

# Principles of the Israeli Political-Military Discourse Based on the Recent IDF Strategy Document

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Relations between the military and political echelons in Israel are complex and multifaceted, both in theory and in practice. The problems resulting from the interface between the two have at times resulted in ineffective military deployment or a crisis of expectations. Moreover, as the positions of the political echelon are never unanimous, its directives to the military have not always been aligned with the government's position, and sometimes even have been nebulous.

In August 2015, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) released a document entitled the "IDF Strategy" directly addressing the issue. Signed by the chief of staff, the document is notable in part for its proposal to adjust the discourse between the military and political echelons as well as to clarify the role of the chief of staff and his functional autonomy. In this document, the chief of staff suggests to the political echelon how it should formulate directives to the military so that military action will match the political objective in question, and thereby prevent a crisis of expectations. According to the document, the IDF sees its role of achieving "victory," which does not necessarily mean defeating the enemy; the political echelon together with the chief of staff must define the concept of victory before the military is deployed. The publication of the "IDF Strategy," unprecedented in Israel's civil-military relations, also highlights the chief of staff's sensitivity to Israeli public opinion.

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