

POSITIONING OF ISRAEL WITH ITS NEIGHBOURS AND ITS MISSILE DEFENCE SYSTEM

INDRANI TALUKDAR

Israel with a population of eight million people is situated along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Its geographic location has significant consequence when it comes to threat perception. It borders Lebanon in the north, Syria in the northeast, Jordan and the West Bank in the east, Egypt and the Gaza Strip on the southwest, and the Gulf of Aqaba in the Red Sea to the south, containing geographically diverse features within its relatively small area. Its geo-political location creates security nightmare for Israeli defence planners as it is surrounded by hostile or potentially belligerent neighbourhood on each of its flanks in the West Asian region. The State of Israel is a geographic divide, the contiguity of the few Arab entities – the West Asia and the North African. For the countries in the West Asia, Israel has been a major strategic distraction. Israel constitutes a crucial factor in the domestic and foreign policy of these countries. It shares a 79 km boundary with Lebanon, 76 km with Syria, 238 km with Jordan, and 266 km with Egypt. Its distance from Iran is 1,558 km, 931 km from Turkey, 412 km from Cyprus and 1,253 km from Greece thus putting Israel in hotspot. Although, the Palestinians are still to be granted independence, the borders that the State of Israel shares with the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are

Ms. **Indrani Talukdar** is a Research Associate at the Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi.

approximately 307 km and 51 km respectively.¹

The distances between these fragile regions and Israel poses security dilemma for Israel, the West Asian and Mediterranean region. It is a complex cobweb of insecurity embedded in religion, ethnicity and also in the treasures of energy, oil and other natural resources. Although Israel has been looked upon as a country that has been under threat from many countries for which it had to develop a strong defence system but one cannot overlook the other side of the coin as well. Islamic neighbouring countries in this region feel a threat to their religion and ethnicity due to the impact of globalisation based on the principles of liberal democracy and economy and not on religion and ethnicity. These regions especially Iran, Syria and the non-state actor Hezbollah of Lebanon feel the Western influence especially that of the US has been of neo-imperialistic dimensions and not of genuine humanity which would mislead the people towards misery and suppression. Another factor that could be seen behind the growing aggressiveness of Iran has been the constant portrayal of being “rogue states” by the West especially by the US and Israel. This portrayal could be a psychological impact leading to belligerence moves from these regimes. In addition to this, these countries see Israel not only as the US agent to have a control of the natural assets that this region holds but also an invader who took away the homeland of Palestinians. They also have been edgy over Israel’s requirement of energy which they feel as a threat to their security.

Towards this security dilemma, two camps that could be perceived have been the nexus especially between Israel-US² and the nexus between Iran-Lebanon-Syria against each other. In this conundrum, seen from a larger angle, the main contenders have been the US and Iran who have been contesting against each other through their friends and allies. The distance between Israel and Lebanon and Israel and Syria, clarifies a lot of Iran’s influence over these two countries to counter Israel. This insecurity for Israel has been created by the geographic distance. Therefore, Iran,

1. RSN Singh, “Israel’s Threat Perception”, *Indian Defence Review*, February 2, 2012, at <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/author/rsnsingh/> accessed on August 2, 2012.
2. Earlier it was a strong nexus between US-Israel-Turkey which was seen as a shield from the threat of Iran and Syria with the help of Hezbollah. But with the strain in the relationship between Israel and Turkey after the *Mavi Marmara* incident this nexus has weakened.

Hezbollah, Hamas and Syria pose the main threats to Israel.

A wider angle to perceive this threat to Israel could be to get even with the US. These belligerent countries as well as non-state actors would keep Israel under the threat perception to counter the hegemony of the US. In this situation, Hezbollah and Hamas have been seen as the different sides of the same coin which has been in a two-front war with Israel. In fact, it has been regarded in Israel that, Hezbollah has been an extension of both Syria and Iran's aggressive foreign policy. It has been bred and is still continuing to breed to take advantage of the US's malaise in Iraq to reassert its influence and deny the "democratic project" of the US especially that of the former US President George W. Bush for West Asia.³ Israel has been dealing with sub-conventional threats to its national security since its establishment in 1948. Its deterrence policy has traditionally concentrated on the prevention of full-scale conventional war. The reason behind this policy was due to the fact that such warfare could jeopardise not only Israel's basic security, but even its actual existence. At the same time, Israel although has a less clearly defined strategy for sub-conventional/low intensity threats but the vital feature towards this counter attack is of "massive retaliation". Its counter-terrorist/counter-insurgency strategy has undergone modifications over the years. To deter low-intensity conflict, Israel has consistently promised to retaliate disproportionately against terrorist and guerrilla organisations.⁴

Lebanon has always been in a contesting position against Israel regarding the maritime borders which is rich with oil fields and also with the cross-border violence. These two parties have been at loggerheads with each other from 1970s to 2000. In 1978 Israel had invaded Lebanon for the first time. Although, the reason for the clash was the Palestine refugees in Lebanon who became militants but the spill-over effect of Israeli-Palestine conflict was over Lebanon as well. In fact especially from 1977, the Israeli-

3. Clive Jones, "Introduction" in Clive Jones and Sergio Catignani (ed) *Israel and Hizbollah: An Asymmetric conflict in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p.2.

4. Sergio Catignani, "Israeli Counter-Insurgency Strategy and the Quest for Security in the Israeli-Lebanese Conflict Area" in Clive Jones and Sergio Catignani (ed) *Israel and Hizbollah: An Asymmetric conflict in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p.67. Also for further details regarding the modifications on the counter-terrorist/counter-insurgency strategy of Israel, refer Catignani's "Israeli Counter-Insurgency Strategy", pp.67-89.

Palestine conflict which was initially perceived within the context of a national and interstate dispute has been seen by the Israelis as a conflict of intercommunal and internecine war. The danger posed by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) became a strategic danger for Israel than just being a nuisance terror.⁵ In 1982, Israel had invaded Lebanon⁶ again but withdrew to a slim borderland buffer zone, held with the aid of proxy militants in the South Lebanon Army (SLA)⁷.

In 1985, Hezbollah, a Lebanese Shia resistance movement sponsored by Iran⁸, called for armed struggle to end the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory. When the Lebanese civil war ended and other warring factions agreed to disarm, Hezbollah and the SLA refused. Combat with Hezbollah, weakened Israeli resolve and led to a collapse of the SLA and an Israeli withdrawal in 1999 to their side of the UN designated border. Citing Israeli control of the Shebaa farms territory, Hezbollah continued cross border attacks intermittently over the next six years. Hezbollah sought freedom for Lebanese citizens in Israeli prisons and successfully used the tactic of capturing Israeli soldiers as leverage for a prisoner exchange in 2004.⁹ The capturing of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah ignited the 2006 Lebanon

5. Ibid, p.69. In fact, this mixing of religion could be seen as a main contesting point for Hezbollah's intervention, supported by the Iranians, against the Israelis.
6. Israel's traditional security concept based on a defensive deterrent posture to maintain the status quo was radically changed with the 1982 Lebanon War. This War was given a wider scope and transformed into an instrument which aided in the realisation of political objectives that were unrelated to any notion of deterrence. The intercommunal dimension was seen as not only as a physical threat to the state of Israel, but also as an existential menace against the Jewish community as a whole. Ibid, p. 69.
7. Christian militia army financed and trained by Israel with a view to control the Israeli security zone in the South of Lebanon. The SLA advocates for a pro-Western Lebanon and devoid of Syrian presence. In June 1999, after the election of Ehud Barak as Prime Minister of Israel, the SLA started withdrawing from the northern most part of the so-called "Security Zone", the Jezzine area of which it took control in 1985. "South Lebanon Army", *Sound of Egypt.com*, at <http://www.soundofegypt.com/palestinian/adult/sla.htm>, accessed on August 6, 2012.
8. Iran's support to Hezbollah marked the involvement of Iran in the Israeli-Lebanese conflict. Syria initially was apprehensive and alarmed at Iran's support to Hezbollah. But by the late 1980s Syria viewed Hezbollah as a valid proxy combatant against Israeli strategic aims regarding Lebanon. With direct support from Iran and with the passive connivance of Syria, Iran was able to provide the Islamic Resistance with substantial guerrilla tactics training as well as sophisticated weaponry such as BM-21 rocket-launchers and AT-3 guided missiles, SAM-7 anti-aircraft and Stinger. Catignani's "Israeli Counter-Insurgency Strategy", p.73.
9. This reaction from the Hezbollah was supported by the Shia communities because of the Israeli attritions against them which included arbitrary economic blocks, long curfews, and periodic cut-off of electricity and water provision from the 1980's.

War. Ironically, the major Israeli challenge in controlling Lebanon after its 1982 invasion was not actually contending with the remnants of the PLO fighters. Contending with new ethno-religious groups that were endangered more by the Israeli-Christian alliance than by the Palestinians became Israel's main preoccupation.¹⁰

The 2006 war with Hezbollah was a huge blow to Israeli defence strategy. The war named as the "Rocket War" or *Harb Tammuz* saw the plummeting of rockets and missiles from both sides. In fact this war was a war where Israelis couldn't claim a definite military victory although the magnitude of Israel's military onslaught was heavy. The Israeli air defence was badly affected by the militia's short range missiles.¹¹ This was the sixth war which had and still has the potentiality for a wider regional conflagration that would include Damascus and Tehran. This potential flashpoint poses dangerous consequences to Israel although a comparison between the other on-going conflicts between Palestine also cannot be overlooked. But the nexus of Iran-Syria with the help of Hezbollah could be seen as a cognisant step to deter the common threat from Israel and the US. This could be affirmed with the defence pact of June 15, 2006 between Iran and Syria. The reason of ire for Iran and Syria apart from the long held displeasure against the US and Israel had been the following:

- For Iran, the gain was to expose the division between Europe and the US at a time when Iran faced the threat of UN-backed international sanctions over its nuclear programme.

The 2006 war with Hezbollah was a huge blow to Israeli defence strategy. The war named as the "Rocket War" or *Harb Tammuz* saw the plummeting of rockets and missiles from both sides.

10. Catignani's "Israeli Counter-Insurgency Strategy", p.73.

11. The missiles of varying range and conventional capability of Hezbollah not only affirms of a confrontation with Israel or its need to affirm its hegemony but also a barricade against the US's struggle over Iran. Jones, "Introduction", p.2.

- For Syria,¹² the anger was because of the humiliation it had to take because of its well-founded suspicious involvement in the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq-al-Hariri of Lebanon. Syrian use of Hezbollah has also been a palliative to the US attempts to ostracise the Ba'athist regime over its link to Hamas and Hezbollah along with its apparent indifference to jihadists crossing from Syrian territory to fight alongside the insurgents of Iraq.¹³

In fact, towards this end, Israel has been witnessing a proliferation of air and missile threats from years especially after the 2006 war. Interestingly, these threats have been from insurgent and terrorist groups supported especially by the two regimes, Iran and Syria. By early 1990's, Israel had developed an intricate counter-terrorist/counter-insurgency strategy based on both active and passive defence measures. Its counter-guerrilla strategy and operational doctrine in Lebanon consisted of five interrelated elements:

- Passive defence where it consisted of defensive measures employed to protect the Israeli civilians from *Katyusha* and other rocket and heavy mortar attacks comprised of advanced fortifications embedded in the security zone-and high-tech security fences with electronic sensor capabilities. The core of Israel's passive defence measures was the high-tech security fence, which contained various early warning and detection systems in order to block any terrorist/guerrilla infiltration.
- Active defence consisted of limited operations such as infantry and Special Forces patrols and ambushes, which aimed to "search and destroy" Hezbollah units within the security zone.
- Offensive operations were those that entailed the Israeli Defence

12. Syria had acted as the main spoiler against Israel's plans to leave Lebanon on favorable security terms: the attainment of a peace agreement with Lebanon and the demilitarisation of south Lebanon. Syria which had the most influence over Lebanese politics could easily manipulate Lebanon into frustrating any Israeli attempts at resolving the Israeli-Lebanese conflict. This was effectively done by allowing Hezbollah to overtly maintain arms and to continue with its insurgency campaign against Israeli and SLA units. Syria's ire towards Israel could be found in Israel's capturing of Golan Heights in 1967 Six Day War. Catignani's "Israeli Counter-Insurgency Strategy", p.78.

13. Clive Jones, "Introduction" in Clive Jones and Sergio Catignani (ed) *Israel and Hizbollah: An Asymmetric conflict in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p.2.

Force (IDF) units infiltrating areas beyond the security zone and into Hezbollah safe havens. The Israeli Air Force (IAF) was often at the heart of such offensive operations given that they usually included air sorties targeting Hezbollah infrastructure, training camps as well as the targeted assassination of important Hezbollah leaders.

- Deterrence although the main aim of these operations was that of improving Israel's deterrent posture vis-à-vis Israel's state and sub-state enemies involved in the Lebanon quagmire, Israel's retaliatory operations increasingly lost their deterrent effect against the 4,000 short range rockets fired from Lebanese territory into Israeli's settlements.

Negotiation and diplomatic efforts¹⁴ which till date has remained unaffected.

In fact, with the new factor emerged in the form of Arab Spring in West Asia from 2010 has been of great concern to Israel's threat perception.¹⁵ It has been assumed that Iran has been the main instigator behind this upheaval. Towards countering all kinds of threats, Israel's Defence Force has been developing its Air and Missile Defence programme. For Israelis, this programme would be a deterrent as well as a compellent threat against these hostile elements. Deterrent threats require the target to refrain from committing acts that the threatener does not like and compellent threats require the target to engage in actions that they do not wish to do.¹⁶ The threats specifically from air for Israel has been categorised into manned combat aircraft, air launched standoff weapons, UAV, Missiles (ballistic, cruise and rockets), Land Attack Cruise Missile (LACM) and air borne attacks. Civil aviation has emerged as a new means of threat, post 9/11. The Israeli Air Force holds the command and control of this programme.

14. Catignani's "Israeli Counter-Insurgency Strategy", pp. 79-80.

15. Perception is the process of apprehending by means of the senses and recognising and interpreting what is processed. Psychologists think of perception as a single unified awareness derived from sensory processes while a stimulus is present. Perception is the basis for understanding, learning, and knowing and the motivation for action. Janice Gross Stein, "Threat Perceptions in International relations", p.2, at <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/politics/research/researchareasofstaff/isppsummeracademy/instructors%20/Stein%20-%20Threat%20Perception%20in%20International%20Relations.pdf> accessed on August 2, 2012.

16. Ibid, p. 2.

Iran has been developing extended range (ER) missiles which could be of grave consequences for Israel which could have a ripple effect on the entire region.

Iran's moves independently (building of nuclear weapons) and through the militias has made Iran the main threat driver. Iran's strategically emerging coalitions with Syria, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihadis detects its quest for hegemony over the region. Both Hezbollah and Hamas have proved to be the auxiliary arms for Iran and now Syria after the assassination of Lebanon's al-Hariri.

Analysing the air threats from Syria and Iran, one important conclusion that the Israelis have arrived at is that, these belligerent countries have been giving more importance to missiles although air power hasn't been completely ignored. Israel has categorised this air threat under several headings like Manned Combat Air Craft, Stand off Air Launched Missiles and Land Attack Cruise Missiles. In the case of Syria, it has been noticed that Syria has been stressing more on missiles than air power. It is opaque in military operations. Most of their aircrafts which have been MIG-29, SU-24, SU-22, and MIG-23 have been kept for museum use. The Syrians have been investing more in missiles. Meanwhile, Iran has F-14 Tomcat, MIG-29, SU-24, F4 Phantom. It has a Joint Command Structure. In 2010 they had the largest air force parade in Sastan where they showcased 220 aircrafts. It has Russian and the US aircrafts. But, Iran like Syria has shown interest in long-range missiles and not in modern aircrafts. In fact, aircraft purchase has been giving way to missile programmes. Iran has been collaborating with Russia for its defence equipments which Israelis perceive it as a strategic move.

In the Stand off Air Launched Missiles, the KH missile has a range of 2,760km, anti radar, AS-14 Molniya which of 10km could pose a threat to Israel. There have been Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) like Missad, Ababil A, Ababil B which has the capacity to do a lethal attack especially the Ababil B. In the section of the LACM, Iranian "Karar" armed drone has approximately 1000km range; Iranian emulation of Kh-55 has 3000km. The specialty of these missiles which Iranian claims is that these missiles can bomb and return back. Israelis therefore do not want the Iranians to

develop LACM. Iran maintains that they have developed missiles with the range of 2000km which Israelis refuses to believe. The Missile Threat towards Israel could be categorised the missiles into four categories with its range:

- Theatre Ballistic Missiles (TBM): Range 300-2500km
- Tactical Ballistic Missiles : Range 120-300km
- Heavy and Medium Artillery Rocket: Range 40-250km
- Stand and Improvised Artillery Rocket: Range 4-40km

Iran has been developing extended range (ER) missiles which could be of grave consequences for Israel which could have a ripple effect on the entire region. Iran's missiles like the Shahab B variants have been of single stage, non storable liquid propellants. Iran has Shahab 3 with a range of 1,300km and warhead explosive, Shahab 3 ER with cluster and thermobaric explosives with a range of 2000km and Kadir 1 also with cluster and thermobaric explosives with a range of 2000km. This threat was visualised in 1998. The new missile Kadir has been more or less the same like the other missiles in Iranian possession. But, what gives an edge to Kadir has been the technological change and guidance system which have been different. Although, Iran has declared the range of Kadir to be of 200km¹⁷ but Israelis suspect it to be 10 times more than what Iranians have announced. What is interesting to note here is that, these missiles were being sold by North Korea to both Iran and Pakistan. Iranians have specified their interest over the long-range missiles for which Shahab came into existence. An important point about these missiles is that, the difference lies in the maneuvering skills which have been obtained by changing the weight and balance of missiles and not only by changing the metal of the missiles, like the design of Shahab 3 could be seen as nothing but the basic design of the Ghauri. There has been a speculation in Israel that these designs might have been sold by Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) where the role of post-USSR also cannot be overlooked. According to Uzi Rubin, it could

17. At <http://www.habermomitor.com/en/haber/detay/long-range-missile-iran-will-try-today/93235/> accessed on June 5, 2012.

have come from Russia which was declining under economic pressure via DPRK.¹⁸

Iran has been developing single stage propellant missiles and also the two stages solid propellants in the form of Asura/Sejjil which has a range of 2,200-2,500km with cluster, thermobaric explosives. It doesn't have similarity to Shaheen. The important part of this missile has been that, it is indigenous and not from Russia or North Korea. Although, Asura has been different from the other missiles but it has a resemblance with Shahab in the feature of diameter of 125m. It also uses the same body neck the rest being different. Iranian maintains that, its range is only 2000km but it has been estimated to be of 2,200. An important feature of this missile has been that, it has the capability to do a cyclic cowing/co swing in the air where the inter operability remains the key towards their success.¹⁹

Israelis have concern about the possession of Heavy Artillery Rockets, which are both guided and unguided and which are in possession of Iran and Hizbullah. They are Nazeet—range: C 150km. This rocket is still in possession of both Iran and Hizbullah. Secondly, Zitzal 2—range: C 250km. This rocket is also with Iran and Hizbullah. But what makes this rocket fatal is that this rocket can hit Tel Aviv, Fatah 110—range: C200km is a guided rocket which is possessed by Iran but not known whether Syria and Hizbullah possesses it or not. These rockets are of inertial navigational system with a guidance package and GPS kit. Apart from the rockets, a range of theatre ballistic missiles have been processed. Syria's possess a range of theatre ballistic missiles which is indigenous in nature and also been borrowed from both North Korea and Iran. The theatre ballistic missiles which Syria possesses have been that of the Scud variants:

- Scud B—range 300km.
- Scud C—range C600km. Its warhead is explosive and chemical. This is possessed by both Syria and Iran.
- Scud D—range 700km. Its warhead is explosive and chemical with a

18. Uzi Rubin, former Director of the Israel Mission Defence Organisation in the Israel Ministry of Defence (MOD) talk on "Israel's Air and Defence Programme" held on June 4, 2012 at the Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi.

19. Ibid.

cluster—runway, demolition, antipersonnel with both fuel/air. This is possessed by Syria.

SS21 “Tochka” is a precision battlefield missile with a range of 120km. According to Uzi Rubin, these tactical ballistic missiles’ designs of Syria must have been copied from North Korea. Many heavy artillery rockets have been converted into the M600 TBM. Sk600 with a range of approximately 200km is an unguided low accuracy missile. The SM 600 has a range of 300km which is a guided one with good accuracy. The Medium Artillery Rockets have been possessed by Iran, Syria and Hezbollah. They are Fazer3 with a range of C45km, “220mm” with a range of C70km which is possessed by only Syria and Fajeer 5 with a range of C75km which is possessed by Iran and Hezbollah. There have been light rockets which are in possession of Hezbollah like the Military Issue Mobile Launchers with a range of 122mm, Improvised Mobile Launcher with 107mm. Through the GRAD BM21 extended range rocket, there was an attack on Haifa Seaport in July 2006.²⁰

Apart from the Hezbollah threat, strengthened by the nexus of Iran and Syria, Israelis also face threat from Hamas, the Islamic Jihadis. These groups have been resourceful who makes homemade rockets through animal fertiliser, sugar and metal. Some of the rockets are “Kassam” with a range of 4-12km, Grad 122mm artillery rocket with a range of 20km, Grad ER 122 mm artillery rocket with a range of 43 km etc. They are more or less of same capabilities with resourceful techniques as well. The speaker pointed out the air threat on Israel through these countries of Iran, Syria and Lebanon’s Hizbullah because of the Scud rockets, heavy and light rockets etc. The implications of these air threats through these missile programs by Syria, Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas on Israeli security is fatal. These programmes of Israel’s adversary have the capability to disrupt military bases and inflict economic damage, terror and nuclear threats. In order to counter these threats, Israel has come up with a strong air and missile defence programme:-

Apart from the Hezbollah threat, strengthened by the nexus of Iran and Syria, Israelis also face threat from Hamas, the Islamic Jihadis.

20. Ibid.

- The Israel Navy has been equipped by the Long Range Surface to Air Missile (LR-SAM) mission. This defence is against multiple threats which can intercept up to a range of 70km. It is under the Israeli joint operation command.
- The Israeli Air Force/Air Defence Command Equipment is the Air Defence Wing. The air defence command system is using MIM 23 Hawk and PAC2, which is a Missile and Air Defence System.

Israelis have built a Multi-layered Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) Concept. Arrow Intermediate Tier Capability which optimised against Theatre Ballistic Missiles. This has full operational capability. The Augmented Arrow's Upper Tier Capability has been optimised against evolved, long range TBM. The Arrow3 Interceptor's capability has more than equivalent capability compared with SM3 mission of US. The Super Green Pine L Band EW/FC radar system has been operational. There have been augmented early warning capabilities which have also optimised against evolved, long range TBM. The TPY-2X Band EW Radar has been operationalised in Israel is the US owned and operated. The most important part of this radar has been that it can accurately differentiate between debris, decoy and target.²¹

In the second level of Israel's BMD is the David Sling Intermediate/Lower Tier Capability optimised against heavy and medium rockets air threats and cruise missiles. The Israelis have the Stunner Interceptor, ELM 2084 Multi Mission Radar (MMR) and Elevated Sensor System which have been kept above 3000km to see everything. In the lower level of BMD is the Iron Dome Lower Tier Capability optimised against short range rockets of the type extensively used by Hezbollah in 2006 war against Israel. Its status is operational combat proven. The main system requirements are:-

- It intercepts rockets launched from up to 70km range;
- It's an all weather operational system;
- "Defended zone" of over 150km;
- Threat warhead detonation;
- Effective against salvos;

21. Ibid.

- Ignoring rockets predicted to hit unpopulated areas.

This is a protection shield from the rocket campaign against southern Israel by Islamic Jihadis. Israel's defence from 2006 has become active which was previously quite passive. In 2008 there was a military operation against Hamas to counter the 2000 rockets being shelled over Israel by this group. After this faceoff, Israel started with its first combat interceptor system from April 2011. It has also started with their Short Range Missile Defence which is in action from 2011-2012. More batteries have been in various stages of production and delivery which have been funded by the US. For Israelis, this programme was actually a life saver for people as the system successfully discriminated between non threatening targets, scoring 75-85% kill rates against the threatening targets. This was important as Israelis were questioned by the world community against the killings of the Palestine civilians. A significant part of the interceptors which are being operationalised is that they won't get exploded over populated areas.²²

With the Arab Spring's consequences spilling over the region, Israel sees dangers looming around. Israel has been apprehensive about the strong connection between Libya, Yemen, Egypt and Syria from the start of the upheaval. For example, all suspected stockpiles of Libya were moved to Yemen during the crisis and Syria's to Lebanon. In this scenario, some future challenges knocking at Israel's door would be:

- There would be threat on Israel homeland security from the standoff of BMs and rockets, cruise missiles etc. The relative weight to manned air craft are decreasing with the coming of the air and missile defence system.
- Missile rockets are likely to become accurate and more lethal.
- Threats from Nuclear BMs are likely to emerge in future.
- All these above challenges would be factored into Israel's long term air and missile defence architecture.
- Israel's extensive investment in missile defence already has prompting responsive counter factors.²³

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

These possessions of missiles and rockets by these belligerent regimes and non-state actors have kept Israelis alert.

CONCLUSION

Israel as a strategic country in the fragile region of West Asia has been living under a constant threat which till now is countered by its own Air and Missile Defence Shield. These possessions of missiles and rockets by these belligerent regimes and non-state actors have kept Israelis alert. Israel has not only been alert towards these regimes and militias but has also turned its focus towards a future conflict zone which lies in the Eastern Mediterranean Zone of Resources. These new threats would come from the countries eligible for offshore resource exploitation like Turkey, Syria, Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and Egypt. Israel has discovered Leviant, Tamar, Dalit and Mari-B field as the potential field for future explorations for natural gas.²⁴ A future tug of war between Turkey and Southern Cyprus over the area along with Lebanon already claiming the Leviant line would be a grave matter of concern not only for Israelis security but also of the region as a whole.

The upheaval of the Arab Spring has added on Israel's realisation of the fragility of its security and also its existence. Israel is well equipped with military defence with the latest technology be it the air power or missile defence shields. But sensing the potentiality of a future flashpoint due to the Syrian crisis or the future Eastern Mediterranean crisis, somewhere it is important to maintain or revive its old allies for its own security sake. Israel's Defence Minister Ehud Barak's proposal to renew friendship with Turkey in the wake of the Syrian crisis is a strong move on Israel's side. This move would be beneficial for both the countries to evade a looming crisis and solve it responsibly. In fact, the way the Syrian crisis is taking shape, it would be wise on both the countries part to come together and renew their alliance.

24. Michael Ratner, "Israel's Offshore Natural Gas Discoveries Enhance Its Economic and Energy Outlook", *CRS Report for Congress*, January 31, 2011, p.2, at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R41618.pdf>, accessed on August 3, 2012.