

The IMT**e**[™] Reports

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Crisis in the Middle East (2) **Updated Edition**

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It is only through labor and prayerful effort, by grim energy and resolute courage, that we move on to better things.

Theodore Roosevelt

The only basic answer we can give to the question 'what will be' is – we will continue to fight, just as we did in the past, and now too. We must prepare ourselves mentally and physically for a prolonged process of struggle.

IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan (Command and Staff College course, 1969)

The crisis in the Middle East is part of a larger globally unfolding war dynamic, a component of the bigger great-power conflicts currently shaping the new world order.

The IMTe Reports, IMTe Brief, Crisis in the Middle East – The wider picture, October 2023

An increasing convergence of national threats is creating a new strategic reality for Israel, making the outbreak of war on several fronts simultaneously a potentially realistic scenario. A sudden, coordinated emergence of these threats would pose serious challenges to Israel ... the most challenging task being to simultaneously neutralize the above threats while concurrently protecting the country's civilian population and infrastructure ... A strategic military dogma, with conceptual depth and wide-ranging effectiveness, has arisen over time, one that embraces all types of action, whether of defense or of retaliation or involving a full-fledged war. In the first two instances, it neutralizes threats and establishes security and, in the third, it automatically allows for a new regional order to emerge. In the eyes of both allies and enemies, such a framework underlines Israel's belief in its operational superiority, its state-of-the-art technological base, its unparalleled military capabilities, and its crystal-clear view and absolute determination to pursue, by any means necessary, the security of the Israeli homeland. Israel promotes a unifying national narrative among all its citizens and diaspora, imparting a sense of mission as well as a constant commitment to mobilization for collective efforts, both in peacetime and at times of war.

The IMTe Reports, IMTe Research Report, Aspects of an Emerging World B. Times of conflict ..., March 2020

The purpose of Israel's strategy is two-fold. Foremost to hinder Iran's ongoing efforts to develop nuclear weapons capability and second to reverse Iranian efforts to create an extensive infrastructure of support across Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, with embedded advanced weapon systems directed at Israel. The latter military development plan, characterized by a clear civil perspective stretching over a wide time horizon, aims for a military that can destroy enemy capabilities on multiple fronts and in record time while minimizing Israeli casualties. The entire Israeli military, with the integration of air, naval, ground, and cyberattack capabilities, is to be interconnected in such a way as to allow units to detect and share information and destroy enemy targets in merely a few seconds, consequently shortening the period during which the Israeli home front and economy could suffer damage or even be paralyzed by incoming enemy fire. This calls for the unprecedentedly efficacious cooperation of a variety of advanced technology units, data engineers, analysts, and IT experts working closely with one another and breaking down traditional barriers between units.

The IMTe Reports, IMTe Research Report, Glimpses into the Future, June 2021

Through its proxies, the Iranian regime effectively controls Lebanon, Iraq, and, to a large extent, Syria (the Gaza Strip has already been cleared by Israel's Defense Forces (IDF) of any future Hamas threat). Israel is concurrently clashing with Hezbollah in Lebanon, confronting on the home front the constant uprisings in the West Bank, and, most importantly, is very close to militarily engaging Iran. Israel is fighting an existential war and is united and determined to win that war at any cost. Its arch-adversary is Iran, with an enormous war machine and close to

attaining nuclear arms capacities. *The recent Iranian ballistic missile attack on Israel is a milestone in the intensifying Middle East conflicts between Israel and its extremist adversaries.* Iran fired just over 180 long-range ballistic missiles at Israel on Tuesday October 1st, 2024, with massive lethal capacity. Israel's IDF has, remarkably, reported zero casualties, the explanation lying in Israel's multilayered missile defense system, probably the most sophisticated in the world. Iran's strike will beyond any doubt be answered by Israel at the time of its choice, and, in our humble view, sooner rather than later, in a highly innovative, sophisticated, and devastating manner. It could involve such options as an overwhelming strike on Iranian energy facilities, and/or nuclear centers, as well as the disabling of energy grids and communication, command & control centers. Additional simultaneous challenges that Israel is confronted with are: the well-organized paramilitary army of the Houthis operating out of Yemen in the Red Sea and the Iraq-based Hezbollah (Hezbollah Brigades) who have also increased their explosive drone and missile launches into Israel. The Palestinian Authority partially controlled West Bank may also be about to explode, creating an internal threat to the Israeli nation.

The vicious conflict in the Middle East may appear as a potentially protracted one. It could, nevertheless, prove to be of far shorter duration than what military analysts currently expect. This could be the result of several key factors converging and synergizing towards one single security goal - namely, the elimination of all existential threats to the state of Israel by a shattering disruption of the chains of command, communication, and control between Iran and its proxy armies. The global impact emanating from a successful outcome of Israel's military operations will influence global counterterrorism strategies, possibly redefining how nations address threats from non-state actors. Modern warfare has evolved tremendously, utilizing cutting-edge military technology, smart weapons, financial means, and international cooperation. Israel may also decide *to selectively disclose its nuclear capabilities*, communicating a credible devastating threat of limited nuclear retaliation, so that Iran and its proxies are deterred from continuing to escalate their aggressions. *The adaptation of an ultimate weapon to serve a deterrence-based strategy of self-preservation is a military strategic concept of paramount national security importance.*

The current Middle East crisis could be the catalyst for American political and military focus to decisively shift to a new paradigm. We hope that the US may finally be coming to the logical realization, which equally serves its own needs for security, that militant extremist factions in the Middle East and beyond have to be neutralized. The Middle East needs to set the foundations for long-lasting peace, in which environment radical terror-oriented groups obviously have no place. China and Russia are also concerned about a well-armed political Islam, especially if it possesses nuclear weapons. As such and apart from diplomatic interventions and mediating efforts, they may, barring a huge regional escalation of the conflict, largely remain out of current Middle East hostilities. The European continent is also waking up to the threat of terrorism emanating from specific radical countries/groups from the Middle East: this may signal a long-lasting shift in its domestic and foreign policies.

Looking at likely outcomes of the current Middle East crisis, two scenarios can predominantly be outlined. We do not consider that a middle-of-the-road compromising option can, in practical terms, exist or survive, despite still being envisaged by US foreign policy.

In the adverse scenario of Israel failing in its attempt to conclusively neutralize and permanently degrade the military capabilities including the potential nuclear arms capacities of Iran, and the latter's proxy armies, the hostilities in the Middle East could swiftly develop into a wider regional war. We consider it unlikely that Israel

will accept a permanent ceasefire allowing Iran and its proxies to reorganize themselves, so as to continue to pursue their long-term objective to destroy Israel. In the event of a rapidly escalating regional war culminating in a global conflict, we would be facing a *global war economy to an extent few in the financial markets today anticipate*. In other words, a mounting Middle East regional war automatically interconnects and interlinks to other hotspots, i.e., Ukraine, Central Asia, and the China Seas, with the inevitable involvement of all three major world powers. The world will then be confronted with the rapidly approaching possibility of WWIII, with the inevitable inclusion by several actors, for the first time in human history, of nuclear weapons, hence entering enormously dangerous uncharted territory.

On the other side of the coin, we could today be glimpsing, at the end of this dark Middle East tunnel – maybe not far away – a positive outcome, favorable and advantageous to an extent not imaginable today. In such a scenario, the IDF successfully faces its adversaries on multiple fronts and, with US and allied backing, spectacularly wins on all fronts. What at first sight appears to be a chaotic broader conflict in the Middle East will ultimately remain firmly under the tight control of the IDF, utilizing a dynamically unfolding, multifaceted war-and-deterrence military campaign, unparalleled in its ability to stay ahead of the game as regards both power, efficacy, and execution. Radical political change in Iran puts a historic country on a permanent peaceful trajectory, diplomatic relations between Israel and major Arab nations are resumed, extremist forces are marginalized, historic long-lasting peace treaties for the Middle East are reinstated, and a new regional order emerges throughout the entire Middle East/Levant. The unquestionable effectiveness of IDF operative capacities is transformed into long-term collective security for Saudi Arabia and for other moderate Arab nations.

In our humble opinion, although we cannot and will not dismiss the first grim scenario of a regional conflict escalating into a global war, nevertheless, we place our faith in the latter highly positive outcome. Even the very first indications of such a splendid and longed-for outcome would release an outflow of gigantic financial opportunity from world economic centers and markets unparalleled in magnitude and duration.

In our forthcoming essay, we will – with the help of God - be reflecting on new elements and parameters of a continuously evolving global environment.

A moment of historic danger: it is still 90 seconds to midnight

Science and Security Board, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists - 2024 Doomsday Clock Statement

The Doomsday Clock is set every year by the Bulletin's Science and Security Board in consultation with its Board of Sponsors, which includes nine Nobel laureates. The Clock has become a universally recognized indicator of the world's vulnerability to global catastrophe caused by manmade technologies. This year, the Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists leaves the hands of the Doomsday Clock unchanged due to ominous trends that continue to point the world toward global catastrophe.

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