
EVOLUTION OF ISRAELI WARFARE TACTICS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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ABSTRACT

The State of Israel has historically experimented with a vast range of military tactics to strengthen its position in the Middle East. This study highlights the relationship between military innovation, geopolitical changes, and strategic recalibrations as it critically analyses the development of Israeli warfare tactics in the Middle East from the state's establishment to the present. This study, which is based on the Defensive Realism theoretical framework, shows how Israel's early conventional warfare—which was intended to help the country survive in the face of hostile neighbours—gradually gave way to asymmetric and hybrid tactics meant to preserve regional supremacy. The paper examines how Israel has responded to changing threats from both state and non-state actors by thoroughly examining significant military operations and technological advancements, such as targeted assassinations, cyberwarfare, artificial intelligence (AI) in Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), and the incorporation of unmanned aerial systems. From the fundamentals of Israeli deterrence and the "security dilemma" to the tactical change towards precision attacks and preemptive operations against organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah, the debates take place throughout five subject areas. Particular focus is placed on how Israeli warfare has changed in the twenty-first century thanks to ISR systems, AI-powered decision-making, and cyber operations—tools that have had a big impact on battlefield results in Gaza,

Lebanon, and other places. The ethical, legal, and strategic ramifications of these approaches are also examined in the article, especially in light of current humanitarian situations and changing global attitudes.

KEYWORDS

Israeli Military Strategy, Asymmetric Warfare, Cyber Operations, ISR Technology, Defensive Realism, Gaza, Hezbollah, Artificial Intelligence, Regional Conflict.

INTRODUCTION

A number of interconnected phenomena define the Israeli-Palestinian context as we move into 2025: ongoing Israeli and Palestinian casualties; political unrest in Israel; a factional struggle for control of Palestinian popular politics; the destruction of the Palestinian territory, economy and a lesser but still detrimental corrosion of the Israeli economy; and public attitudes on both sides, characterized by the idea of "tactical hawks, strategic doves," but with trends indicating a concerning decline in support for peaceful solutions. Professional militaries have long been concerned about the threat of urban operations. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were unable to shift the risk to a partner force when Hamas launched an armed offensive on Israel on October 7, 2023, killing civilians and capturing over 250 captives. The IDF decided to launch a swift combined arms attack into dense urban territory that had been heavily fortified by Hamas to sustain protracted defensive operations in response to the concurrent and more serious threat posed by Hezbollah on Israel's northern border. Additionally, the attack took place in an area under close international attention and populated by a sizable civilian population that opposed the IDF's presence.

Since the IDF is a contemporary military that utilizes a variety of new technologies, its actions are worth examining to determine how Israeli military strategies have changed throughout the years of Israeli occupation in the Middle East. This paper attempts to highlight the historical context of Israeli warfare tactics in the Middle East and a comparative analysis of Israeli tactics versus regional powers. Additionally, this paper attempts to analyze the issues that have prompted tactical adaptation in the field and to highlight tactical lessons that are more broadly applicable.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Through the use of secondary data sources including scholarly research papers and newspaper articles, this methodology describes a qualitative way to investigate the development of Israeli fighting tactics in the Middle East. The primary goal of this research is to understand how these strategies have changed over time in response to shifting geopolitical conditions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the history of Israeli warfare since its inception, and how has the state's military tactics become technologically advanced?
2. What is the role of Great Powers in weaponization of Israel during its conflict with its neighbouring states?
3. How has the evolution of Israeli warfare tactics impacted the Middle East?

TECHNIQUES FOR GATHERING DATA

A thorough analysis of academic publications, research papers, and articles will be done in order to learn more about the history and strategies of the Israeli military. To find pertinent literature, key databases (such as JSTOR and Google Scholar) will be reviewed. To gather current narratives and public opinions about Israeli military tactics, recent newspaper stories from prominent publications (such as The New York Times and Al Jazeera) will be examined. The mentioned resources are to be utilized as secondary sources of data for this research paper.

RELEVANT THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Realism: Realism highlights the importance of state authority and the chaotic character of the international system. According to this idea, Israel's military tactics are reactions to perceived dangers from both non-state actors and its neighbours.

Constructivism: This school of thought emphasizes how social identities and structures influence state behavior. This theory can be used to examine how Israeli military strategies have changed over time and are influenced by national identity and historical narratives.

Deterrence: The idea of deterrence looks at how governments employ the threat of reprisal to stop hostile acts by their enemies. This is especially important to comprehend Israel's strategic approach to its neighbors and extremist organizations.

DISCUSSION

THE ARAB ISRELI WAR

Israel's early security philosophy was massively influenced by an existential perspective, which saw military defeat as a possible extermination of the Jewish people rather than just a strategic setback. It was developed during the 1948 War of Independence. In order to unite military command and social cohesiveness, this existential framing led to a style of warfare that placed a high priority on quick, centralized mobilization, civilian participation in defense, and the establishment of a formalized national military apparatus—the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Arab governments, on the other hand, tackled the same struggle with disjointed military formations and regionally scattered command methods that were influenced more by nationalist or pan-Arab motives that lacked coherence in execution than by existential urgency (Alpher, 1994).

While Arab nations like Egypt, Syria, and Iraq started the 1948 war with professional armies but were unable to coordinate under a single command, Israel quickly transformed from a collection of paramilitary formations into a centrally commanded military force. The existential urgency that characterized Israeli strategy was absent from their goals, which were primarily to assert regional supremacy and thwart the creation of a Jewish state. Their efforts consequently suffered from logistical issues, ambiguous objectives, and political rivalry. As an illustration of strategic conservatism and a lack of unified Pan-Arab command, the Jordanian Arab Legion, after receiving extensive British training, restricted its actions to regions set out for the Arab state under the UN Partition Plan.

Moreover, Israel exhibited a degree of complete societal mobilization that is lacking in Arab regimes by involving its civilian population in the war effort through emergency volunteering, mandatory military service, and municipal defense programs like the Civil Guard. Civilians' involvement in the war effort was mainly passive in Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, while internal political conflicts or unstable monarchies broke the country's solidarity behind the conflict.

Israeli strategies were also distinguished by the idea of territory defense. During this early phase, Israel concentrated extensively on defensive strongholds, such as kibbutzim and settlements, which served as both tactical and symbolic barriers to enemy advance, rather than moving into enemy territory. In contrast, Arab nations adopted traditional offensive tactics, frequently lacking the infrastructure necessary

to support longer-term incursions or oversee lengthy conflicts in hostile environments. The strategic value of fusing public defense with military maneuvering was demonstrated by Israel's use of settlements as mobile defense hubs, which provided significant operational depth and halted the advance of larger Arab troops.

Ultimately, Israel's 1948 military strategy included strategic centralization, grassroots militarization, and ideological urgency. Israel's organizational coherence, adaptability, and existential drive were superior to those of the Arab states, despite their numerical and material superiority in many ways. Israel's distinct stance as a militarized state ready for survival through innovation and social mobilization—elements that would later develop into more asymmetric and technologically advanced strategies—was established by these fundamental contrasts. This phenomenon would continue to influence the dynamics of regional conflicts.

ISRAEL'S SHIFT FROM DEFENSIVE TERRITORIAL PRIORITIES TO A PRE-EMPTIVE DOCTRINE

Israel's transition from a territorially defensive stance in 1948 to an assertive, proactive policy by 1967 denotes a fundamental change in strategy and mentality. This shift sets the state apart from its Arab neighbours' reactive and frequently disjointed military measures. Israel's focus on protecting settlements during the War of Independence, despite the enormous human and material costs, demonstrated how it combined military usefulness with symbolic nationalism. Settlements were forward defense sites as well as civilian areas, signifying both a tactical and a psychological claim to the territory. The Arab military philosophies of the time, which frequently saw territory through a more conventional lens, had no direct equivalent to this "flag-in-the-ground" principle. They saw it as a location to be conquered or regained through state-driven military power, not held through grassroots resilience.

The Six-Day War was when the shift in Israeli doctrine was most noticeable. Israel adopted the theory of preemption, striking first not just to stop enemy aggression but also to take strategic initiative and quickly obtain a military edge. Israel acted in contrast to Arab militaries, whose troop deployments in 1967 were reactive and slow. Arab forces, who frequently prioritized defensive postures or waited for external provocation to justify engagement, rarely displayed the operational coordination and risk tolerance that Israel's preemptive airstrikes, which destroyed

the Egyptian and Syrian air forces in a matter of hours, demonstrated. Egypt's air force, for instance, demonstrated the weakness of traditional military reasoning when confronted with asymmetric temporal and technological superiority after being caught off guard on the ground.

Furthermore, Israeli strategy grew heavily reliant on air superiority, which was a relatively undeveloped aspect of Arab strategy. Egypt and Syria had large ground forces, but they invested less in air defense and air power, both in terms of technology and policy. By making the Israeli Air Force the cornerstone of its operational strategy, Israel, on the other hand, revolutionized contemporary warfare in the area. It used air superiority to secure supply lines, enable swift ground advances, and influence conflict results even before infantry fought (Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024).

The 1967 territorial gains allowed Israel to implement its "defense in depth" tactic, which established a buffer zone that provided strategic breathing room against potential invasions. Arab governments, especially Egypt and Syria, doubled down on conventional military buildups and interstate alliances (like the final coordination seen in the 1973 Yom Kippur War) because they saw these territorial losses as political humiliations rather than strategic disasters. Nevertheless, this tactic continued to rely on conventional massed force doctrines, which lacked the air-ground coordination, intelligence integration, and agility that defined Israeli planning.

A shift in foreign policy stance was also signaled by Israel's military confidence following the Six-Day War. In contrast to Arab leaderships, who remained reactive due to fragmented command structures, ideological differences (such as between monarchies and republics), and internal instability, Israeli generals and politicians increasingly saw regional deterrence as a matter of dominance rather than balance. The dynamics of Middle Eastern conflict would be defined for decades to come by this disparity in tactical culture, with Arab regimes frequently limited by wider political fragmentation and Israel favouring quick, decisive action based on elite military preparation.

CONTRAST BETWEEN ISRAELI WARFARE TACTICS AND ITS ARAB COUNTERPARTS IN THE YOM KIPPUR WAR

To recuperate from the humiliation of 1967, the Arab military, especially those of Egypt and Syria, launched a surprise, concerted offensive during the Yom Kippur

War in 1973, which represented a major turnaround of battlefield initiative. Israel's strategic position had serious flaws that this conflict exposed, the most prominent among them being an excessive dependence on the psychological deterrence of prior successes and a faulty perception of invincibility. Israel was taken by surprise when its early warning and intelligence systems failed to identify the scope and timing of Arab mobilization, which stands in sharp contrast to the 1967 preemptive approach. This intelligence failure showed that Arab states had improved their ability to hide their operational goals, and was contradictory to their prior prowess in predicting threats.

During this conflict, the Arab policy itself changed. The simultaneous, two-front assault—with Egypt crossing the Suez Canal and Syria moving into the Golan Heights—represented a level of coordinated planning and operational discipline never before seen in Arab conflicts, where coordination was poor and tactical execution was disjointed. This was in contrast to previous Arab military actions, which were either postponed, fragmented, or subject to political restrictions. The Arab forces, especially Egypt under Sadat, who was strategically trying to reopen discussions for the restoration of the Sinai, essentially preferred modest territorial gains rather than the destruction of Israel to strengthen their negotiating position. Israel, on the other hand, had to change from a deterrent dominance posture to one of reactive adaptation. The IDF's early struggles on both fronts highlighted the drawbacks of relying heavily on air superiority without integrated infantry support. As opposed to the Six-Day War's blitz-style victories, the IDF now had to fight in sustained combined-arms combat, adjusting tactics on the fly while replenishing diminishing resources. Arab forces, especially Egypt's, demonstrated greater tactical discipline in the early going, successfully thwarting Israeli counterattacks with man-portable air-defense systems (MANPADS) and anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs), demonstrating a growing parity in battlefield technology and training. (Maoz, 2007)

The two sides also differed significantly in how they handled the strategic fallout from the war. For Israel, the conflict prompted a significant reexamination of doctrine, with intelligence no longer being seen as a supplementary tool but as a key component of national defense, leading to reforms in surveillance, human intelligence (HUMINT), and threat modelling. This investment in electronic intelligence and early-warning infrastructure differed with Arab states, where similar reforms were frequently thwarted by internal politics, bureaucratic inefficiencies, or overcentralized command structures.

Additionally, after 1973, diplomacy became a second pillar of Israeli military policy. A "security-through-superiority" mentality had been strengthened by earlier conflicts, but the Yom Kippur War's tremendous cost and existential threat made Israeli leadership realize that negotiated agreements were necessary for long-term stability. Syria and other rejectionist Arab nations, who still preferred military conflict to diplomatic compromise, stood in stark contrast to this. However, Egypt deviated from this pattern by turning towards peace and leveraging its legitimacy during the war to produce the 1978 Camp David Accords. Few other regional actors were willing to undertake the strategic pivot from military conquest to conditional disengagement, which Israel's acceptance of this process—which resulted in the restoration of the Sinai—signalized.

Israel's international and defense-industrial orientations were altered as well by the war. Israel established a strong strategic alliance with the United States, in contrast to Arab nations that mostly depended on Soviet assistance. Israel was able to update its arsenal and establish long-term ties that would influence the balance of power in the region thanks to the postwar U.S. airlift and increased military aid. Israel's acquisition of cutting-edge Western technology gave it a clear qualitative advantage even as both Arab and Israeli forces restocked their arsenals, highlighting the difference between Israeli agility and its enemies' frequently slower modernization cycles.

For both sides, the Yom Kippur War served as a testing ground. Despite a brief period of enhanced cooperation and tactical innovation, Arab states eventually failed to use diplomacy to turn victories on the battlefield into strategic leverage. Despite being unprepared at first, Israel showed institutional agility by responding to the battle by changing its ideology, intelligence system, and strategic partnerships. More than just military power, this flexibility served as the foundation for Israel's changing military strategy in the years following 1973.

ISRAEL'S MILITARY TACTICS IN THE CONTEXT OF LIC (Low Intensity Conflict)

A notable shift in military strategies may be seen in Israel's experience with Low-Intensity Conflict (LIC) from the 1980s onwards, particularly in reaction to non-state entities such as the PLO, Hezbollah, and subsequent Palestinian militant groups throughout the Intifadas. In contrast to the traditional state-versus-state conflicts of 1967 and 1973, LIC forced Israel to adjust to a more complex, drawn-out, and emotionally taxing kind of conflict. The state now had to contend with

dispersed, ideologically driven militants enmeshed in civilian populations rather than standing troops on open battlefields in this asymmetric warfare. This necessitated a drastic change from extensive offensive campaigns to counterterrorism operations, selective strikes, and civil-military control strategies. Israel's 1982 invasion of South Lebanon to destroy the PLO turned into a bloody guerrilla battle against Hezbollah. Hezbollah's rise presented a significant asymmetric obstacle. The rebel group deployed guerrilla tactics like suicide bombs, IEDs, and ambushes, which undermined Israel's military advantage, with the help of the local Shia population. The group successfully contested Israel's technology and firepower advantage by maintaining operational momentum and adaptability through the combination of local legitimacy and international support from Iran. Israel used airpower, artillery, and collective punitive measures, like curfews and demolitions, to deter Hezbollah's resistance in the early going, mirroring Cold War-era policies. But these strategies frequently backfired, alienating civilians trapped in the fighting and increasing sympathy for Hezbollah. Operation Accountability (1993) and Operation Grapes of Wrath (1996), Israel's attempts to quell insurrection, resulted in significant civilian losses and displacement, drawing criticism from both domestic and foreign sectors. The strategic disparity between a state player bound by international rules and a non-state actor profiting from symbolic wins was evident in the failure of such operations to neutralize Hezbollah's resolve.

Hezbollah, on the other hand, used psychological warfare and attritional endurance as their military tactics. The group wanted to cause long-term casualties and create political exhaustion in Israel, not destroy the IDF. By employing media-savvy narratives, especially the portrayal of Israel's 2000 departure as a "victory of resistance," the group was able to increase morale in the region and solidify its political power back home. This method brought to light a crucial tactical difference: Hezbollah targeted its opponent's political will, whereas Israel attempted to dominate the battlefield (Chávez & Swed, 2024).

A significant tactical and psychological shift occurred in 2000 when Israel finally withdrew unilaterally from Lebanon. It proved that sustained LIC might jeopardize Israeli strategic goals even in the absence of conventional military dominance. Israeli military doctrine was also altered by the conflict. Targeted assassinations, intelligence-driven operations, and precise strikes were used more frequently. During the 2006 Lebanon War and the Al Aqsa Intifada, Israeli doctrine grew heavily reliant on the deployment of RMA (Revolution in Military Affairs)

technologies, such as electronic surveillance, drones, and satellite-guided bombs. These weapons were designed to increase pressure on irregular fighters and reduce IDF losses.

However, when enemies used popular resistance narratives and operated in dense civilian locations, the efficacy of such technology-centric measures was restricted. Israel's deterrence by punishment policy, which included house demolitions, deportations, and economic blockades, was only partially successful in Palestinian territory during the Intifadas and again in Lebanon. Although these actions stopped militant activities, they frequently exacerbated anti-Israeli sentiment and prolonged violent cycles.

Therefore, there is a clear doctrinal difference between Israel and its non-state enemies. While organizations such as Hezbollah chose asymmetric resilience, ideological mobilization, and progressive attrition, Israel prioritized technological dominance, deterrence, and control. Although Israel's move to combine technology countermeasures with diplomacy was an adaptive response to LIC, the limitations of conventional force in postmodern wars were highlighted by the country's incapacity to completely repress or delegitimize non-state enemies.

STRATEGIC INTEGRATION OF ISR AND CYBER TECHNOLOGIES IN ISRAELI WARFARE

Israel has strategically evolved its approach to combat in the twenty-first century, especially in low-intensity conflict (LIC) conditions, as seen by its dependence on cutting-edge technology. The incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI), cyberwarfare capabilities, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) technologies into its military strategy has been the most obvious example of this shift. In addition to improving Israel's operational efficacy, these instruments have changed the character of the region's asymmetric warfare.

A key focus of this technological transition has been the increase of situational awareness through real-time data collecting and analysis. The IDF's widespread use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), satellite imaging, and ground-based sensors has allowed it to execute precision strikes while striving to minimize collateral damage. Fighting asymmetric warfare against organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah frequently entails negotiating intricate urban landscapes where fighters are assimilated into the general populace. A prime example of this is the pager attack instigated by Israel in Lebanon to assassinate key leadership figures in

Hezbollah. According to the BBC, nine people were killed with thousands injured (Mao, 2024).

The IDF may consequently operate with more precision and lethality because of the ISR capabilities, which act as force multipliers. Additionally, the IDF's creation of UAV-specialized units demonstrates the institutionalization of drone warfare and guarantees smooth coordination between ground forces and aerial observation capabilities.

Simultaneously, Israel has strengthened its control over the digital and physical aspects of battle through its investments in artificial intelligence and cyber capabilities. The IDF uses cyber operations to target enemy command and communication networks in an effort to weaken its adversaries' operational cohesion. Notably, the strategic importance of cyberwarfare extended beyond traditional battlefield goals when Israel and the United States participated in Operation Stuxnet to damage Iran's nuclear program. A feature of contemporary, tech-enabled LIC measures, this precedent established the tone for Israel's larger digital deterrent plan, which currently incorporates the use of AI for real-time targeting and predictive threat analysis.

However, there has been both strategic and ethical criticism of the growing reliance on technology, particularly AI-driven targeting systems like the purported "Lavender" program. Although AI improves the IDF's ability to identify targets and lowers Israeli military losses, there are claims that it may also speed up deadly decision-making, which could increase harm to civilians. In heavily populated areas like Gaza, where there is little margin for error in differentiating between militants and civilians, this issue is more pressing. Human rights organizations have often accused Israel of using excessive force; thus, the purported use of AI in contentious strikes raises concerns about accountability and transparency (Dostri, 2024).

The larger concept of 5th Generation Warfare, in which perception, information, and cognitive impact are just as important as physical force, is also intricately linked to the integration of ISR and cyber technologies. Israel was acutely aware of this change, as evidenced by its 2017 doctrine on information and influence operations. The IDF aims to manage the narrative both domestically and globally by recognizing the dangers of misinformation and deception, especially in the era of social media. In a time when digital influence can affect public opinion and diplomatic outcomes, the nation's emphasis on information management is highlighted by the deliberate use of Hebrew as a linguistic filter and the implementation of official censorship systems.

However, this information-centric strategy has also come under fire, especially from foreign observers who contend that Israel uses these tools to crush dissent and conceal its actions throughout the war. A complicated battlespace where reality is disputed and strategic communication turns into an extension of armed conflict has been produced by state and non-state actors' abilities to control digital platforms. Repeated flare-ups in Gaza and Lebanon have demonstrated this dynamic, with social media serving as a parallel arena for blame and legitimacy (Haroon, 2024). Furthermore, the regional power dynamics have changed as a result of Israeli technological breakthroughs. In addition to protecting the Israeli people, the proven efficacy of systems like the Iron Dome and David's Sling makes them exportable examples of innovative defense technology. As seen by the Abraham Accords, these mechanisms have impacted the security stances of Gulf governments, promoting greater collaboration with Israel. From the standpoint of defensive realism, Israel's technical dominance has forced its neighbours to reevaluate their approaches, not through conflict, but through cooperation and normalization. Israel's highly advanced military policy is, nevertheless, controversial despite its operational triumphs. The IDF has been able to project power with a small footprint and minimise its casualties thanks to high-tech warfare, but the asymmetrical nature of its operations frequently leads to disproportionate civilian mortality. The use of AI and cyber capabilities in conflict areas has come under increased international scrutiny and brought up moral conundrums. Critics contend that an over-reliance on force rather than political solutions might result from a false sense of impunity brought about by technological dominance (Ouellet et al., 2024).

ISRAEL'S CURRENT MILITARY TRAJECTORY: A ROAD TO STRATEGIC ISOLATION

As of 2025, Israel finds itself at a precarious juncture, with its military strategies—once praised as a symbol of technological dominance and strategic accuracy—becoming more widely seen as tools of regional destabilization and collective retribution. Its "self-defense" and "deterrence" narrative is waning, not only with longstanding allies like the United States but also with human rights organizations and foreign observers. Israel appears to be putting short-term tactical wins ahead of long-term strategic security, as evidenced by the prolonged hunger in Gaza, its belligerent stance in Syria and Iran, and the breakdown of diplomatic goodwill. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is arguably the most scathing critique of Israel's present military approach. Many international organizations now refer to the

situation as a "man-made famine" because of the deliberate blockage of vital relief, the destruction of food infrastructure, and the limitations placed on humanitarian access. These are tactical choices rather than collateral damage. The reasoning seems to be that causing civilians to endure intolerable hardship will either erode Hamas's base of support or shift public opinion against the group. However, this strategy has strategic flaws in addition to being morally unacceptable.

Collective punishment and starvation sow the seeds of generational trauma, strengthen resistance, and engender hatred. The distinction between ethnic persecution and counterterrorism has virtually vanished in the eyes of the world's population. The result is a crisis of legitimacy: Israel's claim to be a besieged lone democracy is becoming less credible. Israel is being isolated on the international scene as a result of diplomatic condemnation, ongoing war crimes investigations, and international court processes.

Israel's ongoing conviction in preemptive deterrence is seen in its assertiveness in Syria and Iran, which includes cyber sabotage, bombings on suspected weapons convoys, and targeted killings. These measures don't result in long-term security, even when they momentarily impair enemies' capabilities. Syria is still divided but antagonistic, and Iran has only strengthened its anti-Israel position and its proxies like Hezbollah despite cyberattacks and shadow warfare.

It is evident that Israel excels at tactical disruption but struggles with strategic solutions. There is just ongoing fighting rather than any real diplomatic endgame. There is increased volatility in response to each assassination or airstrike. Iran still has nuclear aspirations, and it has grown its regional power through asymmetrical alliances, not because of, but because of, Israeli attacks. This has resulted in a perilous cycle whereby Israel's military might merely encourages more complex forms of resistance rather than fostering deterrence or peace.

It is no secret that Israel has been backed by foreign aid in its military operations. For decades, Israel has used weapons manufactured in the United States against its enemies, such as Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas. However, the United States' reevaluation of its backing for Israel is arguably the biggest change. The Biden administration left behind a legacy of funding Israel's operations in Gaza. At least \$12.5 billion in direct military aid to Israel has been provided by U.S. legislation since the beginning of Israel's war with Hamas on October 7, 2023. This includes \$3.8 billion from a bill in March 2024 (in accordance with the current MOU) and \$8.7 billion from a supplemental appropriations act in April 2024. The Joe Biden administration reported in October 2023 that Israel has over 6 hundred active

Foreign Military Financing (FMF) cases, worth approximately \$24 billion. Additionally, traditionally, Israel has been allowed to purchase equipment from Israeli defense companies using a portion of its FMF funding, a privilege not available to other beneficiaries of U.S. military assistance (Guez & Robinson, 2024).

As the Trump administration integrated itself into ongoing international affairs, things have taken a turn for Israel. Recent diplomatic indications, such as barring Israel from multilateral peace talks and postponing arms supplies, suggest rising unease in Washington, even while military assistance and verbal support persist. A fast-changing global consensus, progressive movements, and domestic constituents are putting more and more pressure on American authorities to hold Israel responsible for its wartime conduct.

This change goes beyond mere symbolism. It signifies the decline of diplomatic immunity, Israel's most important strategic advantage. Israel was shielded from global repercussions for many years by strong bilateral connections and U.S. vetoes in the UN Security Council. However, even Washington now appears to be considering whether unwavering backing can last, particularly in light of Israel's actions harming American reputation both within and outside the region.

CONCLUSION

Unquestionably, Israel has benefited from its strong dependence on technical warfare, including real-time ISR equipment, cyber operations, and AI-driven drone strikes. However, technology alone does not prevail in legitimacy conflicts. Operational hubris, the idea that every political issue can be resolved militarily, is a result of the over-reliance on high-tech solutions. This has turned out to be utterly untrue in Lebanon and Syria, where deterrence has not resulted in peace, and in Gaza, where improved technology has not produced stability. Israel runs the risk of turning its strategic advantage into a liability if it keeps going in this direction. The idea of invincibility has diminished, and what's left is a state that is increasingly seen as an aggressor, even by its erstwhile allies.

Israel's long-term national security will decline if it continues its current course, which is characterized by the indiscriminate use of force, regional escalations, and diplomatic disobedience. Along with growing pressure from international legal agencies looking into alleged human rights crimes, one of the primary consequences is the loss of worldwide legitimacy. At the same time, the decline in U.S. backing poses a threat to Israel's most important military and diplomatic

partnership, especially as American public sentiment turns towards calling for conditional aid. The threat scenario may escalate regionally as a result of the backlash, which might take the form of increased asymmetric warfare, cyber retaliation and coordinated opposition from forces affiliated with Iran. As popular confidence in the logic of everlasting conflict continues to erode, domestic instability is likely to increase, hence escalating continuing anti-government demonstrations. Furthermore, the development of regional alliances, increased international scrutiny of Israel's actions, and the technical catch-up of its enemies all pose threats to Israel's long-standing deterrent advantage.

The state is stuck in a strategic impasse. It has the option to reorient its security doctrine towards coexistence rather than dominance, reduce humanitarian suffering, and engage in genuine diplomacy. Alternatively, it may intensify its militarism, increasing regional animosity and running the risk of more international censure.

Its future course could impact not only its position in the Middle East but also the sustainability of its long-term security. Military triumphs without political solutions only result in the next conflict, as history has often demonstrated.

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