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The Israel Defense Forces as an Epistemic Authority: An Intellectual Challenge in the Reality of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict

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ABSTRACT The changes in the nature of warfare and its transformation toward Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) intrastate conflict have challenged the patterns of interaction between the political and the military echelons in Israel. It seems that the political echelon's superiority is maintained at the institutional and formal levels, but on the substantive level, which demands relying on knowledge and systematic staff work, the political echelon's position is weakened and loses its validity.

Introducing the military echelon in Israel as an epistemic authority regarding the violent confrontation and the main outlines of the military knowledge development process might clarify why the absence of the required dialogue between the echelons and the weakness of the intellectual effort increased the military's influence over the shaping of Israeli conflict-management strategy. The argument's validity and its explanatory power can be found relevant for other countries whose militaries are deeply involved in the management of LIC.

KEY WORDS: Israel, civil-military-relations, civil control, epistemic-authority, knowledge, lic, influence

New World of Warfare and its Implications over Civil-Military Relations

Until the last two decades, war was mostly characterized by armed conflict between state entities. Those conflicts can be described as High Intensity Conflicts (HIC) or *interstate conflicts*. This nature of warfare has changed dramatically after the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War. Since then, most violent conflicts have been characterized as ethno-national and communal conflicts. These conflicts can be