative tactics aimed at guiding precise air strikes. Among these strategies, the utilization of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) stands out. These UAVs are equipped with various sensor options and radar systems, allowing for effective intelligence gathering through battlefield surveillance and reconnaissance. This enables timely and accurate information dissemination to both ground and air forces. Additionally, arming these vehicles with combat weapons reduces pilot exposure to risks, thus enhancing operational effectiveness. Among the most significant examples of advanced UAVs are the Heron TP UAV, Hermes 450 UAV, and Hermes 900 UAV. (RUSI, 2018)

Aside from drones, Israel possesses a range of exclusive fighter aircraft, including the American-manufactured F-35, F-16, and F-15 models. These aircraft contribute to making the Israeli Air Force one of the most formidable globally, primarily due to their capability to execute long-range attack missions without refueling. Over the years, these aircraft have undergone continuous development and enhancement, adapting their defense capabilities to meet evolving military objectives. The latest addition to this fleet is the F-35A variant. (Brower, 2018)

Considering the ongoing wars and threats, as well as the insights gained from past experiences and future projections, it is anticipated that the Israeli Air Force will undergo substantial expansion. This growth will be facilitated by plans to enhance the capabilities of Israeli domestic production,

aiming for self-sufficiency. Additionally, financial strategies will be implemented to procure advanced helicopters and aircraft, including an increase in the acquisition of combat aircraft such as the F-35 and upgraded F-15 models, along with expanding the stock of air ammunition.

- **Navy Military strategy**

The Israeli coastline, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, holds significant geopolitical significance due to its strategic positioning amidst essential Israeli infrastructure. It hosts five water desalination facilities, crucial for providing fresh water, alongside marine rigs facilitating the delivery of natural gas to the shore. This gas is subsequently utilized in power plants to generate electricity. Moreover, a vast majority of vital imports arrive in Israel via the Mediterranean Sea. Notably, the discovery of substantial gas reserves between 2009 and 2012 has paved the way for Israel's potential self-sufficiency and even export capabilities. Anticipated trends suggest a growing reliance on the Mediterranean Sea for Israel in the years ahead. (Petrakis, 2019)

Hence, safeguarding the Mediterranean shoreline holds paramount significance, compelling Israel to devise naval military tactics and guarantee optimal maritime defense. Indeed, the Israeli Navy stands as a cornerstone of strategic prowess, playing a central role in bolstering the Israeli military doctrine. Israel has demonstrated its capacity to counter conventional naval adversaries, exemplified by its decisive triumph in the 1973 Battle of Latakia, employing electronic warfare techniques. This victory underscores the efficacy and adaptability of the military doctrine in crisis situations. Nevertheless, the strategic landscape has undergone substantial transformation with the rise of new security challenges, including non-state actors and terrorist organizations. Particularly concerning is the potential possession of weaponry by these groups capable of posing threats to offshore drilling platforms. Hence, there arose a necessity to evolve the Israeli naval military strategy to effectively address contemporary shifts. Moreover, the Second Lebanon War in 2006 serves as a poignant catalyst for refining military doctrine based on invaluable lessons gleaned from that experience. (Labbin, 2023)

In past conventional naval conflicts, Israel adhered to a blue water strategy, typically emphasizing operations in deep oceans, power projection, and long-range endeavors. This approach entailed asserting control over extensive sea lanes through naval patrols, safeguarding vital shipping routes, and exerting maritime influence across significant distances. However, a discernible shift is now apparent. The transition and evolution of the Israeli naval strategy towards embracing a brown water approach are evident. Unlike the blue water strategy, the brown water strategy concentrates on coastal regions and inland waterways, aligning closely with its primary objectives: defense, coastal protection, piracy deterrence, and ground force support. This refined brown water strategy facilitates seamless threat coordination across air, sea, and land branches, enabling automatic sharing of information based on the branch that first detects the target. (Labbin, 2023)

And to support this advanced strategy, the Megan project stands out as a key initiative embraced by the Israeli Naval Forces, exemplifying cutting-edge military doctrine. A prime illustration of this is the acquisition of the German-manufactured Sa'ar 6 class warships, which significantly bolster the defensive capabilities of the Israeli Navy. These vessels, notable for their size and equipped with the IAI-Elta radar system, greatly enhance threat detection capabilities, spanning enemy missiles, defense systems, and projectiles.

Moreover, the system encompasses electronic warfare functionalities and will feature 76 mm cannons alongside multiple weapons stations. Israel further strives for 95% of the sophisticated defense systems integrated into naval vessels to be domestically produced, underscoring the doctrine's commitment to self-reliance. Moreover, the contemporary Sa'ar 6-class warships are poised to serve as a virtual bulwark amidst present-day threats, particularly in their capability to seamlessly share data with ground and air forces, thus enhancing coordination and response efficiency. (Lappin b. Y., 2021)

Given the prevailing advancements, it is anticipated that the Israeli Navy will transition towards a combat doctrine tailored to address contemporary regional threats and anticipate future challenges. Its pivotal role will encompass engaging with adversaries and swiftly identifying targets. Moreover, integration of state technology is foreseen to be paramount in aligning strategy with anticipated scenarios, ensuring preparedness for evolving circumstances.

- **Cyber Defense strategy**

In today's world, with ongoing conflicts and evolving strategic landscapes, cyberspace has gained significant importance alongside traditional fields. including state actors and non-state actors such as terrorist groups, have leveraged cyberspace, presenting new challenges to military strategies worldwide.

Annually, the Israeli Defense Forces encounter numerous cyber-attacks aimed at compromising their defenses, systems, and computer networks. These attacks encompass a range of military activities, both covert and operational, posing significant security threats and undermining critical military capabilities. For instance, in 2020, Ben Gurion Airport experienced cyber-attacks that significantly disrupted flights to Israel, posing sensitive security risks. Israel also grapples with concerns over potentially harmful cyber elements in weapons manufactured abroad, This includes American aircraft and German-made warships, prompting the IDF to conduct decontamination measures post-delivery. (Charles D. Freilich, Matthew S. Cohen, and Gabi Siboni, 2023)

However, Israel recognizes the significance of early investment and advancement in cyberspace and has demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach through successful implementation of its doctrine. A notable illustration is Operation Orchard in 2007, where Israel uncovered collaborative efforts between Syria and North Korea aimed at developing nuclear weapons in Syria, posing a

grave security concern. In response, Israel swiftly deployed numerous combat and modern electronic warfare aircraft. Leveraging these electronic warfare capabilities, Israel successfully neutralized the nuclear facilities, in order to protect its security interests. (GROSS, 2018)

Nevertheless, Studies have indicated a direct correlation between cyberattacks on Israel and escalating military tensions. As tensions increase, there's a corresponding rise in the frequency of cyberattacks. This trend was evident during the major conflicts between Israel and Hamas in 2009, 2012, and 2014. Consequently, the Israeli Defense Forces continue to refine their cyberspace defense strategies, recognizing that cyber threats can emanate from both state actors like Iran and non-state actors like Hamas and Hezbollah. (CURTIS E. LEMAY CENTER for doctrine development and education)
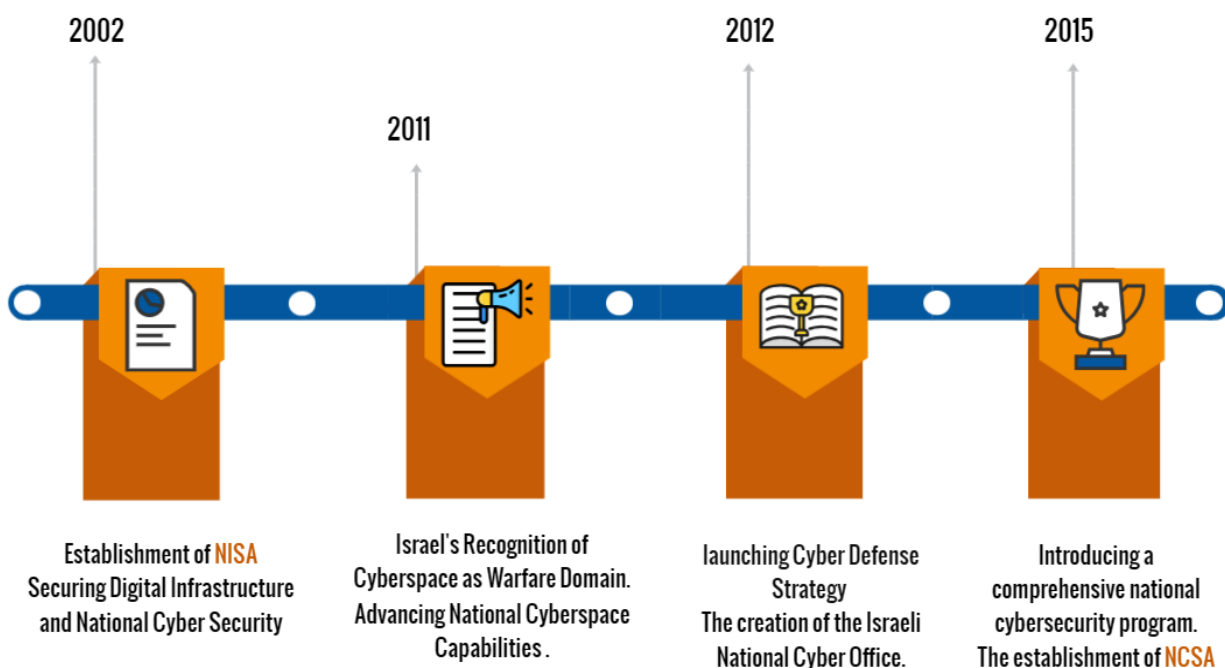
However, Israel recognized early on the significance of investing in cybersecurity and underwent various stages of development to craft adaptable strategies for every evolving scenario. Despite the increasing pace of global cyberattacks, Israel established the National Information Security Authority (NISA) in 2002. This authority's mission is to coordinate defense efforts against cyberattacks, safeguard Israel's infrastructure, and pursue ongoing research and development of strategic security defense strategies.

In 2011, Israel made an official declaration recognizing cyberspace as a new domain of warfare, highlighting the critical need for the development of defense strategies against cyber-attacks, particularly in light of evolving battlegrounds alongside the escalating threats and advancements in technology. This announcement has led to the prioritization of bolstering scientific and technological cybersecurity capabilities. This entails a focus on research and development, as well as fortifying the national science and technology infrastructure in the realm of cyberspace.

In 2012, as a response, Israel initiated the development of its Cyber Defense Strategy. This strategy saw the establishment of the Israeli National Cyber Office, which aimed to enhance cybersecurity efforts by centralizing coordination, fostering information exchange among stakeholders, and fostering innovation in the cybersecurity domain. Progress in Israeli cybersecurity persisted, leading to a pivotal decision in 2015 to launch a comprehensive national cybersecurity program.

This program aimed to bolster Israel's defensive capabilities against cyber threats, improve coordination among government agencies, private sectors, and infrastructure sectors, and advance specialized research in cybersecurity defense strategies. The primary objective of this decision is for Israel to assert itself as a global leader in cybersecurity and to fortify the security of its infrastructure.

In line with the evolving landscape and advancements in Israeli space security strategies, the establishment of the National Center for Cyber Security (NCSA) ensued. This center represents an evolution of prior strategies, aimed at refining and enhancing efforts to defend against cyberattacks with greater precision and efficacy. (PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE NATIONAL CYBER DIRECTORATE, 2017)

2002 — Establishment of NISA Securing Digital Infrastructure and National Cyber Security

2011 — Israel's Recognition of Cyberspace as Warfare Domain. Advancing National Cyberspace Capabilities .

2012 — launching Cyber Defense Strategy The creation of the Israeli National Cyber Office.

2015 — Introducing a comprehensive national cybersecurity program. The establishment of NCSA

This timeline of continuous development underscores the validity of the Israeli military doctrine and its notable flexibility and adaptability. Despite significant efforts, Israeli cyber defense encounters ongoing challenges, particularly due to the dynamic nature of evolving battlefields and strategic environments. Nevertheless, Israel is poised to enhance its cyber defense capabilities, ensuring the fulfillment of national security interests and the protection of critical infrastructure. This progress is anticipated to stem from continued innovation in the field of cybersecurity.

Israel's Current Regional Challenges

Presently, Isael's military doctrine is confronted with two main challenges that could represents a potential threat to its national security.

I.   Iran's process of obtaining nuclear capabilities

The Iranian nuclear program consider as a major concern for Israel today. Israel sees a nuclear-armed Iran as a direct threat to its security and survival. Iran's pursuit of nuclear capabilities aims to assert its dominance in the Middle East. Additionally, Iran supports terrorist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, potentially supplying them with nuclear weapons to target Israel. This poses a significant security risk to Israel, especially if these groups engage in proxy wars on Iran's behalf. This situation not only poses an existential threat to Israel but also alters the strategic balance in the Middle East. Although the nuclear deal with major powers, mainly the United States, reduced the threat, America's recent withdrawal raises concerns about its effectiveness. Israel needs to keep a close eye on Iran's actions and continue engaging in dialogue and cooperation with major powers to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons. This involves supporting international sanctions, particularly those imposed by the United States and the global community. (Eldadi, 2019, p. 21)

It's expected that Israel will strengthen its defenses to stop and protect itself from any potential danger in the future. Since reaching an agreement with Iran to halt uranium enrichment seems improbable, it's crucial to negotiate a fair deal that limits such activities and shuts down facilities like Fordow, while also ensuring effective monitoring. This approach is reinforced to prevent military action against Iran. (Jalal, 2023)

The recent Iranian attack on Israel on April 13, 2024, marks a significant shift in global dynamics. This event demonstrates a changing landscape in both strategic environments and battlefields. Despite this, Israel has showcased its military prowess and the effectiveness of its defense strategies. Through advancements in missile defense systems, including anti-aircraft drones and ballistic missile interception technology, Israel successfully intercepted around 95% of the attack. This success underscores the effectiveness of its doctrine and its ongoing development. However, Israel and its allies should not assume lasting safety. Given the rapidly shifting strategic landscapes, Israel faces heightened threats, particularly from terrorist groups backed by Iran. These groups engage in proxy warfare across multiple regions, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and militias in Iraq and Yemen.

As Iran advances its potential to acquire nuclear weapons, the threat to security escalates. Hence, Israel should persist in refining its military strategies and collaborating with allies to enhance deterrence. Embracing the concept of deterrence through punitive measures may suit the present scenario better. This approach entails imposing significant costs on adversaries and prioritizing retaliatory actions against key targets. (Jacob Nagel & Mark Dubowitz, 2024)

II. **The continuation of the Palestinian conflict and negative impacts resulting from the conflict .**

The relationship between Israel and Palestine brings many difficulties for Israel's military doctrine. The ongoing conflict between them creates problems both domestically and globally. It also poses a long-term challenge for Israel's goal of staying both democratic and Jewish, as the conflict involves regional, national, religious, and cultural aspects. However It's important to mention that the closeness of Israel and Palestine makes the Palestinian conflict a constant and real threat. Israel's military strategy aims to protect national security interests, through: maintaining Israel's Jewish and democratic identity, establishing recognized international borders, fostering moderate Palestinian leadership that seeks political harmony with Israel, preventing Palestinian territories from becoming hubs for anti-Israeli terrorism, safeguarding airspace from hostile actions, nurturing positive relations with the Arab world, lessening Palestinian reliance on Israel, and building strong alliances with neighboring nations like Jordan. These guidelines outlined in the Israeli military doctrine aim to advance national interests. (Eldadi, 2019)

Recently, the events of October 7 serve as a test to assess the recent developments in Israeli military doctrine, particularly regarding positions on military deterrence, intelligence assessment for early warning, and the feasibility of self-sufficiency and ongoing security strategies. This evaluation provides a solid starting point for formulating security hypotheses and perceptions. To ensure a future that aligns with the demands of the modern era and draws from past lessons, it's crucial to adapt doctrinal strategies to current circumstances. This involves studying the latest activities of terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah, recognizing that battlefields and strategic environments are dynamic elements requiring constant updates and security solutions. (Levite, 2024)

Evaluation and Adaptability of Doctrinal Solutions of Neighboring States and Great Powers (NATO, Russia, USA, China).

Aspect of Military Doctrine	NATO	Russia	USA	China
Emphasis	▪ Collective defense. ▪ Crisis management. ▪ Cooperative security.	▪ Strategic deterrence. ▪ Regional dominance. ▪ Asymmetric warfare.	▪ Global superiority through advanced technology. ▪ Power projection. ▪ Rapid deployment.	▪ Strategic deterrence. ▪ Regional power projection. ▪ Asymmetric warfare.
Recent Adaptation	▪ Cybersecurity. ▪ Hybrid warfare. ▪ Integration of new member states.	▪ Incorporation of hybrid warfare tactics. ▪ Modernization of military forces.	▪ Emphasis on counterinsurgency. ▪ Cyber warfare. ▪ Space operations. ▪ Alliances with NATO and partners.	▪ Rapid modernization, integration of advanced technology. ▪ Asymmetric warfare tactics.
Approach to Technology	▪ Emphasis on interoperability. ▪ Joint operations. ▪ Integration of new technologies.	▪ Modernization of nuclear forces. ▪ Development of strategic weapons. ▪ Focus on cyber capabilities.	▪ Development of new warfare domains (cyber, space). ▪ Technological advancements.	▪ Integration of artificial intelligence. ▪ Advanced technology in military strategies.
Geopolitical Focus	▪ European and transatlantic security. ▪ Cooperation with allies.	▪ Near abroad influence (Ukraine, Syria). ▪ Countering NATO's influence.	▪ Global operations. ▪ Strategic alliances (NATO, others). ▪ Cooperation with partners.	▪ Regional dominance (South China Sea). ▪ Challenging US influence in Asia-Pacific.
Adaptability	▪ Shift to address non-traditional threats. ▪ Inclusion of new member states. ▪ Rapid response forces.	▪ Integration of hybrid warfare tactics. ▪ Military modernization. ▪ strategic flexibility.	▪ Emphasis on technological advancements. ▪ Global responsiveness. ▪ Strategic agility.	▪ Rapid modernization. ▪ Adaptability in integrating advanced technologies. ▪ Flexibility in strategic responses.

Conclusion

Military doctrine is like a roadmap for a country's armed forces. It lays out the important ideas that guide how military units work together to achieve the goals of the nation. It covers everything from big-picture strategies to day-to-day tactics. The main job of military doctrine is to keep the country safe and protect its sovereignty. (Spencer, WHAT IS ARMY DOCTRINE?, 2017) The main aims of Israel's military doctrine are to keep the country safe, protect its people and territory, uphold its values and national identity, and boost its strength at home and abroad. It also focuses on building good relationships with neighboring countries for security. Over time, Israel's military strategy has evolved, mainly due to ongoing tensions with Arab neighbors and traditional warfare tactics. Despite challenges, Israel has shown the effectiveness of its military approach through past victories and peace agreements, such as those with Egypt and Jordan. (Eid, 2019)

However, shifts in the strategic landscape led Israel to analyze the anticipated challenges from 2006 to 2016. This analysis eventually led to the formal announcement of its modern military doctrine. The Arab uprisings marked a significant change in the strategic environment, introducing security threats that endangered Israel. These uprisings contributed to instability across the Middle East region, prompting Israel to reassess its security posture. (Eldadi, 2019)

It worth to mention the importance of doctrine's military strategy which plays a vital role within its framework. Israel's ability to adjust its military strategy has facilitated its smooth evolution to address ongoing changes, particularly in land, air, naval, and space security domains. For instance, the adaptation of Merkava tanks, fundamental to the Israeli Defense Forces, illustrates this flexibility. The enhancements made to these tanks have yielded tangible outcomes, showcasing the adaptability of the military doctrine. Israel remains dedicated to enhancing its military capabilities in response to evolving threats, particularly in terms of land strategy. (Kim, 2016) Moreover, tunnel o underground warfare has been recognized as a significant threat, while tunnel warfare is not a new phenomenon, the shift from traditional to hybrid warfare has increased the risks associated with tunnel warfare, particularly when utilized by terrorist groups like Hamas. (Daphné Richemond-Barak and Stefan Voiculescu-Holvad, 2023)

In addition, to support the advancement of Israeli military strategies, Israel boasts cutting-edge fighter aircraft like the F-13, F-16, and F-35, which contribute to its status as one of the world's most formidable air forces. Furthermore, its naval defense capabilities have been bolstered with advanced German warships, such as the Sa'ar 6 class, equipped with Israeli security defense systems, making up 95% of its construction to serve as an exclusive defensive asset. Israel's military doctrine has demonstrated its adaptability by seamlessly integrating updates to traditional military strategies. Additionally, Israel has emerged as a global leader in modern areas, notably space security, through the implementation of strategies aimed at enhancing defense against ongoing cyber threats. (PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE NATIONAL CYBER DIRECTORATE, 2017)

Regarding the current challenges, Israel is currently facing two main challenges: Iran's process of obtaining nuclear weapons and the Palestinian issue, both of which are considered a threat to Israeli national security. Since the military doctrine is characterized by flexibility and adaptation, it is expected that the Israeli military doctrine will witness further development based on the lessons learned from previous experiences and studies on current situations. (Eldadi, 2019)

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