

An Israeli Approach to Detering Terrorism

Managing Persistent Conflict through a Violent Dialogue of Military Operations

BY MARK VINSON

On July 8, 2014, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched Operation Protective Edge against Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and other violent extremist organizations (VEOs) attacking Israel from the Gaza Strip. This was Israel's fourth major operation in Gaza since 2006, each immediately following a period of escalating, violent exchanges. The persistent, long-term interactions of this conflict, the increasingly dangerous nature of the VEO threat, and Israel's adaptive approach to manage conflicts with such VEOs, provide a conceptual basis for "deterrence operations" as a component of a military support concept to a whole-of-government strategy for preventing and managing conflict with VEOs.

The United States and Israel have well-developed, but distinct, concepts of deterrence. Although both concepts emerged in the 1950s as centerpieces of each nation's national strategy, they were designed to address dissimilar existential threats, and they have evolved along largely separate paths in response to unique national security challenges. Although each concept shares a fundamental cost-benefit, rational-actor basis, their current approaches remain different.

While the U.S. security environment has the inherent physical advantage of strategic depth, enabled by friendly neighbors and two oceans, the terror attacks of 9/11 shattered any notions that the U.S. homeland is secure from attack. Moreover, U.S. security interests, responsibilities, and threats are global and wide-ranging, and physical distance no longer ensures security from terrorism and modern threats, such as cyber, space, and missile attacks.

Israel, on the other hand, is a small country with no strategic depth, surrounded by a hostile, regional mix of state and non-state adversaries, and has remained in an almost perpetual state of conflict since gaining statehood in 1948. To survive, Israel developed a powerful, high-technology military that repeatedly defeated its larger Arab neighbors in a series of major wars from 1948 to 1973. The cumulative deterrent effect of these decisive victories eventually led to peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan; while Syria remains hostile it is deterred from directly challenging Israel militarily. Concurrently, Israel has remained in a state of persistent conflict with a host of

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increasingly powerful Arab VEOs that have maintained a violent resistance to Israel's existence. In response, Israel's concept of "deterrence operations" has evolved to try to prevent and manage these conflicts.

Despite their different contextual origins and paths, since the end of the Cold War, and, in particular, since 9/11, the most likely security threats to the U.S. and Israel have substantially overlapped and converged on VEOs and their state sponsors, who employ terrorism and other asymmetric means and methods to counter U.S. and Israeli conventional military strength. Both countries are now threatened by the proliferation and lethal potential of VEOs with the intent, capability, and willingness to attack the vital interests of both nations on a potentially catastrophic scale. While persistent conflict with VEOs threatens Israel's

homeland, the primary threat to the U.S. is currently to its national interests abroad.

After fighting two prolonged wars in the midst of a global counter-terrorism campaign, the U.S. is now transitioning its counter-terrorism approach to a conflict prevention strategy that seeks to anticipate threats and to partner with other countries to stop terrorism from taking root, spreading, and threatening U.S. national security interests at home and abroad. With the evolution of its threats and security strategy, the U.S. needs to critically examine the appropriate role for and concept of deterrence operations.

Based on the author's research of open-source literature and a cooperative, two-year examination of ideas for deterring VEOs with the IDF and the U.S. military, this article will describe the growing and persistent threat of conflict with VEOs, review the U.S. President's



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Eight Qassam small artillery rocket launchers, seven equipped with operating systems and one armed and ready to launch, uncovered during a counter-terrorism operation in northern Gaza.

new vision for preventing terrorism, and examine key aspects of the Israeli approach to deterring and managing conflict with such VEOs. It concludes with some ideas that the United States might consider in a concept for deterring VEOs in support of a broader, whole-of-government approach to preventing and managing conflict.

The Growing and Persistent Threat of VEOs

On 7 August 2014, the U.S. began limited airstrikes against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants who were threatening the Kurdish capital of Erbil.¹ The airstrikes were intended to support Kurdish military forces and to protect U.S. diplomats, military advisors, and civilians. In a brutal response, ISIL beheaded captured American photojournalist James Foley, posting a gruesome propaganda video on the internet with a warning of further revenge if U.S. airstrikes continued. U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel characterized ISIL as a “long-term threat” that would require a “long-term strategy” to combat it.² The emergence of extremist actors with violent political agendas, advanced weapons and communications capabilities, religious or ideologically-based interests, long-term strategies, and the willingness to confront powerful states through terrorism and other asymmetric means and methods continues to threaten U.S. national interests.

After 13 years of war since the terror attacks of 9/11/2001, U.S. conflict with terror organizations and the threat of terrorism and other harm by VEOs around the world persists. Indeed, on May 28, 2014, President Barack Obama stated that “for the foreseeable future, the most direct threat to America at home and abroad remains terrorism.”³ A partial list of VEOs in the news during the summer of 2014

included Hamas firing rockets and missiles and conducting cross-border raids from the Gaza Strip into Israel; Hezbollah fighting Sunni rebel and Islamic jihadist forces in Syria while amassing a state-like arsenal of rockets and missiles in Lebanon aimed at Israel; pro-Russia separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine fighting Ukrainian military forces with Grad rockets and advanced surface-to-air missiles; the ISIL militants attacking regime and other non-aligned forces in Iraq and Syria, rapidly seizing territory and advanced weapons as they go; al-Qaeda affiliates fighting in Yemen, Syria, Libya, and Mali; and al-Shabaab and Boko Haram terrorizing the populations of east and west Africa, respectively. Each of these conflicts involving VEOs has been, or is likely to be, a long-term conflict that threatens the stability of a region.

The U.S. military’s Capstone Concept for Joint Operations (CCJO) describes a future security environment characterized by the “diffusion of advanced technology..., [t]he proliferation of cyber and space weapons, precision munitions, ballistic missiles, and anti-access and area denial capabilities.”⁴ Such capabilities give VEOs the means to not only threaten local and regional stability, but also to threaten U.S. “access to the global commons” and inflict potentially “devastating losses.”⁵ Even as potential adversaries obtain advanced capabilities that narrow the advantages enjoyed by the U.S., the CCJO warns that they “continue to explore asymmetric ways to employ both crude and advanced technology to exploit U.S. vulnerabilities.”⁶ While some VEOs may possess state-like capabilities to threaten vital U.S. national security interests, they generally lack the symmetric, state-to-state framework of interests, values, government, and economic infrastructure that enable the U.S. to deter

them as it would a state. Further, the U.S. will usually have greater difficulty directly communicating threats to VEO leaders.

A U.S. Vision of Prevention

To address the growing and persistent terrorism threat by VEOs, President Obama presented a foreign policy speech on May 28, 2014, to announce a shift in the U.S. counter-terrorism strategy. He described a move from the direct, force-intensive, costly approach featured in Iraq and Afghanistan, to a more indirect approach that seeks to prevent costly wars by working “to more effectively partner with countries where terrorist networks seek a foothold.”⁷ The president’s prevention strategy envisions a primary military role of training and advising host country security forces, and the collective application, by allies and partners, of a broader set of tools “to include diplomacy and development; sanctions and isolation; appeals to international law and – if just, necessary, and effective – multilateral military action.”⁸

The president’s vision refocuses U.S. counter-terrorism efforts on anticipating and preventing conflict with VEOs; however, it may lack a timely or sufficient path to address VEOs when prevention fails. The prevention strategy relies on detecting the early indicators of conflict, as well as on the cooperation of host-nation governments and other partners to establish security and provide the non-military remedies to preclude a conflict. Besides training and advising, the military must approach conflict prevention with a complementary range of ways to provide a safe and secure environment, including deterrence, dissuasion, compellence, preemption, and even preventive attacks. Additionally, if prevention fails and a conflict emerges with a dangerous VEO, like

ISIL, then the strategy must quickly counter the threat. For long-term conflicts with persistent VEOs, the U.S. requires a long-term approach to manage the conflict until non-military initiatives can succeed.

In the U.S., the application and relevance of deterrence theory to various current and emerging extremist threats since 9/11/2001 has been the subject of some debate. In a June 2002 speech at West Point, President George W. Bush asserted, “Deterrence – the promise of massive retaliation against nations – means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend.”⁹ However, the U.S. strategic defense guidance published in January 2012, *Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, directs that “U.S. forces will be capable of deterring and defeating aggression by any potential adversary.”¹⁰

The current U.S. military concept for deterrence operations, published in December 2006, applies the same general approach to deterring a terror attack by a non-state actor as it does to deterring a nuclear missile attack by a nation-state.¹¹ The U.S. understanding of deterrence was largely developed from its symmetric Cold War meaning and application and has not been substantially adapted to address emerging asymmetric, VEO threats. However, the proliferation and lethal potential of VEOs with the intent, capability, and willingness to threaten the vital interests of the U.S. on a potentially catastrophic scale requires the U.S. government to examine critically how to effectively deter such actors. Although the U.S. deterrence concept now includes deterrence of non-state actors, much work remains to fully develop and effectively operationalize deterrence approaches to address the unique challenges of VEO threats. Further, to address

root-cause issues that generate and sustain VEOs will require more than a military solution. An updated concept must address the role of deterrence in the broader, whole-of-government context of preventing and managing conflicts with VEOs, which will require some conceptual changes to how the U.S. military conducts deterrence operations.

Toward that end, the U.S. should consider the Israeli approach to, and experience with, deterrence operations as a crucible for examining ideas for deterring highly-enabled VEOs that engage in persistent conflict. As Thomas Rid observed in his *Contemporary Security Policy* article on Israel's evolving approach to deterrence, "Historically, Israel offers perhaps the

only case study where different approaches towards the deterrence of non-state actors and terrorists have been tried and tested over many decades – decades during which Israel's political and military leaders assumed that political violence could not be entirely stopped, only limited, thereby transcending a singular and binary view of the use of force. Operationally, Israel's experience illuminates the relationship between the deterring use of force and the construction of norms, an aspect of deterrence research that has received little attention in the vast literature on the subject."¹² This article will now examine Israel's evolving concept of deterrence operations as a way to manage conflict, focusing on its more recent application to deter VEO attacks from the Gaza Strip.



M. Asser

Two laser guided bombs dropped by the Israeli air force on an apartment belonging to a senior Hezbollah official in the center of Tyre, south Lebanon, 2006. Four children and several others were injured, though none was killed.

The Israeli Concept of Deterrence Operations: “Managing” Violence through Measured Retaliation

A Law-Enforcement-Style Conflict Management Approach

Israel’s unique conceptualization of conventional deterrence has evolved during many decades of practice against a regional mix of state and non-state adversaries. Rid traced Israel’s experience with applying deterrence against irregular, non-state actor threats to its pre-independence, Zionist movement days in the 1920s.¹³ Driven by its many adversaries and perpetually hostile environment, Israel has developed a policy, strategy, and culture of deterrence as a strategic necessity. Since achieving statehood in 1948, deterrence has stood as a pillar of Israel’s national defense strategy, inferring an operational and strategic

deterrence meaning to IDF capabilities, such as the Iron Dome missile-defense system to deny successful rocket attacks, and unmanned combat air vehicles, or drones, to provide prompt retaliation for VEO attacks. In particular, deterrence has served as a strategic foundation to the IDF’s developing design and execution of “deterrence operations” as its broad approach for achieving and maintaining a relative state of deterrence against adaptive threat actors in a dynamic environment.

Born out of its initial employment to deter violent Arab terrorist attacks and crimes against early Zionist settlers, the Israeli approach resembles aspects of a law enforcement concept for deterring crime.¹⁴ Like a law-enforcement practitioner’s basic assumption of the inevitability of some amount of crime, Israel presumes political violence with its neighbors will be a persistent problem that cannot be eliminated, and must, therefore, be *managed* to keep it at an acceptable level. As with law-enforcement capabilities for deterring crime, Israel maintains a credible, ready security force to enable the threat and use of force, both to punish and to reduce the future risk of VEO attacks.

A Dual Logic of Deterrence Operations

To address VEO attacks, Israel systematically uses measured retaliation – and periodically, massive retaliation – as integral to how it manages violent conflict and establishes an informal norm of belligerent behavior between itself and an adversary. Although Israel’s use of retaliatory force as a method to change an adversary’s behavior is compellence, not deterrence, Israel calls them “deterrence operations” due to their primary coercive objective of restoring deterrence. In general, the intent of Israeli retaliation is not a backward-looking act



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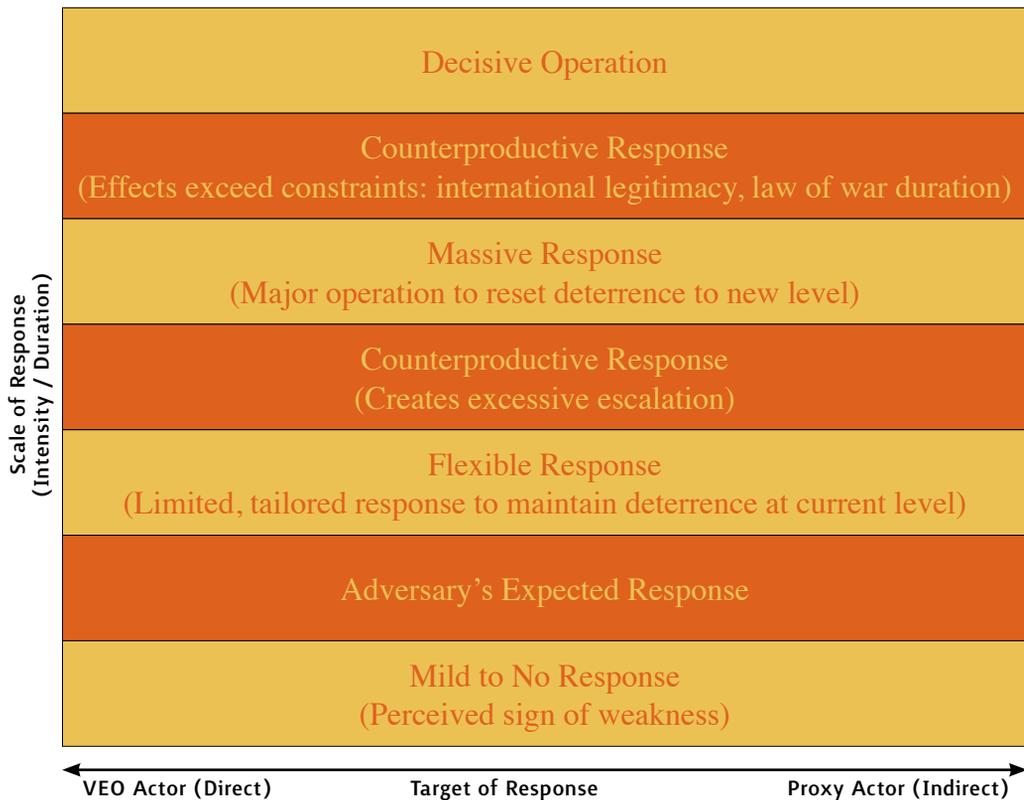
A kindergarten in central Israel during a rocket alarm, July 2014.

of retributive punishment, but a forward-looking, utilitarian action designed to both punish the breach of norms and to influence the adversary’s decision calculus by imposing a high enough cost to deter future attacks.¹⁵ Like the U.S. idea of tailored deterrence operations, the target of the IDF’s retaliation is specific to the threatened act, actor, and circumstances; however, the IDF also intends that other regional actors looking for signs of Israeli weakness receive a general deterrent effect.

Israel’s “deterrence operations” employ a two-tiered, or dual-logic concept, of “flexible” or “massive response” operations, depending on whether Israel is trying to maintain a status quo of deterrence or trying to restore deterrence lost through an excessive escalation of

the conflict, respectively. Since disengaging from the Gaza Strip in 2005, Israel has conducted four “massive response” deterrence operations to restore deterrence of VEOs in Gaza – Operations Summer Rains and Autumn Clouds (June–November 2006); Operation Cast Lead (December 2008–January 2009); Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012); and Operation Protective Edge (July–August 2014). During the longer, steady-state periods of small-scale conflict between these major operations, Israel has conducted “flexible response” operations: limited, tailored retaliatory attacks to punish intermittent attacks on Israel.

The deterrence model in the figure below illustrates this dual logic of “deterrence



IDF Deterrence Operations Model

operations,” depicting them as measured, optimal responses on a graduated scale of intensity and duration of potential responses (Y axis), and the careful selection of the target (X axis).

The scale of response will be discussed in the following sections. Regarding targets, in general, Israel might target either the VEO or a proxy actor to achieve its deterrence aims. In a direct approach, Israel would target the VEO actor that conducted the attack. For example, the IDF might destroy a PIJ rocket launch site if it determines that they have fired a rocket into Israel. Alternatively, Israel might take an indirect approach by targeting an actor that would serve as Israel’s proxy for influencing the VEO actor. In this case, Israel would seek to motivate the proxy actor, which might not share Israel’s deterrence objective, to use its more effective influence to deter or otherwise prevent further attacks by the VEO actor. Motivating the proxy actor may require either rewards or punishments to induce it to act. For example, Israel might have targeted Hamas by opening or closing a border-crossing site to reward or punish it, as the former governing party of the Gaza Strip, depending on whether Hamas was providing adequate security control over PIJ.

Flexible Response Operations: A Violent Dialogue

Israel conducts “flexible response” operations to punish an attack and deter an escalation of conflict by creating and maintaining an unwritten norm for the use-of-force or “rules-of-the-game” understanding between the two sides of the conflict. These rules are not formally developed and documented. Each enemy action and corresponding Israeli retaliatory response contributes to a continuous series of actions and counteractions that

establishes a “dialogue” or system of bargaining through violent actions. This violent dialogue of actions and words is communicated by both sides, typically in the absence of a direct means of communication between Israel and the VEO, to maintain conflict within a bounded range of actions.

For this article, a *threat* is defined as a function of an actor’s implied or expressed intentions, capabilities, and willingness to commit a specific act of violence under certain conditions upon another actor. Flexible response operations primarily target the VEO’s willingness to escalate its attacks.

Clearly, the Israeli approach does not consider an enemy attack, and its subsequent need to retaliate, to be a complete loss of deterrence. While an attack using weapons of mass destruction still requires an *absolute* deterrence standard of no attacks, most attacks on Israel, particularly those from VEOs, have fallen within a low-level range of persistent conflict to which Israel applies a *relative* deterrence standard. As Jeffrey Knopf observed about deterrence of asymmetric threats in *The Fourth Wave in Deterrence Research*, “However undesirable, one or even a handful of deterrence failures would not vitiate the value of deterrence. Because a single deterrence failure does not risk complete destruction of the country, the standard for evaluating deterrence has changed from the Cold War.”¹⁸ Assessing the state of deterrence under these conditions is not an objective black or white, but a subjective shade of gray.

In most cases, after an enemy attack during steady-state periods of relative calm, Israel conducts “flexible response” operations to promptly retaliate, generally in the form of military attacks, to impose a limited, immediate cost that either pre-serves a status quo of

relative deterrence or deters an escalating situation. The IDF's intent is to identify and execute a "flexible response" within an optimal range of potential responses, using limited military actions to communicate a deterrent message to the adversary that is neither too weak nor too strong. The IDF's basic assumption is that no response, or a mild response, would generally be ineffective, because the adversary might interpret it as a sign of weakness, which could encourage it to continue or escalate its acts. Likewise, the IDF estimates that a response that only meets the adversary's cost-benefit expectations would not adequately punish the attack and deter future escalation. On the other hand, a response that is too severe might demand an enemy response, leading to a counterproductive escalation. Thus, an effective response must fall within a theoretical range between what is expected and what would escalate the situation. Identifying

such a response requires careful judgment and a thorough and nuanced understanding of the adversary's core decision factors and decision calculus. Each enemy action – even a small attack on Israel, such as a mortar or small rocket fired into uninhabited Israeli territory – requires a carefully considered, consequential response to maintain Israel's relative deterrence goal within a fairly stable state of "dynamic equilibrium." Dynamic equilibrium exists when, despite the exchange of attacks and retaliation between Israel and the VEO, there is no observable net change in the system.

Effective retaliation requires a prompt, certain, and severe response.¹⁹ A prompt response shows strength and more clearly communicates the cause and effect relationship between the VEO's attack and Israel's retaliatory response. Certainty or predictability is achieved when every VEO attack is met with



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IDF soldiers uncover a tunnel near the Philadelphi Route between the Gaza Strip and Egypt

a retaliatory response. Finally, the severity of the response must achieve a deterrent effect, but not so intense as to cause counterproductive escalation.

As long as the adversary's actions and Israel's retaliations maintain a "dynamic equilibrium," then a sufficient level of deterrence exists and stronger actions by Israel are not required. However, if Israel perceives that its adversary is breaking the rules of the game by escalating its actions, and "flexible response" actions no longer maintain the deterrence status quo, then its political leaders must decide whether a "massive response operation" is required to restore deterrence.

Massive Response Operations: Escalation Dominance to Reset Deterrence

Israel conducts massive response deterrence operations to reset the "rules of the game," to restore specific deterrence of the adversary and to reinforce general deterrence across the region. Such major operations are essentially short-duration punitive expeditions, with limited objectives that fall short of decisively defeating its adversary, but are principally designed to compel the VEO to stop its belligerent behavior for as long as possible. Like flexible response operations, they are focused on influencing an adversary's *willingness* to continue escalating the conflict; however, massive response operations are distinguished by Israel's additional objective of significantly damaging the adversary's primary threat capabilities, such as command and control facilities and weapon storage sites. By destroying these *capabilities*, Israel both punishes the VEO's actions and removes its near-term capacity to resume attacks, buying Israel time before another major conflict.

Besides destroying VEO threat capabilities, the IDF seeks to compel the VEO to stop its attacks by using its superior military capabilities to achieve "escalation dominance." During the 2014 operation in Gaza, Israel initially targeted missile capabilities and command and control sites to achieve escalation dominance. However, Hamas responded with its own escalation dominance efforts by firing longer-range rockets and using cross-border tunnels to infiltrate Israel and conduct surprise attacks on Israeli forces protecting communities near the border. While Israel's Iron Dome air defense batteries destroyed most of the threatening rockets, Israel determined that the tunnels were a strategic threat capability that needed to be destroyed. To re-establish escalation dominance, Israel conducted a ground attack into Gaza to locate and destroy these tunnels.

While Israel's massive response operations leverage its superior military capacity, these operations can be constrained by practical, strategic considerations of domestic and international legitimacy, law of war, and a desire to end the conflict as quickly as possible. Exceeding these constraints can be counterproductive to strategic objectives. When fighting VEOs embedded in civilian populations, there is a strong tension between conducting operations to achieve escalation dominance and the collateral risk of non-combatant casualties and damage to civilian communities. Excessive harm to civilians could lose international support and legitimacy for its operations, thus, proving politically counterproductive. The laws of war constrain the use of military force, with principles such as distinction and proportionality requiring careful consideration, especially in conflicts involving VEOs that deliberately fight from amongst the population. On the other hand, a massive response operation

must inflict significant punishment to achieve deterrence. So, while Israel seeks escalation dominance over its opponent, its freedom of action may be constrained within operational and strategic limits. Exceeding these limits must be weighed against the potential benefits.

During Operation Pillar of Defense in 2012, the IDF demonstrated escalation dominance over its Gaza rivals through sustained and unchallenged air attacks and a successful missile defense that minimized effective attacks from Gaza. The IDF threatened further escalation by deploying forces for a ground attack into Gaza, but, ultimately, Israel's leaders decided that a ground attack was not necessary to achieve their objectives. Israel's ground operation was essentially constrained by pragmatic cost-benefit calculations that included loss of international legitimacy. While many nations supported Israel's right to self-defense, they did not support a ground attack into Gaza that might have resulted in higher numbers of civilian casualties.²⁰ During Operation Protective Edge in 2014, Israel's leaders decided that a limited ground attack was legitimate and necessary to destroy infiltration tunnels after Hamas refused an Egyptian cease-fire proposal and used a tunnel to attack Israel.²¹

Conclusions: Implications for the United States

Although the U.S. and Israel differ substantially in the scope and scale of their national security strategies, they share many interests and values. In recent years, their national interests have been increasingly threatened by dangerous and persistent VEOs that apply asymmetric approaches, such as terror attacks, to engage in long-term conflicts. Two ways the U.S. might benefit from Israel's experiences with deterring VEOs are; 1) by examining

Israel's deterrence operations concept for ways to address the unique challenges of VEOs; and 2) by considering Israel's balanced joint force development of both offensive and defensive capabilities to enable escalation dominance over its VEO adversaries. However, military deterrence operations alone are not enough to effectively prevent or manage long-term conflicts with VEOs, much less to eventually resolve them. Toward these ends, the U.S. must determine the role of deterrence operations in the broader context of its evolving whole-of-government strategy for counter-terrorism. Israel's escalating series of conflicts with VEOs in Gaza illustrates the military's capability to use flexible response operations to manage the escalation of violence between major conflicts, as well as its capability to conduct massive response operations to temporarily prevent conflict by reducing the adversary's will and capability for violence. However, to holistically and decisively address VEOs during a long-term conflict requires a whole-of-government approach that addresses its root causes. To enable the development of the requisite joint force capabilities, the military should develop a concept of support for such a strategy.

Adapt the Concept of Deterrence Operations to Address VEOs

As the U.S. continues to evolve its joint concept for deterrence operations, it should consider adapting a conflict prevention/management approach, based on Israel's experience, to deal with persistent conflict with VEOs. Such a concept must recognize the inevitability of VEO attacks and seek to manage long-term conflicts, employing "flexible response" operations to maintain relative deterrence, or "massive response" operations to restore it. As direct communication with VEOs is unlikely, the U.S. concept should

describe how to use a violent dialogue of prompt, predictable, severe retaliation to normatively establish clear “rules of the game.” The concept should also describe how to judiciously employ retaliatory actions that are severe enough to show strength and deter an enemy response, but not so strong as to encourage excessive, counterproductive escalation. The concept should discuss considerations for either directly targeting VEOs or indirectly influencing them through a proxy actor. For conflicts that escalate to an unacceptable level, the concept should describe major deterrence operations that would apply military ways and means to establish escalation dominance. Finally, the concept should provide key ideas and required capabilities for a short-term, punitive expedition, designed to destroy key threat capabilities and reduce an adversary’s willingness to attack.

Develop A Balanced Mix of Offensive and Defensive Deterrence Capabilities

The U.S. should examine a variety of VEO threat scenarios to determine the right balance of offensive and defensive capabilities required to support a concept of deterrence operations. Offensive capabilities provide the means to credibly threaten retaliation. However, to prevent conflict and deter VEOs that have little or no physical targets of value, defensive capabilities may better strengthen a deterrence posture.

VEOs generally lack targetable territory and infrastructure, which limits the deterrence value of offensive, cost-imposition capabilities. However, deterrence can also be achieved by employing effective active and passive defense capabilities. Investing in defensive capabilities to help prevent successful attacks enhances deterrence, and they can complement offensive



Iron Dome system intercepts Gaza rockets aimed at central Israel.

capabilities capable of imposing a price for VEO attacks. For example, the IDF's Iron Dome is an effective missile-defense capability that denies adversaries the benefits of a successful rocket or missile attack. According to senior Israeli sources, during Operation Protective Edge, Iron Dome intercepted almost 90 percent of the rockets headed for Israeli population centers, avoiding damage and casualties, and denying Hamas the benefits of its rockets causing destruction.²² Of more than 4,500 rockets fired from Gaza, approximately 25 percent threatened to hit populated areas, but only 70 hit urban areas inside Israel (killing one Israeli civilian; four other Israeli civilians and nine Israeli soldiers were killed by mortars).²³ In areas protected by Iron Dome, there were no civilian fatalities.²⁴ Israel also developed a national civil-defense warning and shelter system to warn its citizens of rocket attacks. Such a passive-defense system also contributed to deterrence by reducing casualties and increasing the population's resilience, and it complemented Israel's offensive air and ground capabilities.

The U.S. should also examine the required authorities and capabilities to enable joint forces with prompt use of non-lethal offensive capabilities, such as cyber-attack and electronic warfare capabilities. As described earlier, the capability to retaliate promptly, with measured intensity and predictability, and in a way that does not lead to excessive escalation, demands that the U.S. have such offensive means with global reach. Offensive capabilities enable the U.S. to credibly threaten a VEO with retaliatory costs. Cyber and electronic warfare tools can provide a non-attributable response to threats that sends adversaries a strong, clear message, while reducing the risk of inciting an escalatory response.

Develop a Military Concept of Support to a Whole-of-Government Strategy for Conflict Prevention and Management

On 16 September 2014, Secretary of Defense Hagel told Congress, "...American military power alone cannot, will not eradicate the threats posed by ISIL to the United States, our allies, and our friends and partners in the region....We intend to use all of those instruments of power, military, law enforcement, economic, diplomatic, and intelligence in coordination with all the countries in the region."²⁵ In short, addressing long-term conflicts with VEOs, like ISIL, requires a whole-of-government approach with the unified efforts of allies and other partners.

Israel's approach to deterrence operations includes a variety of military methods: deterrence, dissuasion, compellence, and pre-emption. However, Israel's military operations have not decisively resolved its conflicts with VEOs. These methods may buy Israel a time of relative calm, but its adversaries use this time to rearm and rebuild. Perhaps its adversaries might become exhausted with the conflict and seek a less violent path, but perhaps not. Ultimately, Israel must either defeat its VEO adversaries militarily or use all of its instruments of power to address its adversary's strategic intent/motivations for conflict. Former Israeli Foreign Minister, Shlomo Ben Ami, in addressing the 2014 conflict between Israel and Gaza, assessed Israel's dilemma, saying, "These wars are creating a new kind of threat to Israel, for they add to the conflicts' strictly military dimension the domains of diplomacy, regional politics, legitimacy, and international law, in which Israel does not have the upper hand. As a result, in asymmetrical conflicts, Israel finds its military superiority vitiated. These are political battles that cannot be won

by military means. The asymmetry between the nature of the threats and Israel's response ends up putting the superior military power in a position of strategic inferiority."²⁶ To be clear, VEO attacks demand an effective military response. Israeli deterrence operations have effectively purchased short periods of calm. But it takes more than military ways and means to manage, and perhaps resolve, such conflicts. If military means are insufficient, then how might the government best use the time and security purchased through military deterrence operations to move toward peace?

To gain lasting, or at least incremental, value from deterrence operations against VEOs, the operations must be conceptualized as a supporting part of a broader, whole-of-government strategy, a more comprehensive, long-term approach, to address conflict with VEOs. The U.S. National Security Strategy states, "Successful engagement will depend upon the effective use and integration of different elements of American power. Our diplomacy and development capabilities must help prevent conflict..." Toward this end, the U.S. military should develop a joint concept for military support to a whole-of-government strategy to prevent and manage conflict. The primary role of military deterrence operations, in this context, would be to buy time and create the security conditions for a whole-of-government strategy. Such a strategy is led by diplomatic and development efforts that are intended to address the root causes that create and sustain the VEOs. These non-military efforts will leverage the time bought by deterrence operations to enable the U.S. to seize the initiative and decisively resolve its conflicts with VEOs. **PRISM**

Notes

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⁵ CCJO, 2.

⁶ CCJO, 2.

⁷ Remarks by the President at the United States Military Academy Commencement Ceremony.

⁸ Remarks by the President at the United States Military Academy Commencement Ceremony.

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¹⁹ Rid, 128.

²⁰ International Crisis Group, *Israel and Hamas: Fire and Ceasefire in a New Middle East*, Middle East Report No. 133, 22 November 2012, 10.

²¹ Batsheva Sobelman, and Alexandra Zavis, "Israeli troops and tanks move into the Gaza Strip," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 July 2014.

²² Iron Dome data came from Alon Ben-David, "No Fatalities In Israel's Iron Dome Zone," *Aviation Week Intelligence Network*, 28 August 2014,.

²³ Ben-David, "No Fatalities In Israel's Iron Dome Zone."

²⁴ Ben-David, "No Fatalities In Israel's Iron Dome Zone."

²⁵ Chuck Hagel, "Statement on Iraq, Syria, and ISIL Before the Senate Armed Services Committee," U.S. Department of Defense, 16 September 2014.

²⁶ Shlomo Ben-Ami, "The Gaza Trap," Project Syndicate, 28 July 2014, <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/shlomo-ben-ami-explains-why-israel-finds-itself-in-a-strategically-inferior-position>.

Photos

Page 60 photo by Emanuel Yellin. 2012. *Iron Dome during "Operation Pillar of Cloud"*. From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:IronDome246.jpg> licensed under the Creative Commons **Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported** license. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>. Photo reproduced unaltered.

Page 62 photo by Israel Defense Forces. 2007. *Eight Qassam launchers, seven equipped with operating systems and one armed and ready to launch, were uncovered during a counter-terrorism operation in northern Gaza. Had it been launched, this Qassam would have targeted Israel's civilian population.* From https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr_-_Israel_Defense_Forces_-_Eight_Qassam_Launchers_in_Gaza.jpg licensed under the Creative Commons **Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic** license. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/deed.en>. Photo reproduced unaltered.

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Page 72 photo by Israel Defense Forces. 2014. *Iron Dome system intercepts Gaza rockets aimed at central Israel.* From https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iron_Dome_in_Operation_Protective_Edge.jpg licensed under the Creative Commons **Attribution 2.0 Generic** license. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en>. Photo reproduced unaltered.



Cyclone Nargis makes landfall in Myanmar, May 3, 2008