

ISRAEL REPORT

To provide greater exposure to primary Israeli news sources and opinions in order to become better informed on the issues, and to gain a better understanding of the wide range of perspectives that exist in Israeli society and politics.

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HIZBULLAH USED ABANDONED IDF EQUIPMENT IN KIDNAPPING (Arutz-7 IsraelNN.com 7/13/07)

Reports from Lebanon claim that the IDF reservists kidnapped last year were alive at the time and abducted by Hizbullah terrorists using weapons abandoned by the IDF during the hasty 2000 withdrawal.

According to Maariv, an investigation has found that the terrorists who captured IDF reservists Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser were using equipment that was left when the IDF retreated from Lebanon in 2000.

The retreat was conducted hastily during the night at the orders of then-Prime Minister Ehud Barak. "The Barak government's irresponsible withdrawal from Lebanon brought Hizbullah to the fence, paved the way for Nasrallah and caused the problems in Lebanon in 2006," former Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said at a Tuesday ceremony marking a year since the Second Lebanon War.

PALESTINIAN STEALS LIEBERMAN'S CELL PHONE (Ynet 7/11/07)

Police in Jerusalem have launched a hunt after a Palestinian youth who stole a phone belonging to Strategic Affairs Minister Avigdor Lieberman.

The Palestinian, who works at a carwash station in the city, snatched the phone from the minister's car as it was being washed. The phone was later found on the youth who managed to flee the scene before the police arrived.

Following a complaint by the bodyguard, the station's owner searched his staff and found the mobile phone on the youth.

Lieberman's bodyguard filed a complaint against the youth with the police.

The police said they have identified the youth and were trying to locate him.

MK YORAM MARCIANO CAUGHT SHAVING WHILE DRIVING (Jerusalem Post 7/13/07)

MK Yoram Marciano (Labor) was stopped by police on Thursday night after he was caught shaving while driving.

According to the police, Marciano refused to wait while the officer who pulled him over checked his information, but instead grabbed his documents and attempted to flee.

In response to the reports, Marciano said he hadn't known it was illegal to shave while driving. He denied having tried to get away from police.

REPORT: INDIA, ISRAEL TO JOINTLY DEVELOP \$2.47B. MISSILE PROJECT (Haaretz 7/13/07)

India and Israel will jointly develop a new generation of medium-range surface-to-air missiles in a \$2.47 billion project that India hopes will secure its strategic assets, Indian newspapers reported this week.

India's Cabinet Committee on Security approved the joint venture Thursday, according to Indian newspaper The Economic Times.

In an article Friday, The Times of India called the project "yet another indicator that Indo-Israeli strategic ties are zooming full-steam ahead, with India buying Israeli military equipment worth a whopping \$1.6 billion just in 2006 alone."

The missile system, which is expected to take four to five years to develop, is capable of detecting and destroying aircraft, missiles and drones at a range of 70 kilometers, the Times of India reported. It quoted an unnamed source as saying that each of the 18 firing units will come equipped with a command and control center, an acquisition radar, a guidance radar and three launchers with eight missiles each.

The missile system development is an extension of a \$480 million Israel

Aerospace Industries project, launched in January 2006, to develop a supersonic 60-kilometer missile defense system for the Indian navy, the paper said.

RESERVISTS TO BE RESUPPLIED BY SEPT. (Jerusalem Post 7/12/07)

While a year has passed since the Second Lebanon War, the IDF is still in the process of transforming its combat units and hopes to complete replenishing emergency supplies for reservists by the end of the summer, senior officers said Wednesday.

Following the war, the IDF received NIS 2 billion in aid from the government to procure brand new equipment for combat reservists. Behind the project is Col. Ilan Peretz, head of the Planning and Organization Department in the IDF's Ground Forces Command.

"We will finish resupplying all of the infantry units by September and will then continue on to the rest of the IDF," Peretz told The Jerusalem Post Wednesday in an interview coinciding with the war's first anniversary.

"Reservists are getting equipment that is equal and sometimes even better than compulsory combat soldiers."

The new equipment includes new bulletproof vests, lightweight helmets and new Load Bearing Equipment (LBE) harnesses for carrying ammunition and other supplies. The IDF is also in the process of shortening M-16 rifles and according to Peretz will become one of the first Western militaries to only operate with the short version of the American weapon.

"Today's IDF is a different IDF," Deputy Chief of General Staff Maj.-Gen. Moshe Kaplinsky said Wednesday. "We made mistakes before the war but since then we have made great achievements."

Peretz said that he was aware the new equipment on its own was not enough to change the outcome of the next war. But he said it could change the way soldiers feel when they were sent to the front lines to fight for their country. By the end of the year, the IDF hopes to have trained 70 percent of its

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reserve units.

"I don't think that this equipment was what was missing in the last war," he said. "But this will certainly improve the feeling among the soldiers."

In addition to the changes in equipment, due to difficulty in getting supplies like food and ammunition to units operating inside Lebanon last summer the IDF has decided to assign a non-commissioned career serviceman to each reserve battalion to be responsible for the unit's logistical needs.

The IDF has also ordered hundreds of Trophy active protection anti-missile systems, which it plans to begin installing this summer on its Merkava tanks.

The decision to purchase the systems was made following the war in Lebanon, during which Hizbullah anti-tank missile squads damaged 40 Merkava tanks and killed more than 30 tank crew members.

Developed by the Rafael Armament Development Authority, the Trophy system creates a hemispheric protected zone around armored vehicles such as the Merkava tank, which operated prominently in Lebanon during the month-long war this past summer. The system is designed to detect and track a threat and counter it with a launched projectile that intercepts the anti-tank missile.

AS ALIYAH AGENCIES TRADE BARBS, SPLIT LOOMS LARGE (Ha'aretz 7/13/07)

The Jewish Agency reneged on its financial commitments to Nefesh B'Nefesh and owes NBN significant sums of money, Danny Ayalon, former Israeli ambassador to the United States and NBN co-chair, charged in an interview this week. Ayalon said the Jewish Agency's failure to meet its financial commitments was the sole factor leading to the current crisis between the two groups.

"JAFI [The Jewish Agency for Israel] was supporting our efforts and stopped with no explanation," he said Wednesday in a telephone interview from France. "It's very difficult to explain why JAFI didn't meet its commitments, and the onus to explain that is on them."

NBN and the Jewish Agency formed an alliance in 2004, but the contract between the two organizations expired last week. According to NBN officials, the Jewish Agency only paid 45 percent of its original commitment for the 2006 budget, leaving an estimated half million dollars in unpaid costs.

The Jewish Agency said in response that the two organizations have different ways of accounting and that the issue was being discussed until "NBN decided to unilaterally break relations."

But Ayalon, who assumed his position at the aliyah organization in January, stressed that NBN is continuing its current mission - even if it means flying solo. "Though disappointed, we have no quarrel with them. We are focused on our mission and are happy to cooperate with anyone. Aliyah is a mission that is bigger than any one organization or any one person. Credit is the least of our concerns. This is not about respect or honor. This is about bringing olim [new immigrants]. We are not in the business of credit or kudos. We are in the business of bringing North American Jews home. Full stop.

"It's not up to us," he said when asked why an agreement between the two was not being renegotiated. "Those who broke [the contract] should un-break it ... This isn't an issue of numbers and accounting. This is a matter of principle; either you share responsibility or you don't."

Relations between the two organizations have long been strained, but aliyah officials in Jerusalem now describe a near breakdown of communication between the two aliyah giants. NBN, which deals specifically with North American and British aliyah, has privately chartered planes from El Al for the coming group immigration flights this summer - an expense that the Jewish Agency, which is mandated to deal with all aliyah, had previously incurred. The Jewish Agency logo, meanwhile, has also disappeared from NBN materials and advertisements.

According to the contract between the Jewish Agency and NBN, which expired at the end of last month, the Jewish Agency transfers to NBN \$1,000 for each immigrant the organization handles, minus the cost of the flight to

Israel, which the Agency pays in full. In return, the two groups agreed to cooperate to encourage and increase aliyah and to refer immigrants to each other for various services. If a potential immigrant comes directly to NBN, they must deal with a JAFI representative, who is the only one eligible, by law, to open an official aliyah file for them. If the potential immigrant comes directly to the Jewish Agency, emissaries will refer them to NBN if they are interested in applying for a financial grant or want to join a group flight.

But the status quo seems to have changed. Last week, Jewish Agency officials said NBN had decided to go it alone and sever its connection with the Agency. Aliyah officials in Israel this week called the allegation "preposterous," saying, "The fact is that the Jewish Agency was supposed to give NBN a certain amount of money per immigrant and it didn't. So if you ask who stopped the contract, it was certainly not NBN. NBN is now on its own, but not by its choosing."

In the past, JAFI officials have accused NBN of failing to share credit for promoting aliyah, but NBN director of communications Yael Katsman categorically denies these charges.

"On the planes, the JAFI and NBN logos are the exact same size. We've also put out full-page advertisements in major Jewish newspapers thanking the Jewish Agency and their shlichim [aliyah emissaries] because we wanted to make our appreciation clear." At the very public welcome ceremonies for new immigrants, she said, Jewish Agency officials have been given recognition awards. Katsman also said that when NBN commissioned massive banners and realized that the Jewish Agency logo was smaller than their own, they paid to have the banners remade before they were even hung. "We had them fixed and made sure that everything was done correctly at our own expense," she said. "We always want to give credit to our partners for their help."

According to some aliyah officials in Israel, the Jewish Agency is able to work with other private aliyah organizations like AMI [Alya et Meilleure Integration], which promotes French aliyah, simply because AMI is still small and not threatening. "The truth is that the Jewish Agency fights with the whole world," the source said. "Look what happened with the Jewish Agency and Taglit. The Jewish Agency started MASA only after Taglit-birthright. They don't work with others well, they bully smaller organizations and they start smear campaigns."

The source, who asked to go unnamed, also said the JAFI is spreading itself too thin and hasn't been able to successfully target North American aliyah in the way that NBN has. "They can't be a supermarket. They help the poor, repair war damages, deal with aliyah, work with Jewish education and so many more things. The Jewish Agency is so big, so cumbersome, so bureaucratic that it is not able to meet the needs of the Jewish people in the 21st century.

"NBN, on the other hand, is lean and mean, with low overhead and a lot of expertise. It is a small group of young, dedicated people who don't care about credit, who have a pioneering spirit. Look at the numbers before NBN started and after: NBN consistently increases aliyah numbers. NBN created a successful model."

The Jewish Agency said in response that the money owed to NBN was being discussed and "was on the table until NBN broke the contract and decided unilaterally to end negotiations and go on its own. The Jewish Agency saw NBN as a full partner and gives it credit for increasing aliyah. But we have reached 3,000 [North American olim] and there are still millions more Jews [in North America]."

Regarding other charges, JAFI spokesman Michael Jankelowitz said: "The raison d'etre of the Jewish Agency is aliyah. We have brought over 3 million olim who have formed the basis for the modern Israeli state. We've been in the business of aliyah since 1929 and the fact that the Jewish Agency is a bureaucracy does not mean it's not capable of fulfilling its mission. Bureaucracy is not necessarily negative. NBN is an organization that was fostered at the outset by former Jewish Agency chair Sallai Meridor. The Jewish Agency views NBN as a very positive movement in the right direction

to increase aliyah. But people also have to respect what the Jewish Agency is doing."

Regarding the charge that JAFI works well with AMI because the French organization is not yet threatening, Jankelowitz said, "We work well with AMI because they give credit to the Jewish Agency when the JAFI deserves it." He also insisted that the Jewish Agency does not have "institutional problems" with NBN or Taglit-birthright. "It seems to be personal vendettas of people in these organizations."

IDF: MISUNDERSTANDING MAY SPARK WAR WITH SYRIA (Ynet 7/11/07)

A misunderstanding between the Israeli and Syrian governments may spark a war between the two countries, the IDF deputy chief of staff warned on Wednesday.

Maj-Gen Moshe Kaplinsky said however that the army did not believe the two countries were heading for a confrontation, but acknowledged the situation along the border was tense.

"As far as I know, we are not heading for war with Syria this summer," said Kaplinsky in a meeting with military reporters.

Asked about the army's readiness for war in the aftermath of its poor performance against Hizbullah last summer, Kaplinsky said: "After last summer's war, the IDF is a different army. After the war all the operational plans have been rewritten."

He admitted that Syria's acquirement of sophisticated Russian arms was alarming but said the army believed Damascus was upgrading its armed forces for defensive reasons.

Kaplinsky said that the IDF had started implementing a series of recommendations made by internal inquiries, noting that old equipment was being upgraded. The army was criticized last summer for supplying old gear and equipment to the thousands of reservists who were called up for the war. He also said that by the end of 2007 the army would be training 70 percent of the reserve forces on a regular basis.

SURVIVORS' CHILDREN TO SUE GERMAN GOVERNMENT FOR THERAPY (Haaretz 7/13/07)

An unprecedented lawsuit will be filed in Tel Aviv District Court on Sunday on behalf of thousands of children of Holocaust survivors demanding that the German government pay for therapy needed to help them cope with their suffering.

The plaintiffs will ask the court to declare a class action, estimating at least 15,000 potential patients. So far, some 3,000 Israelis have joined the suit, including reputed academics and performing artists.

"I think it's time to raise the cry of the second generation, who bear the scars on their souls, and recognize them, too, as Holocaust casualties," wrote attorney Gideon Fisher, whose parents were Holocaust survivors, in the suit.

The suit describes, among others, the condition of five daughters of survivors who are suffering from trauma, anxiety and depression. One plaintiff, 55, is afraid of traveling on buses as they remind her of the trains that took Jews to the extermination camps. She is subject to panic attacks and takes tranquilizers.

Another plaintiff, who says she was raised in a dark, dirty home by parents suffering from depression, has developed fear of dogs. Today, she is emotionally disabled.

"Both the experience of the second generation [of Holocaust survivors] and studies reflect an intergenerational transference of the trauma, demonstrated in naming them after Holocaust victims, expecting them to serve as memorial candles to them, ongoing exposure to unending mourning and horror stories, guilt-raising manipulations and excessive control," the suit says.

OH, WHAT A WAR (Yoel Marcus, Ha'aretz 7/12/07)

The first anniversary of the Second Lebanon War, marked yesterday, is not a

good excuse for a party. Because, of all the wars Israel has fought, it is the only one remembered as a failure. Because, apart from the War of Independence, it was the longest war we have ever fought. Because it was the only one in which the enemy struck deep inside Israeli territory. Because it was the only offensive war that we decided upon in the span of a few hours. Because it was the only war in which we didn't think first. Because it was the only war we went into unprepared. And worst of all, it was the only war that eroded the myth of Israel's power of deterrence and military might in the eyes of our neighbors and the world.

And yet, despite all this, and despite the high price in human life - 163 dead - we're lucky the war was a year ago, and not three or four or five years from now. Because considering how militarily unprepared we were then for an offensive war, and considering how wrong we were in our assessments of the enemy and its capabilities, God knows where Israel would be and what it would have to face several years from now.

That Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, defense minister Amir Peretz and chief of staff Dan Halutz were so smug back then, so sure we were going to teach Hezbollah a lesson, makes Israel's defeat all the more humiliating. Halutz was not only wrong in his conviction that the whole war could be wrapped up from the air. He also goofed in selling his stocks a few hours before the war. The fact is, two days into the war, the stock market shot up. Lousy war, lousy investment.

Hezbollah surprised us with 4,000 artillery rockets that kept on coming until the last minute before the cease-fire. Lucky for us, only 800 of them hit built-up areas. In a future war, the home front will be an integral part of the war. With all the missile batteries stationed around us, Katyushas and Zilzals will be kid stuff by then.

Our assumption that the army is ready at all times for a major operation, and would need a few hours' warning at most if the political echelon decided to go to war, was shot down overnight. We have a hollow leadership, as David Grossman put it, and the same goes for their judgment in launching an all-out war in a matter of hours. The army did not deliver the goods at even the most basic level, and it couldn't have.

The exclusive focus on preventing terror distorted the army's whole approach to its task. Most military experience is gained through training, not by policing territories. But for years, there were hardly any drills. Battalion and company commanders went into battle without ever putting their soldiers through their paces. The equipment, both light and heavy, was outdated and rusty for lack of use.

Our luck was that we got rapped across the fingers when there was no existential danger to the state, and no irreversible damage was done. In the past, wars were fought against regular or semi-regular Arab armies, far from the home front. In the next war, all of Israel will be bombarded by rockets and missiles, and the home front will be the main front.

In the past, we saw the enemy and could take aim. Today, we face an evasive enemy, an enemy that has learned how to camouflage itself and disappear into the woodwork, to spread out in small task forces, equipped with anti-tank, anti-aircraft and anti-ship missiles in quantities that ensure the effectiveness of its attacks. And nothing has been said yet about the possible resurgence of terror, with bombs going off and suicide bombers blowing themselves up in the heart of the country.

Based on our experience in the last war, the threats from Syria and the nuclear armament of Iran, all sorts of theories about the battlefield of the future are hovering in the air. With the enemy building up its attack force and dangers looming over the home front, the question is not so much what kind of scenario the army is preparing for, but how the political echelon is readying itself to reach life-or-death decisions.

The winner will not be the one with the newest and most lethal weapons, but the one whose leaders make the right moves. Weapons of war may be more sophisticated today, but the basic approach formulated by David Ben-Gurion in the early days of the state is still valid - move the war to enemy territory

and keep it short.

For those who didn't understand that when they reached their spur-of-the-moment decision to go to war in Lebanon, let them wait until October.

Winograd will make sure to explain just how miserable a failure it was, and who was responsible for it.

CIVIL FIGHTS: IT'S BACK TO THE OLD 'POLITICAL HORIZON' SCAM (Evelyn Gordon, Jerusalem Post 7/11/07)

One sometimes wonders what planet diplomats and journalists live on. Javier Solana, the European Union's foreign policy czar, for instance, recently told European parliamentarians that (in Haaretz's paraphrase) "the most worrisome aspect of the peace process is Israel's lack of interest in discussing borders with the Palestinians." US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice wants Israel to negotiate a final-status agreement with the Palestinian Authority now, albeit with delayed implementation, and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni enthusiastically backs this idea. A New York Times editorial last week described new Quartet envoy Tony Blair's chief mission as "restoring [Palestinians'] belief in a livable future in a viable Palestinian state," chiefly by restarting final-status negotiations.

What none of these learned experts appear to have grasped is that Israel cannot seriously negotiate final-status issues without knowing whether a Palestinian state will be serious about fighting terror, because that will determine how much Israel can safely concede.

Given the PA's current record, for instance, no Israeli government would allow a Palestinian state within rocket range of Ben-Gurion Airport or major cities such as Tel Aviv, meaning that Israel would have to keep territory even beyond the current route of the security fence. If the Palestinians were serious about fighting terror, however, withdrawing to on or near the Green Line would be much less problematic.

Similarly, no government could allow its capital city, the seat of government, to be under constant fire, as Sderot is from Gaza. Thus absent solid evidence that the Palestinians will crack down on terror - which no Palestinian government over the past 14 years has provided - major concessions in Jerusalem are also impossible.

Nor could any responsible government allow the West Bank to become the armed fortress that Gaza has since the disengagement, when the PA took over the border with Egypt, under EU supervision. Absent evidence that a Palestinian state would take counterterrorism seriously, Israel would therefore have to retain control of the Palestinian-Jordanian border. A PA crackdown on terror, in contrast, would enable this border to be transferred to Palestinian control.

WHAT RICE and Solana are effectively proposing is "negotiate a final-status agreement as if a Palestinian state could be trusted to fight terror, but condition implementation on PA performance." This approach, however, has two problems.

First, until Israelis are convinced of Palestinian willingness and ability to fight terror, any prime minister who acceded to Palestinian demands on these issues would be committing political suicide. That is precisely why Ehud Olmert, a politician par excellence, rejected Rice's idea.

The bigger problem, however, is the international community's track record on Palestinian compliance. To understand why, a brief review of the Oslo process is in order.

In September 1993, Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat signed the Declaration of Principles; Arafat promised to eschew violence. In May 1994 came the Gaza-Jericho Agreement, under which Israel withdrew from Jericho and most of Gaza; Arafat again promised to eschew violence. September 1995 brought the Interim Agreement (Oslo-2), under which Israel left six West Bank cities; Arafat pledged yet again to eschew violence.

Thus by spring of 1996, Israel had carried out its major treaty obligation: territorial withdrawals. Rabin also froze settlement construction (the only Israeli premier ever to do so) as a goodwill gesture, even though no

agreement required this.

During those same two and a half years, however, Palestinian terror killed more Israelis than during the entire preceding decade. Thus Arafat had blatantly violated his major treaty obligation.

ONE WOULD therefore have expected the world to pressure Arafat to honor his commitments, while exempting Israel from further concessions until he did so. Instead, it pressured Israel into additional concessions: first the Hebron Agreement in January 1997, under which Israel withdrew from most of Hebron; then the Wye Agreement in October 1998 (never implemented), which required Israel to quit another 13 percent of the territories. In exchange, Israel received nothing but more empty promises on terror.

Then came the Camp David summit and the subsequent outbreak of the second intifada in September 2000. Over the next four years, Palestinian terror killed more Israelis than during the previous 53 years. Yet once again (with the occasional exception of George Bush), the world did not respond by pressuring the Palestinians to uphold their five signed pledges to eschew violence; instead, it demanded more Israeli concessions, arguing - as Rice, Solana and the Times do - that the PA cannot be expected to honor its commitments unless Israel first "strengthens" it through such concessions.

Moreover, no Israeli concessions are ever deemed enough. Israel's offers at the Camp David, Washington and Taba talks in 2000-2001, for instance - a Palestinian state on some 97 percent of the territories, including most of east Jerusalem and the Temple Mount - were not considered a sufficient "political horizon" to justify demanding Palestinian action on terror. The disengagement, in which Israel demonstrated its willingness to uproot settlements for peace by destroying 21 communities in Gaza and four in the West Bank, was also not considered sufficient to mandate Palestinian action on terror.

What this track record proves is that if Israel signed a final-status agreement and the Palestinians still failed to deliver on terror, it would nevertheless come under tremendous international pressure to keep its side of the bargain, just as has happened with every previous agreement since 1993. Either the international community would whitewash PA behavior and declare the Palestinians in compliance when they were not, as it did from 1993 to 2000, or it would argue, as it has since, that Israel must "strengthen" the PA by starting to implement the agreement - i.e. making concrete territorial and security concessions - before the PA can be expected to do its part.

Any agreement signed without prior proof of Palestinian willingness and ability to fight terror would thus almost certainly end up forcing Israeli withdrawals that would leave Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Ben-Gurion Airport as vulnerable to terrorist fire as Sderot is. No responsible prime minister would risk putting Israel into such a situation. And Livni's eagerness to do so merely proves how unfit she is for that post.

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