

Maritime Strategy and National Security Research

Advancing Israel's National Interests at Sea

In 1950, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion was the first to articulate the importance of naval power to the survival of the fledgling Jewish state. "Anyone who understands our geographic reality and its economic and political implications will immediately grasp the value of our sea power for our existence."

Since that time, the Mediterranean Sea has only increased in importance. The overwhelming majority of Israeli exports and imports leave or enter the country through the sea. Underwater cables on the sea-floor transmit almost all of Israel's telecommunications data. Recent discoveries of large-scale offshore gas fields have turned Israel into a major player in the global energy market. Two of the country's main enemies, Hezbollah and Hamas, rely on sea-based smuggling to receive weapons and supplies.



Despite new geopolitical threats, economic developments and advances in technology, to this day Israel's maritime strategy remains largely an afterthought. For many years, the navy has been the Israel Defense Force's least visible military service. The country's most recent effort to craft a new national security strategy, in 2006, did not include a significant maritime component. As a result, Israel has no comprehensive vision, goals, or policy for

maritime and naval issues. This strategic lacuna was recently acknowledged by Israeli President Reuven Rivlin when he publicly stated: "For many years, we did not understand how important the navy is to our security and our national economy."

The Maritime Strategy Research Project is working to fill the analysis and policy void. The University has recruited a number of leading Israeli security and naval professionals and academics to study key maritime strategic, geographic and legal issues related to Israel and generate thought-provoking policy positions. The position papers reflect a multidisciplinary perspective encompassing security, legal aspects, diplomacy and the economy.



Three separate developments necessitate a reformulation of Israel's regional maritime architecture:

- The discovery of significant hydro-carbon deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea has the potential to create conflict, but also holds out the promise for regional cooperation.
- The changing security environment including, Iranian-Israeli tensions, maritime weapons shipments to Hamas and Hezbollah, political instability in Egypt, the Syrian Civil War, the influx of immigrants from Africa, and the reorientation of American foreign policy in the Middle East.
- Global strategic developments will inevitably have regional consequences including, China's growing interest in securing natural resources, international anti-piracy naval cooperation, the transfer via water of materials associated with weapons of mass destruction, and deep-sea energy exploration.

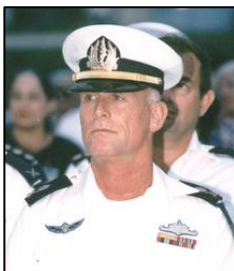
The Project will combine innovative scholarly research, coupled with hands-on practical experience. In the first phase, the Project will identify scholars and practitioners in the region and task them with developing research papers analyzing the interests, potential

areas of conflict and cooperation for local and international stakeholders. A preliminary environmental scan points to three sets of state actors: states on the littoral zone, both exporters and importers (such as Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, and Syria); powerful global actors that have both strategic and commercial interests (US, EU, Russia); and global actors that have mostly commercial interests (such as Australia, Italy and France). In the second phase, the Project will fuse the various papers into a finished comprehensive product through a number of carefully facilitated workshops.

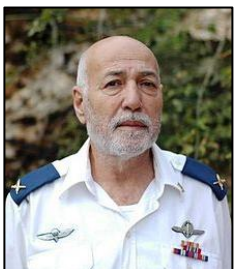
As the only non-military entity generating position papers in the field, the research project contributes to governmental decision-making while encouraging public discourse on issues of maritime and naval strategy.

Academic Leadership

The University of Haifa is the natural choice to lead this research effort as it is the only university in Israel with a graduate school of marine sciences and because the University has recruited a number of leading Israeli security and naval professionals to spearhead the project. The experience and expertise of the team will allow unprecedented access to the Israeli and other foreign governments, security establishments, as well as the business and legal communities, NGOs, and academic institutions.



Admiral (ret.) Ami Ayalon is Chairman of the Executive Committee of the University of Haifa. Mr. Ayalon has served as Commander-in-chief of the Israeli Navy, Commander of *Shayetet 13* (Israel's Navy SEALs), Director of the *Shin Bet* (Israeli Secret Services) and was a cabinet minister. Mr. Ayalon received the Medal of Valor, Israel's highest decoration, for his role in Operation Bulmus 6 – the assault on the Egyptian fortifications on Green Island. During the operation Ayalon was injured three times, but continued fighting on until the Egyptian garrison was destroyed. He is frequently invited to speak domestically and internationally on Israel's security situation. Mr. Ayalon earned his graduate degrees in Public Administration from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and in Law from Bar-Ilan University.



Admiral (ret.) Dr. Israel Leshem (PhD, University of Haifa) is the project coordinator. Dr. Leshem served as the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Israeli Navy. He conducts research and lectures on a range of security topics with an emphasis on teaching future naval officers who attend the University as part of the Israeli Naval Academy.



Dr. Ehud Eiran (PhD Brandeis University) is an Assistant Professor in the University's Department of International Relations. Dr. Eiran held research positions at the Program on Negotiation at the Harvard Law School and at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Dr. Eiran was also a lecturer at the Department of Political Science at MIT. Prior to his academic career Eiran served on the Prime Minister's foreign policy team and worked for Israel's Attorney General.



Dr. Aviad Rubin (PhD, McGill University) is the Faculty Chair of the Naval Academy Program at the University of Haifa. The program offers a unique Master's degree program for Army officers and includes courses in political science, economics and administration, transportation and shipping, as well as such courses as Terror and Counter-terrorism and an Introduction to National Security. Dr. Rubin's research focuses on the intersection between democratic theory and identity politics, with particular emphasis on religion, nationalism and language in the Middle East context. Dr. Rubin is a retired naval officer.



Attorney Nadia Zimmerman-Mogilevsky is a lecturer at the University of Haifa's Faculty of Law. She is an expert in energy law, with special focus on Israel's maritime hydro-carbon deposits. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Ms. **Zimmerman-Mogilevsky** has worked for a number of national and international organizations, including the World Bank.

Request for Support

As the Middle East enters a period of political and financial uncertainty, an integrated and forward thinking maritime strategy is critically important to Israeli security and economy. The interdisciplinary research taking place at the University of Haifa is well positioned to make a significant contribution to the State of Israel's future.

The Maritime Strategy Research Project has raised \$350,000 from local and international supporters of the University.

- ❖ **A generous gift of \$650,000** will enable the University of Haifa to reach its fundraising goal of \$1 million.

About the University of Haifa

As the largest research university in the country's northern region and academic home to a community of students that most accurately mirrors Israeli society, the University of Haifa is of unique strategic importance to the State of Israel. It enrolls the largest number of military and security personnel, who study alongside civilians from all walks of life - *Haredi* and secular Jews, new immigrants, Arabs, and Druze.

The University's mission is to cultivate academic excellence, create a shared Israeli experience, and promote democratic values in an environment of tolerance and multiculturalism. It is such an environment that contributes to outstanding research and a community of exceptional, creative, and productive alumni. We believe that fostering outstanding research while strengthening Israel's northern region and promoting an environment of multiculturalism is of strategic importance for the continued existence and prosperity of the State of Israel.

The University of Haifa stands atop Mount Carmel, where Haifa's southern boundary verges on the Carmel National Park. Over 18,000 students study here for undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees. The University of Haifa is fully committed to academic excellence, which is expressed in its many and diverse interdisciplinary and international programs and collaborations with academic institutions around the world. The University of Haifa has gained an international reputation in many research areas, and is Israel's leading university in the humanities, education, social sciences, law, and marine research.

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