

Israeli Security Policies in Comparative Perspective

JST 3930(29481), INR 4931

Instructor: Dr. Or Arthur Honig

Tuesday, Thursday| Period 8 (3:00 PM – 3:50 PM).

Office Hours & location: Walker Hall, room 200E, Tuesday and Thursday Periods 1&2
(8:00-9:30 am)

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Course Description

Are you interested in the formulation of different security policies in the face of different and often simultaneous challenges? In this course we will learn about different security policies and assess their effectiveness. We will better understand how and why different security policies are adopted given different international and domestic constraints. We will do so by looking primarily at the security policies of Israel and comparing them to the policies adopted by other countries. During its very short history of 76 years, the small state of Israel has had to face a variety of serious security challenges, ranging from hostile nuclear and biological weapons programs to conventional warfare, insurgency and terrorism in their variety of forms. We will explore how Israel met these challenges, assess how effective these policies were, and determine to what extent the Israeli policy response differed, if at all, from that of other countries (democracies and non-democracies) and why. We will also discuss what other

countries, and especially the US, may learn from the Israeli experience, and where conditions are too different for adopting the Israeli policy response. No background knowledge is required.

Course objectives

Notably, the goal of this course is not just to give the students a better understanding of the factors and calculations behind the adoption of different policies (especially the unique ones which make it different from other regions) but also to learn how to compare the Israeli case to other cases. Hence, you will acquire the skill to think theoretically about the military and diplomatic history of this small and beleaguered country, as well as to think critically about the International Security/Strategic Interactions models we currently have. Since many of these security and strategic models were derived from the Western experience, they often do not fit well with the behaviour of actors in the Middle East. This creates room for rethinking existing models.

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the dynamics of strategic interactions between Israel and its adversaries.
- Assess the effectiveness of different security policies under different circumstances.
- Use historical data for the purpose of both testing and developing strategic interactions models.
- Analyse new policies as they are being adopted and formulated by identifying the forces shaping them, especially in the Middle East.

- Learn how to present and generate a class debate.

Course requirements and grading:

20% -- active participation. This component of the grade might include homework tasks. As a general rule, I would like you to read those items with a star next to them. I will also ask students to begin class by sharing what they have read, what they found interesting or puzzling. If you read items beyond the obligatory ones (or watch relevant videos) you will get extra participation points.

30% -- a 15-25 minute presentation on a topic related to Israeli security policies (to be chosen either from the list of topics or approved by me). These will be presented by students based on their choice of dates, though most probably towards the second half of the semester.

Instructions are uploaded to canvas.

45% -- an oral exam (to be held during class time and office hours in the last two to three weeks). Make-up exams must be approved by the instructor beforehand, or justified afterward by providing appropriate documentation (medical, etc.).

5% -- a short multiple choice exam (to be held in the last class before the beginning of the oral exams).

Grade scale:

87–89 = B+ 77–79 = C+ 67–69 = D+ below 60 = E

93–100 = A 83–86 = B 73–76 = C 63–66 = D

90–92 = A- 80–82 = B- 70–72 = C- 60–62 = D

Grading Criteria is as follows:

- A-range – 90s -- Excels – Full command and facility with material with the ability to place it within larger historical/literary context and to make arguments based upon it.
- B-range – 80s – Good – Solid understanding of material but without complete facility or ability to make arguments based on it.
- C-range – 70s -- Fair – Some understanding of major themes, lack of command with detail, or some understanding of detail but lack of contextual understanding.
- D-range – 60s -- Poor – Enough factual understanding to pass, but little to no contextual clarity.
- F-range – Fails – Lack of university level quality.

For the grading policies of the University of Florida in general, follow this link:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/> (Links to an external site.)

Class Policies

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. You *are* expected to participate on days during which we have discussion. Be in class on time.

Electronics:

I discourage the use of unnecessary electronics in the classroom. Let's unplug for a few hours and focus on the texts in front of us and the people in the room. The majority of the

readings will be provided in .pdf format. I would prefer for all note taking to be done by hand. If you must have a computer for some reason, it should only be used for readings.

Academic Honesty:

The University of Florida Student Honor Code is located at this link:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php> (Links to an external site.).

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code

(<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated!

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluations:

Students in this class are participating in the pilot evaluation of the new course evaluation system called GatorEvals. The new evaluation system is designed to be more informative to instructors so that teaching effectiveness is enhanced and to be more seamlessly linked to UF's CANVAS learning management system. Students can complete their evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals.

Recordings:

As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal

agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal

penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and

rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida

community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on

individual assignments: For more information, please see:

<http://registrar.ufl.edu/catalog0910/policies/regulationferpa.html>

Academic Resources:

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learningsupport@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
<http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.)

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Required Textbooks: None. All required textbooks will be uploaded to canvas, and the relevant books will be placed in the reserve section of Library West.

The course outline (by weeks)

The course is divided into three main parts. The first part will provide the necessary theoretical and historical background. It will provide basic concepts of national security and situate the subject of Israeli security policies both in terms of the study of IR of the Middle East, and in the study of International Security more generally. We will also cover in a very concise way the history of Israel's security. The second part of the course is really the main bulk of the course. We will explore a variety of security policies and security challenges that

Israel has faced. We will try to see whether the strategic interaction that took place between Israel and its adversaries fits the existing models, how it shed light on debates in the literature, and lastly, we will compare the Israeli policies to that of other countries. The third part of the course consists of presentations by students about a variety of episodes of the Israeli security policy that can both shed light on our understanding of theoretical issues in security studies as well as increase our understanding of Israel.

Part I: Background: A brief history of the Israeli security predicament & of basic concepts in national security

1. What is national Security and how can we study policies comparatively

We will cover the basics such as the thinking of Karl von Clausewitz, the nexus between military studies and national security, the way that scholars of International Relations theory have addressed the behaviour of Middle Eastern actors, how IR scholars have tried to develop rational and psychological models for understanding strategic interactions, the role of geopolitical and cultural factors in determining the country's national security doctrine, and finally what is a grand strategy. We will also address the very important question of the benefits and limitations of studying security policies in a comparative fashion.

Melvyn P. Leffler; "National Security," *Journal of American History*, Volume 77, Issue 1, 1 June 1990, Pages 143–152.

Alexander L. George, *Bridging the Gap: Theory and Practice in Foreign Policy* (USIP Press), skim.

Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley, “On Strategy” in Williamson Murray et al (eds.) *The Making of Strategy* (Cambridge UP, 1994), pp. 1-23.

Mary Kaldor and Iavor Rangelov (eds.), *The Handbook of Global Security Policy* (Wiley, 2014), Chapters 6,7, 12, and 17.

Paul Viotti, “International Relations and the Defense Policies of Nations” in Douglas J. Murray and Paul R. Viotti (eds.), *The Defense Policies of Nations: A Comparative Study, Third Edition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), chapter 1.

Andrew M. Dorman and Joyce P. Kaufman, “The Challenge of National Security,” Andrew M. Dorman and Joyce P. Kaufman (eds.) *Providing for National Security: A Comparative Analysis* (Stanford UP, 2014), chapter 1.

2. A brief diplomatic and military history of Israel

Israel has been locked since its establishment in three different conflicts that had a military dimension: the conflict with the Palestinians, the conflict with the Pan-Arab movement, and finally the conflict with revolutionary Iran and its various proxies. Its conflict with the Muslim Brotherhood movement affected its conflict with the Palestinians (in the form of Hamas) and its relations with Turkey, but otherwise lacked a military dimension.

Recommended reading:

Ahron Bregman, *Israel's Wars: A History Since 1947* (Routledge, 2016), skim.

BBC and PBS, “The Fifty Years War” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3rXQQ0PgCU>

3. The basic Israeli security doctrine and how it evolved over the years

What is a security doctrine? How is it different from grand strategy, foreign policy or military doctrine? What are the main pillars of a national security doctrine? How did it evolve in the Israeli case over the years? Many small countries are heavily armed neutral states (Singapore, Switzerland). Why did not Israel adopt this kind of approach?

Readings:

*Michael Handel, “The evolution of Israeli strategy: The psychology of insecurity and the quest for absolute security” in Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley, “On Strategy” in Williamson Murray et al (eds.) *The Making of Strategy* (Cambridge UP, 1994), ch. 17.

*Charles Freilich, *Zion's Dilemmas* (Cornell UP, 2012), chapters 1 and 2.

For post October 7 commentaries about either the need to update/modify the security doctrine or to implement it in a more rigorous fashion see:

Yoav Gelber, “Israel’s Revised National Security Doctrine Must Include Border Defense,”
The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune, February 2024.

<https://jstribune.com/gelber-israels-revised-national-security-doctrine-must-include-border-defense/>

Efram Inbar and Mebachem Bachrach, “The Perils of Containment/Restraint in Israel’s National Security Behavior” JISS Memo

https://jiss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/CONTAINMENT_EN.pdf

For policymakers themselves writing their understanding of the Israeli security doctrine see:

Dan Meridor and Ron Eldadi, "Israel's National Security Doctrine," INSS Memo.

https://www.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Memo187_11.pdf

Yaakov Amidror:

<https://jiss.org.il/en/amidror-israels-national-security-doctrine/>

Part II: an analysis of the different theoretical and conceptual issues using Israeli cases

- 1. The problem of strategic learning at the national level -- why do nations fail to learn from their own past or from the history of others? When do they over-learn from the past?**

There has been a lot of attention in the Foreign Policy Analysis literature to how foreign policy and national security decisions are being made. Yet, every decision reflects prior assumptions and concepts. Hence, the poverty of strategic thought is considered a major problem for policy making. Yet, where is knowledge or insights about national security being created? For instance, Israel's first defence minister -- David Ben Gurion -- deliberately decided to prevent the IDF from developing a college or a top research institution in order to

prevent them from developing a geopolitical orientation of their own. Do generals tend to be intellectually lazier than politicians or vice versa? What can be done in order to improve the learning process and what role can or should academia and think tanks play here? Does the Israeli case illustrate a suboptimal production of knowledge? Is the situation in the US better or vice versa? If so, why?

Michael Desch, *Cult of the Irrelevant* (Princeton UP, 2019), skim.

Nimrod Goren, "The role of think tanks in promoting foreign policy change in Israel" in [Donald E. Abelson](#) and [Christopher J. Rastrick](#) (eds.) *Handbook on Think Tanks in Public Policy* (Elgar, 2001), Chapter 14

Yossi Baidatz, "Strategy as a learning process: An Israeli case study for the new administration," Brookings Institution Commentary, November 29, 2016

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strategy-as-a-learning-process-an-israeli-case-study-for-the-new-administration/>

2. The use or misuse of targeted assassinations

We will first go over the main history of Israel's use of assassinations, and then try to answer the main questions. I deliberately assigned readings which are critical of Israel's use of assassinations (including a very old article of mine, which I am not sure I still agree with) in order for us to discuss whether we agree with them or not.

Some key questions: when this tool should be used and what should it not be used? Why did Israel find this tool so attractive? Why do other nations facing terrorism did not use this tool

(at least until 9/11)? Why do most countries not kill the leaders of other countries? In hindsight, what were some disadvantages or unexpected advantages in using this tool?

Or Honig, "Explaining Israel's Misuse of Strategic Assassinations," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 30, No. 6 (June 2007), pp. 563 - 577

Ronen Bergman, *Rise and Kill First* (NY: Random House, 2018), Skim.

Also watch this interview with Dr. Bergman: "Inside the Mossad: Ronen Bergman in Conversation with David Sanger" The 92nd Street.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wlEp6iPwosA>

3. Escalation of enduring rivalries into war

Why do rivalries suddenly turn into wars or at least produce very dangerous crises? What role can covert diplomacy play in preventing an escalation into war? Do historians of intelligence tend to exaggerate the potential role of covert diplomacy (better diplomacy could have made a difference) or are the forces pushing for war too strong very often? What constraints might limit Iran and Israel from engaging in a large scale and unlimited war? The enduring rivalries literature has tried to answer these questions, but we will try to reexamine these answers by looking at three empirical cases: the Israeli Egyptian rivalry (the prelude to the 1956 and the 1967 wars and the 1960 case of an almost war), the Israeli Syrian relations (the prelude to the 1982 war and the period prior to the almost war in summer 1996), and finally the Israeli Iranian relations (which turned into a direct interaction when Iran twice shot ballistic missiles into Israel -- April and October 2024).

-- On the Egypt-Israel rivalry turning into wars read:

Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims*, chapter 6.

Ian Black, "Secrets and lies at the heart of Britain's Middle Eastern folly" *The Guardian*, 11 July, 2006

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2006/jul/11/egypt.past>

Ben Mor, "Strategic Beliefs and the Formation of Enduring International Rivalries: Israel's National Security Conception, 1948–56," *International Relations*, 18 (September 2004), pp. 309-329.

Shimon Peres: The Biography, by Michael Bar-Zohar, New York: Random House, 2007
Chapters 11-12 "Suez" and "Secret Meeting at Severs" pp. 132-154

Avi Shlaim, "The Protocol of Sèvres, 1956: Anatomy of a War Plot" *International Affairs*, 73:3(1997), 509-530.

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ssfc0005/The%20Protocol%20of%20Sevres%201956%20Anatomy%20of%20a%20War%20Plot.html>

George Gawrych, *The Albatross of Decisive Victory* (London: Greenwood press, 2000), pp. 1-38.

*Michael Oren, *Six Days of War* (Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 33-169.

*Avner Yaniv, *Deterrence without the Bomb* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1987), chapter 3.

4. Questions of Intelligence estimates (preventing surprise attacks)

The relevant empirical cases: The Yom Kippur War, Operation Barbarossa, Pearl Harbor, 9/11 and the 2023 Hamas attack.

Some questions: What are some differences between the cases in terms of the nature of the surprising actor, his plans and motivations? Can we say that some cases were harder to prevent than others? Are surprise attacks inevitable? Can we speak about partially being unsurprised or less surprised in some of these cases? What are some key patterns that we find across all or at least many cases of surprise attacks? What are the different kinds of strategic surprises?

Readings:

Efraim Kam, *Surprise Attack: The Victim's Perspective* (Harvard UP, 2004), Skim.

Or Honig, "Surprise Attacks – Are They Inevitable? Moving beyond the Orthodox-Revisionist Dichotomy," *Security Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1, (March 2008), pp. 72-106.

Group activity: Try to think of all the do's and Don'ts when preparing a manual for the attacker. Make use of all the cases of failed and successful surprise attacks.

5. Questions of espionage (recruitment and detection of spies)

1. Regarding the question of recruitment, we will watch in class parts of the movie "Son of Hamas"

You can also read the book: Hassan Yousef, Mosab (2010). *Son of Hamas: A Gripping Account of Terror, Betrayal, Political Intrigue, and Unthinkable Choices* (First ed.). Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale Momentum House.

Uri Bar Joseph, *The Angel: The Egyptian Spy Who Saved Israel* (New York: HarperCollins, 2016), skim.

Game of Pawns (the story of Glenn Shriver):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8xIUNK4JHQ&t=15s>

Some key questions: what were the motivations of the spy in each case? What are some key differences between the agencies in terms of their recruiting style?

2. How do countries respond to instances of intelligence leak? When and why do countries/regimes try to double the spies they caught rather than kill suspects for instance?

Watch: Vice, “Palestinians Spying For Israel Risk Execution By Hamas”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QW2DLxrihg8&t=37s>

Watch a short clip on Garbo for understanding countries that made the decision to double spies. [Garbo: Most important double agent of all time?](#)

6. What is the best organisational design for intelligence communities and agencies?

Are we excessively obsessed with reforms to fix the intelligence community? Where do leaders get their images of the world in addition to intelligence agencies? When will the intelligence successfully shape the perceptions of the top decision-makers? What does the Israeli experience show? Why does the Israeli intelligence community look the way it does (very different from the shape of the American intelligence community)? What are the main factors that determine the shape of intelligence communities and intelligence organisations?

Is path dependence the main factor? Is it a good idea to give the military the responsibility for both war-fighting related intelligence and for foreign policy and national security level intelligence (as is the case in Israel and Russia, but not the US and the UK)? Finally, does Israeli intelligence community get to influence foreign policy more than its equivalents in other countries, and if so, why? When do fights over turf become ugly?

Paul Pillar, *Intelligence and U.S. Foreign Policy: Iraq, 9/11, and Misguided Reform* (Columbia UP, 2011), skim.

Amy Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford University Press, 1999), skim.

Keren Yarhi-Milo, “In the Eye of the Beholder: How Leaders and Intelligence Communities Assess the Intentions of Adversaries,” *International Security*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Summer 2013), pp. 7–51.

Uri Bar Joseph, “Military Intelligence as the National Intelligence Estimator: The Case of Israel,” *Armed Forces & Society*, 36/3 (May 2009).

Ian Black, “The origins of Israeli intelligence,” *Intelligence and National Security* 2, no. 4 (1987): 151-156, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684528708431920>.

Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services & the Struggle Against Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

7. Questions of deterrence

We will first try to understand why sometimes some countries care less about their reputation than on other occasions. Then we will proceed to address the main question of the effectiveness and limitations of deterrence. In this latter context, we will mainly try to find the right answer in the debate between the deterrence optimists (Elli Lieberman, Doron Almog) and deterrence pessimists (Janice Stein and Ned Lebow, Shmuel Bar). Hence, when reading the materials presented by both camps, try to adjudicate between them and not just identify the causal mechanisms proposed by each camp. I deliberately assigned two books which use the same case study (the Israeli-Egyptian rivalry). Who is more persuasive and why do you think so?

For background on deterrence,

Lawrence Freedman, “Introduction—The Evolution of Deterrence Strategy and Research” in Frans Osinga and Tim Sweijjs (eds.) *Netherlands Annual Review of Military Studies 2020: Deterrence in the 21st Century—Insights from Theory and Practice* (Springer, 2021), chapter 1.

Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence* (Polity Press, May 2004), skim.

A. Deterrence against states

The relevant empirical case: the Israeli-Egyptian rivalry, 1948-73.

Elli Lieberman, *Reconceptualizing Deterrence: Nudging Toward Rationality in Middle Eastern Rivalries* (Routledge, 2013), chapters 1 and 2.

Janice Gross Stein (1985), “Calculation, Miscalculation, and Conventional Deterrence I: The View from Cairo,” in Robert Jervis, Richard N. Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press), pp. 34-59.

Janice Gross Stein (1985), "Calculation, Miscalculation, and Conventional Deterrence II: The View from Jerusalem," in *Psychology and Deterrence*, pp. 60-88.

B. Deterrence against terror groups

Shmuel Bar, "God, Nations, and Deterrence: The Impact of Religion on Deterrence," in Keith B. Payne (ed.) *Understanding Deterrence* (Routledge, 2013), chapter 2.

Elli Lieberman, *Deterring Terrorism: A Model for Strategic Deterrence* (Routledge, 2019), chapters 1, 2, 3 and 7.

Shmuel Bar, "Deterring Terrorists: What Israel has learned," Hoover institution June 2, 2008.

<https://www.hoover.org/research/deterring-terrorists>

C. Why do some countries care about their deterrent reputations more than others?

Amir Lupovici, "Israeli Deterrence and the October 7 Attack," Strategic Assessment, INSS, 27/1 (March 2024), pp. 60-80

https://www.inss.org.il/strategic_assessment/deterrence/

Keren Yarhi Milo, *Who Fights for Reputation: The Psychology of Leaders in International Conflict* (Princeton UP, 2018), chapters 1-2.

8. Questions of military occupation

One goal of occupation authorities is to prevent an insurgency which would divert attention and resources from other security threats. Another goal is to minimise any enemy insurgent activity once it has broken out. Obviously democracies are restrained and cannot rely on deterrence or stick alone to prevent an insurgency or to nip it in the bud. Why do some occupation governments succeed in preventing or minimising insurgent activity, while others fail to do that? What can the Israeli experience teach us? Why did Israel fail to anticipate some of the insurgencies and was totally surprised by them? In what ways was the Israeli occupation policy suboptimal and what factors made it so?

We will especially examine closely the following four cases: the British occupation of mandatory Palestine, the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, and finally the American occupation of Iraq.

Shlomo Gazit, *The Carrot and the Stick* (Washington, DC: B'nai B'rith Books, 1995).

Samy Cohen, *Israel's Asymmetric Wars* (The Sciences Po Series in International Relations and Political Economy) 2010th Edition.

Ahron Bregman, *Cursed Victory: Israel and the Occupied Territories: A History* (New York: Pegasus Books).

Schulze, Kirsten E. (1996) "Perceptions and misperceptions: influences on Israeli intelligence estimates during the 1982 Lebanon War," *Journal of Conflict Studies*, XVI (1). 134-152.

Avner Yaniv, *Dilemmas of Security* (Oxford UP, 1990), skim.

Yair Evron, *Israel's Intervention in Lebanon* (Baltimore, MD: JHU Press), skim.

Ian Lustick, “writing the Intifada: collective Action in the Occupied Territories,” *World Politics*, 45/4 (1993).

Zeev Schiff and Ehud Yaari, *Intifada* (New York: Simon & Schuster), skim.

9. Questions of propaganda and public diplomacy

The relevant cases: The Mavi Marmara flotilla to protest the siege over Gaza (2010), and the ship Exodus (1947).

Some questions: How important is it to win in the fight over global hearts and minds? Can Israel ever win in the sphere of public diplomacy given the media’s adherence to the Aggressor-victim narrative? Was Israel’s response to the Mavi Marmara a Suboptimal policy response?

On the Exodus, see Aviva Halamish, *The Exodus affair : Holocaust survivors and the struggle for Palestine* (Vallentine Mitchell and Co Ltd, 1998), skim.

On the Mavi Marmara flotilla watch: BBC panorama, “Death in the Mediterranean”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSLHEfy8KEw>

10. Questions related to managing a peace process or peaceful relations with a former adversary

The main security challenges during the peace process are to make progress in face of spoiling terrorism, and also simultaneously to genuinely assess the adversary leader’s serious intention to make peace and implement the agreement. What policies did Israel adopt to meet these two goals in the Palestinian arena?

There were two main challenges for Israel after the peace accords with its former adversaries were signed: to avoid making it politically difficult for their peace partners to adhere to the agreements (namely, overburdening the peace process with intolerable actions), to make sure that their partners for peace do not act in violation of the agreement or otherwise in ways which are detrimental to the Israeli national interest. How well did Israel perform these tasks?

David Makovsky, *Making Peace with the PLO* (Routledge, December 1995)

Matthew Levitt, *Negotiating Under Fire: Preserving Peace Talks in the Face of Terror Attacks* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

11. Questions of alliance management (US-Israel relations over the years)

What determines the decision of two countries to become allies? Did Israeli courting actually help in bringing about the US-Israel alliance? When are client allies likely to be restrained and when they are not? Did Israeli meddling in American domestic politics help the alliance or undermined it? Can alliance survive in face of domestic political polarisation in the great power (the US)?

David Tal, *The Making of an Alliance The Origins and Development of the US-Israel Relationship* (Cambridge UP, 2022).

Dennis Ross, *Doomed to Succeed* (Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2015), chapter 11.

Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, *The United States and Israel since 1948: A “Special Relationship”?*, *Diplomatic History*, Volume 22, Issue 2.

PBS: “Netanyahu At War”

Jeremy Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics* (Cornell UP), introduction and the chapter on ISrael.

Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend*, skim.

12. Civil Military Relations during wartime

When we think of military history we can see that some generals are great strategists (the British Alan Brooke, the Israeli Moshe Dayan, to some extent Yitzhak Rabin), while others are military geniuses (Yamamoto, Ariel Sharon). Should the military promote and nurture both kinds of generals based on the assumption that the politicians are strategic amateurs?

What makes a good war time leader? Should we have a clear list of tasks that each echelon is responsible for? Who should be calling the shots in war? Should Israel restructure its policy systems in order to get a more dominant civilian echelon or can we say that overly subordinating the military is less preferable than keeping it as a partner in policymaking? How can we ensure that there would not be any insubordination given that Israel does not follow the Huntingtonian model of separation between the civilian and military spheres?

Readings:

Eliot Cohen, *Supreme Command* (New York: Free Press, 2002), introduction and chapter on David Ben Gurion. Skim the chapters on Clemenceau and Lincoln.

Lawrence Freedman, *Command* (Oxford UP, 2022), chapter 4 (The Very Model of Insubordination: Ariel Sharon and Israel's Wars).

13. Questions of crisis management

Relevant cases: the May 1967 Arab Israeli crisis, the Cuban missile crisis, and finally the August 1914 crisis.

Some questions: to what extent the domestic factors shaped crisis management in each case?

What were some of the unintended consequences of different actors' steps that led to the war's outbreak? Why did it take the Eshkol government several days before launching the preemptive strike (hint: excessively banking on Washington)? Is the outbreak of the June 1967 war consistent more with Offensive or Defensive Realism? What can the outbreak of the war teach us about civil-military relations and policy formulation in authoritarian regimes (in reference to Egyptian belligerence)? In terms of crisis management, what are similarities and differences between JFK in the Cuban Missile Crisis and Eshkol in the May 1967 crisis?

* James Blight and David Welch, *On the Brink* (1989), skim.

* Janice G. Stein, "Inadvertent War and Miscalculated Escalation: The Arab Israeli War of 1967," in Alexander George (ed.) *Avoiding War: Problems of Crisis Management* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991).

*Michael Oren, *Six Days of War* (Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 33-169.

*Ami Gluska, *The Israeli Military and the Origins of the 1967 War* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 74-120, 160-179. Instead it is also possible to read his article in MERIA.

Also Watch on youtube:

For the Cuban Missile Crisis case: Armageddon Letters: Be Kennedy, Be Khrushchev. Ideally also watch the movie Thirteen Days.

For the May-June 1967 crisis case:

14. Questions of force buildup

The goal of force buildup is to create the kind of military which is best suited for meeting the challenges that the nation faces within a given budget. Over time Israel was heavily influenced by the American way of fighting wars. The technological revolution and especially RMA caused a shift from a big ground force to a lean army which invests heavily in commandos and platforms for firing in a long range fashion. Is this the wave of the future? For what purposes if at all do we still need a large ground force with many divisions? Is Israel excessively in love with the new concept of commandos and technology? How do drones change the battlefield? Who should be in charge of force buildup planning? What social and political forces influenced the processes and design of force buildup in Israel? How has Israel's military managed to become so technologically innovative despite huge competition from private companies? What are the pros and cons of a mandatory conscription army instead of having an all volunteer force?

Eliot Cohen, *Commandos and Politicians* (Harvard UP, 1978), skim.

Edward Luttwak and Dan Horowitz, *The Israeli Army* (1975), skim.

Edward N. Luttwak and Eitan Shamir, *The Art of Military Innovation: Lessons from the Israel Defense Forces* (Harvard UP, 2023), skim.

15. Nuclear proliferation and counter-proliferation

Should Iran be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons? If Iran were to be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons, would we witness a major proliferation of nuclear states in the region? Would nuclear proliferation lead to a more stable Middle East or to a less stable one? If Israel's loss of its monopoly on nuclear weapons in the region were to lead to greater instability, what should the Israeli response be to Iran's nuclear weapons' program? And should Israel persist with its policy of preventing other actors in the Middle East from acquiring nuclear weapons? Should Israel let the US do the counter-proliferation job in the Middle East?

Uri Bar Joseph, "The Hidden Debate: The Formation of Nuclear Doctrines in the Middle East," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1982, pp. 205–227.

Shmuel Bar, "The Danger of a Poly-Nuclear Mideast," Hoover Institution, February 1, 2013

<https://www.hoover.org/research/danger-poly-nuclear-mideast>

16. The difficulties of exercising restraint in face of strategic provocations

Israel exercised restraint in face of major provocations or highly provocative terror attacks during several periods in its history: the premiership of Moshe Shrett (1953-55), the premiership of Yitzhak Shamir during the first Gulf War (1991), the Premiership of Ehud Barak and Ariel Sharon during the Al-Aqsa Intifada (2000-4), and finally the premiership of Netanyahu during his second tenure onwards (2009-).

Some key questions: what are the advantages and disadvantages associated with exercising restraint, especially for a small country like ISrael? what are the difficulties for a country to exercise restraint? Which countries failed to exercise restraint in history and why? What

measures can be taken to improve the ability of a country to exercise restraint without compromising one's deterrent image?

*Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, "Ben-Gurion to Sharett: Conflict Management and Great Power Constraints in Israeli Foreign Policy," *Middle Eastern Studies* 24 (1988), 330-356.

David A. Welch, "The Politics and Psychology of Restraint: Israeli Decision-Making in the Gulf War," *International Journal*, 47/2 (Spring 1992).

Or Honig, "The End of Israeli Military Restraint: As Restraint Fails, Jerusalem Reverts to A Policy of Deterrence," *Middle East Quarterly* – Vol. XIV: No. 1 (Winter 2007).

Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff, *34 Days* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), skim.

17. Israel as part of regional coalitions trying to balance against the regional actor trying to dominate the region

There have been several regional powers who tried to gain regional dominance, beginning with the Hashemites (especially King Abdullah I of Jordan) and ending with revolutionary Iran. Israel has been partially a member of the camp of one of the dominating actors (Abdullah I of Jordan), but has also been at the forefront of the regional balancing effort in two relatively successful cases of regional dominance: Gamal abdul Nasser and the Pan-Arab movement (1956-67), and Revolutionary Iran especially since the removal of Saddam Hussein.

Key questions: what explains the success of only some bids for regional dominance? When we compare the Middle East to Europe what differences can we identify? Does Israel play a major role in balancing against bid for regional dominance?

For background in the concept of regional vs global balancing and the nexus between them see John J. Mearheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (WW Norton, 2001), skim.

Joseph Alpher, *Periphery: Israel's Search for Middle East Allies* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), skim.

Malcolm Kerr, *The Arab Cold War, 1958-1970* (New York: 1971), pp. 1-137.

Efraim Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism*, chapter 9.

Adeed Dawisha, *Egypt and the Arab World* (New York: Wiley, 1976), pp. 9-62.

18. Weapons industries and its pros and cons, arms transfers as a tool of influence

What are the advantages and disadvantages of having your own arms industry? What explains the Israeli success in becoming a global weapon exporter? Is the US interested in this situation of Israeli strength in this area? Is it good or bad for the economy?

David Tal, "Weapons without influence: British arms supply policy and the Egyptian-Czech arms deal, 1945–55," *Journal of imperial and Commonwealth history*, vol. 34, no. 3 (2006), pp. 369-388.

Isaac Ben Israel, "Security, technology and cyber warfare" (chapter 19) in Stuart Cohen and Aharon Klieman (eds.), *Routledge Handbook on Israeli Security* (Routledge, 2019).

SIPRI trends in international arms transfers (2024):

<https://www.sipri.org/publications/2025/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-international-arms-transfers-2024>

19. Questions of war termination

One of the key questions in the enduring rivalries is what kind of war outcome is most conducive for the termination of the conflict. It is well known that some war outcomes

merely create the conditions for the next war due to a variety of factors. The First and the Second World Wars come to mind. What does the Israeli experience show in this respect?

* Janice Gross Stein, "The Termination of the October War: A Reappraisal," in *Nissan Oren* (ed.), *Termination of Wars* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press).

Avi Kober. "Great-Power Involvement and Israeli Battlefield Success in the Arab-Israeli Wars, 1948-1982," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8.1 (Winter, 2006), pp. 20-48.

* Janice Gross Stein, "War Termination and Conflict Reduction or, How Wars Should End," *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Fall 1975), pp. 1-27.

20. Counterinsurgency and the 2023 Gaza War

According to Gil Merom, democracies lose small wars against a weaker adversary since they cannot act with sufficient brutality. At some point the middle class feels empathy to the civilians on the other side and there is growing normative gap between the government and the middle class. Did we see this mechanism in the Gaza War? What were some Israeli mistakes in running the current Gaza war? What lessons could Israel have learnt from the American experiences in Vietnam and Iraq?

Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars: State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), introduction and ch. 1

Benjamin S. Lambeth. "Israel's War in Gaza: A Paradigm of Effective Military Learning and Adaptation," *International Security* 37 (2), 2012, pp. 81-118. Benjamin S. Lambeth.

"Learning from Lebanon: Airpower and Strategy in Israel's 2006 War against Hezbollah," *Naval War College Review* 65 (3), 2012, pp. 83- 105.

Evan Braden Montgomery and Stacie L. Pettyjohn. "Democratization, Instability and War: Israel's 2006 Conflicts with Hamas and Hezbollah," *Security Studies* 19 (3), 2010, pp. 521-554.

Part III: Interesting episodes that we can learn from -- students' presentations

Each student will present on one of the following topics. You may come up with a different topic, but you will need an approval of mine in advance. Ask yourself analytical why questions. For instance, why are the cases so similar or so different in

1. A comparison between two cases of escalation into direct conflict -- the Israeli Egyptian conflict
2. A comparison of the three cases of Israeli bombing of nuclear reactors -- Iraq in 1981 and Syria in 2017. What explains the
3. A comparison of the two cases of Israeli wars of Defense -- the 1973 war and the 2023 war.
4. Why did Israel partially win the 1948 war?
5. Why did Israel launch the 1982 war when it did?
6. Why did Israel strategically lose the first War in Lebanon? Why did the US fail to learn from this experience when invading Iraq?
7. Why did Israel win strategically in the Al-Aqsa Intifada? Should we call this a victory?
8. A comparison of the hunt after arch-terrorist leaders in several cases (Bin Laden, Hamas's Yahya Sinwar and FLN's Ali La Pointe).

9. A comparison of US-Israel relations during major Israeli wars -- what are some patterns you can find? Is the 2023-24 war unique due to a strain in relations stemming from polarisation in the American political system?
10. What are the sources for over-reliance on fortified lines of defense? Maginot line, the Bar Lev line, and the Israel-Gaza fence.
11. What explains the endurance of the Israeli Jordanian strategic relations over the years? What can we learn from it from the perspective of strategic or security studies?
12. Limited wars in the American and Israeli experiences.
13. Politics during wartime and the limitation of democracies in waging different kinds of wars.

The challenges of the US and Israel and how they tackle them together or sometimes strongly disagree on how to address things

Another aspect is to look at the tools

1. deterrence

The egypt israel deterrence

Iran and the nuclear issue

2. Counter-terrorism strategic assassinatons

3.

Shmuel bar