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Review article

NATIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM OF ISRAEL

Abstract

The changing nature of security risks and threats has conditioned a redefinition of Israel's security policy, and it has also imposed the adoption of new security approaches. Acknowledging this reality, Israel must adapt to the new circumstances in order to protect its national interests and to achieve an optimal level of security. The adaptation of the security system to the new security environment should be an expression and a result of the general comprehensive inclusion of all subjects in charge of achieving security. In finding an optimal model for achieving security, it is necessary to start by perceiving the position and efficiency of the security system, while accepting security sector reforms as an adopted concept that includes a broad platform for the implementation and concretization of the specific tasks for the improvement of the internal structure of Israel's security system.

Key words: *security, security system, security sector, security policy, Israel.*

1. Introductory remarks

Israel covers an area of 21,920 km² (of which 445 km² belong to the territorial waters),

(Lansford, 2019) and is a coastal state located in the eastern Mediterranean, in the Middle East region, extending to the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea and the Dead Sea. It is bordered by Egypt to the southwest, Jordan and Syria to the east, and Lebanon to the north. Because geodetic methods may differ, the length of the state border reported by neighboring countries may vary and is therefore not quantified in numbers (The World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency, 2020).

Israel, as a small, modern country located at the center of three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa, still retains its importance on the world stage because of its historical significance. The earth is sacred to three major religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. One of the most famous rivers in the world, the Jordan River, flows through Israel and flows into the Dead Sea. The surface of the water in the sea is the lowest point on Earth and with the highest salinity density (Bruce, 2018).

According to 2020 World Bank data, Israel has a population of 8,883,800 inhabitants (World Bank Group, 2020). The population consists of 74.2% Jews (more than 6.7 million), 20.9% Arabs and 4.8% other population (Central Bureau of Statistics-Israel, 2019). Thus, the most represented is the Jewish ethnic community (76.9% of the total number of Jews born in Israel, and the remaining 23.1% are Jews emigrated from other parts of the world). By religion, 74.7% were Jewish, 17.7% Muslim, 2% Christian, 1.6% Druze and 4% Hebrew is the official language of Israel, other spoken languages are Arabic, as well as English and Russian.

2. Historical development

The birthplace of the Jewish people is the land of Israel. It is a country with a significant part of the nation's long history, of which the first thousand years are recorded in the Bible; "There, its cultural, religious and national identity was formed; and there, his physical presence has been maintained for centuries, even when the majority was forced into exile". During the years of dispersal, the Jewish people never separated, nor did they forget their connection to the land. With the founding of the state of Israel in 1948, Jewish independence, lost 2,000 years earlier, was restored (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Israel, 2020).

In the years that followed, Israel faced additional challenges, such as a lack of natural resources, difficult terrain and significant water shortages, and persistent threats of attack and terrorism (Bruce, 2018). The Sinai campaign, or Operation Kadesh, was aimed at ending terrorist attacks in Israel and removing the Egyptian blockade of Elat, and marked the final transformation of the Israeli army into a professional army capable of large-scale operations. A combat plan was adopted in early October 1956, but was revised following Israel's secret agreement with Britain and France. Under the agreement, Israel will shift its focus to the Suez Canal as close as possible. The entire Sinai Peninsula fell into Israeli hands. Israel was forced to withdraw from the Sinai without any security guarantees, and the United Nations Rapid Deployment Force was formed to guarantee for non recurrence of such incidents; tensions continued despite the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was reorganized, but its main military wing, Fatah - made up of paramilitary and terrorist organizations - began operations on January 1, 1965, across the Lebanese border. There was no existential threat to Israel, it was a constant inconvenience from there and a temptation to distract attention and energy from the main task, preparing for another round (Ministry of Foreign Affairs. History. Government of Israel, 2020). Territory under de facto Israeli control has grown as a result of Israeli military occupation of Arab territories in the Sinai Peninsula, and the Gaza Strip, the West Bank (including the Old City of Jerusalem), and the Golan Heights have suffered transformation after the Arab-Israeli war ((Lansford, 2019) in 1967 (the Gaza Strip is now under Palestinian control, as well as part of the West Bank).

So, since 1967, Israel has been attacked by Egypt, Jordan, Syria and the PLO to retake the Sinai Peninsula, which is under Israeli control after the Six-day War. In a short period of six days, the Israeli army crossed the entire Sinai Peninsula, all the way to the Suez Canal; took the whole West Bank of the Jordan River; and in the final days, not surprisingly, had “captured” much of the Golan Heights, including the dominant Mount Hermon - since then “the eyes and ears of Israel”. The culmination was the return of the Old City of Jerusalem and a reunion with the place of worship of the Jews, the West Bank (Israel State Archives, 2020).

In 1973, Israel was invaded by Egypt (again to retake the Sinai Peninsula) and Syria (to retake the Golan Heights). The war, which began on the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, the Day of Reconciliation (October 6, 1973), was the fiercest Arab-Israeli war since 1948. In the beginning, the Egyptians and the Syrians achieved some significant initial gains: the former crossed the Suez Canal, and the latter crossed the Golan Heights and appeared before the Sea of Galilee. However, the wheel turned very fast. The counterattack quickly ensued and the Israeli Liberation Army responded with lightning speed and immediately approached just 100 km from the Egyptian capital Cairo, shelling the airports around the Syrian capital Damascus. The UN Security Council passed a resolution called “land of peace”, which forced Israel to cede part of the reclaimed territories in order to “buy” peace. Since then, Israel has gradually withdrawn from the Sinai Peninsula and enabled a broader Palestinian self-government in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as well as concluding peace agreements with Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994). In 1982, Israel also responded to threats coming from southern Lebanon. Ever since 1971, Israel has been invading southern Lebanon to destroy PLO units that have been operating against Israeli targets in the area for years. A ceasefire with the Palestinians in Lebanon was declared in July 1981, and attacks on Israeli targets in Israel and abroad continued, making the threat to northern settlements unbearable. On June 6, 1982, the Israeli Defense Forces launched Operation Peace for Galilee. The war in Lebanon can be divided into two phases. The first was the conventional war, which lasted from June 6 to August 23, 1982, when extremist groups were expelled from Beirut. The second phase, which lasted the next three years, was aimed at extremist and terrorist groups ((Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Government of Israel, 2019). In 1986, Israel entered Lebanese territory and navigated the blockade of Lebanon to destroy Hezbollah units. Meanwhile, on November 15, 1988, the Declaration of Independence of Palestine was declared in Algeria, which in a way meant the acceptance of the UN Resolution of 1967, which stipulates the division of territories and the cessation of attacks. Shortly afterwards, the Palestinian state was recognized by a large number of countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs About Israel History, 2020). In the 1980s of the previous century, power over the occupied Palestinian territories was divided between four bodies: the military, the civilian administration, the Israeli security agency, and the police. The Israeli police force formed a special branch in 1994 to administer the West Bank. The

Palestinian Authority, established in 1994 under President Yasser Arafat, became the fifth body. The existence of five bodies in charge of the Occupied Palestinian Territories has created a great deal of confusion (Hever, 2018). Since the Palestinian movement, Israel has been in constant confrontation with the Palestinian Liberation Organization PLO (Britannica, Intifada, Palestinian-Israeli History, 2020), which later became the legitimate representative of the Palestinians in the region, as well as Hezbollah and Hamas organizations / movements. In parallel, Israel is facing continuous rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Lebanon (primarily organized by these organizations), with particular intensity during the Intifada (Periods of intense Palestinian operations against Israel, or as the Palestinians call them, Uprisings against the Israeli authorities in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank), from 1987-1993 and from 2000-2005, the wars in the Gaza Strip from December 2008 to January 2009, as well as in 2014. Tensions are present and constant.

3. Institutions for creating security policy

In the absence of a constitution, the structure of Israeli government is defined by the basic laws (in the absence of a classical constitution, the composition and organization of government and a range of issues subject to constitutional matter have been resolved by a set of 13 basic laws. The basic laws on which the legislation of Israel is based are the laws of: Parliament, State of Israel, President, Government, State Economy, Army, Jerusalem, Capital of Israel, Judiciary, State Controller, Freedom from Occupation, Human Dignity and Freedom, Referendum and Israel-National State of the Jewish People), which provide for a predominantly ceremonial president, a prime minister as an efficient chief executive, and a legislature (*the Knesset*) (Lansford, 2019). Israeli state institutions have been strong and organized in a corporate system since their inception. The military elite was initially highly politicized. Numerous members of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament), ministers, mayors, prime ministers and presidents are elected or appointed after a long military service. At the same time, the security institutions themselves (led by professional officers, rather than politically elected or appointed officials) have had a significant impact on shaping government policy (Hever, 2018).

The President of the state has mostly formal and ceremonial responsibilities, which are defined by law and is elected by a simple majority of the Knesset from among the nominated candidates for a period of seven years and with the right to one term.

The president has roles and powers that other government institutions cannot take on, both in times of peace and in times of crisis and dispute. The power of the President of the state largely stems from the fact that in the election for president it is insisted for the person to be non-partisan, and he is a symbol of national unity that represents the basic values of the state. Under the basic law on the President of the State, the head of state is given substantial

immunity from all matters relating to his duties and powers. This immunity is extended after the end of the term of the President. This immunity enables the President not to be held accountable before any court in the exercise of his duties or in the exercise of his powers. The purpose of substantial immunity is to protect the President's status as head of state, ahead of other branches of government. In addition to substantial immunity, the President shall enjoy procedural immunity during his term of office and may not be convicted while in office. Furthermore, the basic law gives him a number of duties and powers, including: signing laws; reviewing government reports from its meetings; issuing accreditations to the country's diplomatic representatives and receiving credentials of foreign diplomatic representatives sent by foreign countries to Israel; authorizes consular representatives and receives accreditations for the appointment of consular representatives and missions sent from foreign countries to Israel; signs agreements with foreign countries approved by the Knesset; appoints judges and other officials and removes them from office following a previously prescribed procedure; pardons convicted offenders and may commute sentences, especially when the government exercises the power to limit the term of imprisonment to life imprisonment. Also within his competence is the appointment of the Governor of the Bank of Israel, the President of the National Academy of Sciences, as well as members of the Board of the Chief Rabbinate, etc. (Government Press Office, Prime Minister's Office, 2020).

The legislature in Israel, as a state with an established parliamentary democracy with a proportional representation voting system, is entrusted to the *Knesset*. Representatives of the Knesset are elected in general, national, direct and proportional elections, in accordance with the law on elections to the Knesset. The Knesset, which has 120 seats and includes political parties based on their percentage of the total vote, has a threshold of 2%. It is interesting to emphasize that there are no constituencies, and the people vote for closed party lists, as opposed to individual candidates. The low threshold versus the typical thresholds ranging between 4% and 6% is given to enable smaller political parties in Israel to be an active player in politics. As the larger parties rarely win more than a quarter to a third of the seats, the smaller parties always position themselves among the larger coalition partners (Piehler, 2013; Zanotti, 2018). The elected members of the parliament at the first session declare their allegiance to the Knesset, and at the same session the President and the Vice President of the Parliament are elected. The Knesset usually has a four-year term, but can be dissolved earlier or dissolved if the prime minister is unable to form a government.

The government is the executive branch of the state, responsible for managing internal and external affairs, as well as security issues. Its policy-making powers are very broad and it is empowered to take action on any matter that is not legally competent to another body. According to legislation passed in March 1992, a historic change has taken place in the country's electoral system. Thus, the law provides the direct election of the Prime Minister by the Knesset

(Lansford, 2019). The proposed ministers are approved by the Knesset. All ministers must be Israeli citizens and residents of Israel and all must be members of the Knesset. Once approved / voted on, ministers are accountable to the Prime Minister for the performance of their duties and are accountable to the Knesset for their actions. Most ministers are given a portfolio and run a ministry, and ministers without a portfolio may be called upon to take responsibility for special projects. The Prime Minister can also be in the role of a minister with a specific portfolio. Ministers, with the approval of the Prime Minister and the Government, may appoint a Deputy Minister to their ministry; and all must be members of the Knesset. Like the Knesset, the government has a four-year term, but its term can be shortened by resignation, incompetence or death of the prime minister or a vote of no confidence in the Knesset. All governments to date have been based on multi-party coalitions, as no party has so far won enough seats in the Knesset to form a government on its own.

4. Israel's national security policy

Israel's national security policy and strategy reflects the basic components of the state's security activities and distinguishes between related goals and objectives. At the same time, it addresses a range of discrete potential threats, specific conflict targets, and establishes guidelines for adapting those targets to a given confrontation to protect the values needed. The values of a nation reflect its characteristics, serving as a kind of fundamental declaration to express the nation's identity and vision. They are important, essential and invaluable to all residents. Israel's vital national interests are the following: the state is the national home of the Jewish people, which means the inclusion and expansion of the Jewish majority in all parts of the country; strengthening Israel's qualitative advantages; human capital development; establishing economic power; achieving peace with neighbours; strengthening Israel among the nations of the world; promoting national and security resilience, etc. (Siboni, 2019)

Israel has reacted to the uniquely harsh strategic environment it has faced since its inception by developing defense capabilities that are completely overdimensional and disproportionate to its size, but necessary to emphasize its regional power, and its existence is no longer in question. However, Israel continues to face serious threats such as: weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, missiles and cyber attacks, primarily from Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas; the ongoing conflict with the Palestinians; and demographic challenges (Freilich, 2019). So, Israel, as rarely as any other country in the world, faces complex threats. The nature of external threats to the state of Israel can be divided into the following categories: Conventional threats coming from state military or non-state organizations. Unconventional threats consist mainly of efforts to achieve military nuclear capabilities. Subconventional threats, which include guerrilla warfare and terrorism by actors inside and outside Israel. Certainly these internal challenges and threats to Israel focus on state erosion and the

belief in the justice of the Zionist cause and the weakening of the internal legitimacy of Israel's actions (Eisenkot, 2019).

Basically, the threats and escalation of the conflicts with Israel are constantly present. At the same time, the risk of unplanned escalation (in Syria, Lebanon and the Gaza Strip) still exists and forces Israel to resort to the use of force. Iran continues to be a major threat to Israel, and this requires close coordination with the United States to build independent capabilities and continued use of force against Iran's efforts to impose itself on Syria. So Iran still poses the greatest threat to Israel's security, with its nuclear and ballistic missile programs and its regional activity. The threat is visible, although Iran is in a difficult economic situation caused by continued US sanctions, falling oil prices and failed attempts to get help from international institutions; as well as the growing lack of trust in the regime among the Iranian public. Despite its serious difficulties, Iran continues its efforts to promote its regional interests in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, while building military, political, economic, and social infrastructure to secure its long-term influence in those countries. Some of this infrastructure is aimed directly against Israel. Israel, by the nature or scale of the challenges facing in the northern front, as the main challenge in this theater is the activity of the radical Shiite axis, with an emphasis on the multidimensional consolidation of Iran through its proxies in Syria and the establishment of Hezbollah strongholds in the Golan Heights. This consolidation is slower than anticipated and planned by Tehran, but continues despite severe economic constraints on Iran. Israel resumes operations against Iran and Hezbollah and delays their activities, but will probably not be able to remove them. The challenges on the northern front, therefore, will not disappear, but they are unlikely to escalate into a major escalation, as all actors are currently focused on resolving the post-corona virus crisis and have no interest in war. However, there are concerns about unplanned escalation, which could lead to war on the Lebanese, Syrian and Iraqi fronts. This scenario of a multi-frontal war ("northern war") should be the main reference scenario for war. At the same time, political and military efforts are needed to prevent war and to use alternative means to promote Israel's goals on the northern front. Hezbollah is continuing its military Build-up, with assistance from Iran, including the precision-guided missile project ("precision project") and the development of its ability to enter Israel by ground forces. Lebanon is on the brink of economic, political, governmental and medical crisis. The crisis has also affected Hezbollah, which maintains its position in the Lebanese system, although events in Iran have also had a negative impact on the organization. At the same time, the Palestinian arena is becoming increasingly aware that coordination with Israel is essential. Its dependence on Israeli aid is clear, and a degree of legitimacy has been extended to cooperation with Israel. The crisis in recent years has also created an opportunity to reach a long-term ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas. The main problem facing the new government in the Palestinian arena is the application of Israeli sovereignty to the territories in the West Bank, i.e. annexation. Another signifi-

cant risk involves Israel's relations with Egypt and Jordan. Jordan's response to annexation could have negative impact on the cooperation in preserving Israel's longest border, and even on the peace deal, with similar consequences for the relations with Egypt (Brun & Yadlin, 2019).

This complex security condition and Israel's relations with neighboring countries are a clear indication that threats are present and certain. In accordance with the military doctrine of 2015, the military aspect of the doctrine is based on deterrence, early warning, defense, respectively, it is based on the following principles: 1). Relying on a defense security strategy, which is based on the assurance of Israel for effective deterrence, and neutralizing threats and, if necessary, avoiding confrontation, 2). Offensive military concept which is the basic assumption that the enemy can not be defeated through defensive posture. Therefore, it is necessary to use force to achieve clear military results in preserving the legitimacy of the state of Israel, 3). Strategic cooperation - strengthening relations with the United States and developing strategic ties with other key countries in addition to establishing and strengthening support centers around the world, 4). Strengthening Israel's regional status through inclusion in peace agreements and maximizing the potential for cooperation with moderate elements in the region, 5). Maintaining the relative advantage based on human quality, advanced technological capabilities (weapons) and various types of intelligence.

The mere fact that Israel is the only non-Arab country in the Middle East is a sufficient indicator of the need to take national security threats seriously, because the threats come from all sides, from outside and even from within. However, Israel handles them quite well, on the one hand through the outstanding work of the intelligence services, and on the other hand, by investing in expensive, modern defense systems such as the Iron Dome. Israel does not rely solely on this security measure, however, it uses a layered defense system that includes early warning sirens, shelters and fortified buildings, and so on. In the wake of frequent terrorist attacks, Israel has developed sophisticated state of emergency and preparedness protocols that affect emergency management techniques around the world. Israel adopts approach to all dangers highlighting key elements such as contingency planning, extensive training, mobilization of material and human resources, coordinated command and capacity building. Israel increasingly believes there is no real partner for peace in the region and feels compelled to focus on national security and counter-terrorism measures (Bruce, 2018).

Conclusion

Israel's national security policy should ensure comprehensive security and protection of Israel's national interests. Providing the required level of security is a complex and difficult task. It requires security to be rationally funded and to synthesize the efforts of all security actors to provide the necessary level of security, for society, for the nation, for the citizens. In the process of ensuring

an optimal level of security, the security system should perform the required function and respond appropriately to the changing nature of security threats.

So, analyzing the segment of issues related to Israel's security policy is a complex task, because it is characterized by great complicacy, specificity and contradiction. Therefore, the study of national security policy should be based on its full understanding and thorough understanding so that we do not face any improvisation and partisanship.

The ability to successfully pursue Israel's national security policy is a direct consequence of the nation's power and the projected security system that should provide the necessary protection and mobilize total human and material resources in the direction of protecting vital national interests. This manifestation also means the ability to deal with sources of threat to national security, ranging from prevention to effective management in complex security situations.

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