# MARITIME STRATEGIC EVALUATION FOR ISRAEL 2020/21

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# Implementing of Maritime Defense concepts for Protection of Israel's Economic Waters

*Ido Ben Moshe*[1]

## Introduction

For the past two decades, the State of Israel has been involved in the development of energy resources in its economic waters. This activity has generated a number of important processes that have a strategic impact on the country and may shape the future and status of its sea within the State of Israel's national strategy.

The importance of Israel's maritime domain has grown in recent years. This calls for multi-dimensional planning and organizational integration that will ensure the achievement of Israel's national goals on the political, security, energy and economic levels.

An energy project on a national scale is a particularly complex endeavor and includes the planning and construction of maritime facilities, production infrastructures and transmission systems (particularly long ones in Israel's case). It requires the evaluation of numerous factors, including, among others, the geographic location of the facility, its effect on the environment and the safety risks that accompany its operation. In addition, it requires an evaluation of all threats, based on an assessment of Israel's security and geostrategic situation. As part of this evaluation process, the central question facing decisions makers is the threshold required to defend and secure the day-to-day operation of the facility from the viewpoint of safety and security. Among the many considerations—and based on the strategic importance of a maritime energy facility for Israel and in consideration of Israel's geostrategic situation—security will carry major weight.

Damage to a maritime facility which serves as an important component in the supply of natural gas to the State of Israel will have implications beyond simply the damage caused since it has the potential to disrupt electricity generation in Israel, which in turn will have adverse effects on economic activity. On top we should note other important elements, such as the economic damage (the cost of repairing the facility) and environmental, perceptual, and commercial damage. In addition, this will lead to a reduction in the deterrence of the IDF and the State of Israel. Maritime facilities in general and those in Israel in particular are already today subject to threats from

1 This chapter is an updated and shortened version of a paper written by the author in 2010 for the National Security College.

a wide variety of players: nation states, national armies, terrorist organizations, extreme environmental and social activists, hackers and possible even players with economic interests. This list will likely continue to grow in various directions. The character of the threats and their intensity are liable to be highly diverse, and they will have a changing profile over the years.

As a result, the State of Israel, the IDF and the navy have in recent years taken actions to update and modify the strategy for the navy and IDF operations according to the changing geostrategic reality that was created when the Eastern Mediterranean Basin became an essential and valuable strategic zone for the State of Israel. In this context, it should be emphasized that this view is also applicable to other countries in the region who look at the sea as a promising economic resource, some of whom have also implemented that approach in practice (militarily and politically) with the goal of strengthening their position in the Eastern Mediterranean Basin. Their importance, as well as the implications of any damage to the natural gas infrastructures in the Mediterranean, necessitates an evaluation of the risk that the State of Israel may have to deal with in the protection of its economic waters.

In this chapter, we will present an assessment of the progress made so far in the development and revision of the operational concepts that will lead the actions of the Israeli navy and that is required to protect Israel's economic waters, in view of the changes that are developing already at this point in time. These changes will have a decisive impact on the existing security doctrine, which is meant to ensure Israel's sovereignty also in its waters in the Mediterranean. In what follows, we will describe the directions we recommend for policy making in order to provide an appropriate conceptual approach to ensure control over Israel's economic waters and the energy infrastructures located within them. Maritime awareness can provide a future platform for achieving naval superiority in a conflict and a solid basis for the development of a grand maritime strategy for the State of Israel.

## Maritime elements of the national security doctrine

To the extent that it is possible to predict, the nature of future wars and conflicts will continue to change; nonetheless and despite the lack of certainty with regard to the nature of a future conflict, it is possible to identify certain trends based on the arms acquisition and buildup of power among Israel's enemies. It can be assumed that also in future wars, the resilience of the Israeli home front will be tested to a great extent and the economy's infrastructure and population (the civilian home front) will serve as a target for missiles and rockets. As part of the process of evaluating the intensity and quality of the overall threat (land/air/other) to the energy infrastructures in the

Mediterranean, it is worth considering a number of unique characteristics that affect the regional balance of power and deterrence to a great extent. The main claim that we wish to present to the reader is that the development of the offshore natural gas sector constitutes a "change in reality" that requires major policy revisions on a national level.

**The geographic dimension** – Until a few years age and since the establishment of the State, Israel has assigned importance to its maritime sovereignty and has used the navy to ensure control over its territorial waters, without any special emphasis on the issue of its economic waters. Although over the years the navy has operated far out at sea, the character of this activity was focused on a specific operational mission, rather than routine security activity, and without any permanent presence far out in Israel's economic waters.

The economic waters are a large maritime expanse that will be added to Israel's waters after the approval of the Maritime Zones Law.[2] The importance of this area is a direct result of the natural resources and energy infrastructures located within it. This calls for Israel to ensure its control over this area and its defense.[3] The physical size of the economic waters is somewhat larger than Israel's total land territory. This is a large expanse of sea, which is distant from the coast and as a result the ability for civilian governance is limited there. Similarly, the possibilities for military activity (maritime awareness: deterrence, response, a control network and "constructing a picture"[4]) are limited due to the reliance on coastal infrastructures and ocean-going vessels.

**The dimension of surprise** – The strategic change that has occurred in the enemy's strategy to defeat Israel has led to discarding of the idea of Israel's conquest and destruction while at the same time the Israeli home front has become the primary target for aggression. This is part of the intention that major damage in the home front will lead to attrition that will "break" the State of Israel. This approach continues

2 Proposed Maritime Zones Law, 2017. https://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/Legislation/Laws/pages/LawBill.aspx?t=lawsuggestionssearch&lawitemid=2022714

3 There is a gradient of a coastal country's sovereignty and responsibility, beginning from its territorial sea, to its contiguous zone and finally its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The sovereignty in the EEZ is limited primarily to the exploitation of natural resources (and other elements) as described in the United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982). Israel is not a party to this covenant (which it has not signed), but has declared on a number of occasions that it will fulfill the policy of the Convention and its instructions.

4 The operational process that characterizes the detection and classification of maritime targets, up to the ability of tactical presentation, exploitation and information generation.

to motivate the intensive buildup of power based on missiles and rockets in the intermediate and long run (an effort that is seeking greater and greater precision and destructive power). This threat and the strategic importance of the offshore infrastructures to the State of Israel, in our opinion, make the scenario of a first strike as particularly feasible and attractive in the eyes of Israel's rivals. The continuing improvement in the range of missiles and rockets and the large-scale efforts by Syria and the Hezbollah, with the support of Iran, to achieve precision in a missile strike means that a maritime facility becomes an optimal target for a surgical strike. This will be achieved with only a small loss of civilian lives,[5] but will provide Hezbollah (or Iran) with a victory picture and will cause decisive damage to the home front, to the Israeli economy, to the national morale and to the ability of the population and the economy to endure crisis situations.

**Greater asymmetry between Israel and its neighbors** – The maritime facilities exacerbate the lack of balance between Israel and some of its neighbors. Already at this point in time, the disparity in GDP per capita between Israel and its neighbors is almost unbridgeable. The maritime facilities make Israel more vulnerable to its enemies in terms of energy security. It creates a lack of equilibrium on the basis of maritime borders[6] and Israel's existing energy reserves. The development of advanced infrastructures for oil and gas exploration by Israel's neighbors—and primarily Lebanon—is in the future liable to improve the balance of threats from both sides of the maritime boundary.

**The strategic home front, deterrence and sources of friction** – In recent years, the maritime domain has become a direct source of friction and confrontation. Over the years, the uniqueness of the maritime domain has been manifested in the absence of any major threat. The sea was a domain in which activity was not subject to threats arising from the friction and close proximity that characterize Israel conflicts on land. This reality is very different today. Currently, a large part of the maritime arena is threatened by coast-to-sea missiles which can be deployed on command, or alternatively with the start of fighting, at launch position in Lebanon and Syria.[7] In the existing reality, the maritime domain and its boundaries are liable to become

5 The number of workers on a maritime facility of intermediate size (such as the Tamar rig) is limited (about 30 to 40 crew members).

6 Yedidia Yaari, "The Naval Arm 2000 – Challenge and Response," *Maarachot*, Volume 368. [Hebrew]

7 For example, the attack on the Israeli naval vessel Hanit by an Iranian-made coast-to-sea missile at the beginning of the Second Lebanon War in July 2006.

a focus of confrontation between countries in the region, including Israel, Lebanon and Turkey.

Deterrence – In view of the lack of regional stability, deterrence is a primary factor in creating restraint in the Middle East. An attack on a maritime facility will constitute a serious attack on Israel's deterrent ability and will be classified as a legitime attack on civilian infrastructure. Such an attack is probably liable to be considered legitimate also by the opinion of the international community.

**The regional dimension** – In recent years, we have been witnessed to an intensifying and uncompromising confrontation between Turkey and Greece on the question of the boundary between their economic waters. This followed a unilateral and blunt declaration by Turkey and Libya that is not within the lines of international law.[8]

The demarcation of a boundary for economic waters in the Mediterranean has regional, political and diplomatic significance and disagreement in this context can drag the region into a conflict. The phenomenon of cross-alliances between the region's states and the limited involvement of the international community and the US are liable to undermine the already frail situation of regional stability and in the end could bring about a regional war.

Israel needs to declare an economic zone that rests on the legitimacy of international law and is supported by regional economic interests. This will be accomplished by the legislating of the 'Law of Maritime Zones' and the demarcation of its maritime boundaries with its neighbors.

In this context, and in the spirit of the normalization agreements that have emerged in recent months with some of the Persian Gulf states, (Abraham Accords), it will be necessary to more energetically promote cooperation with the "dialogue" states in the Eastern Mediterranean: Israel, Egypt, Greece and Cyprus. What is needed is cooperation based on dialogue and an overlapping of civilian-diplomatic interests in areas such as energy. This is a discourse with the most profound potential and significance. In our view, academic bodies can play a role in promoting initial contact, based on research activity and identical or intersecting interests.

The growing Chinese influence in the region, alongside Iranian, Russian and Turkish attempts to establish a stronghold in the Eastern Mediterranean, require constant assessment of the situation with respect to the effect of these efforts on the maritime domain – Israel's western border. In addition, the assessment is necessary

8 An agreement with the Government of National Accord (GNA) signed in November 2019.

in order to monitor the military forces of these countries and their operational policy and routine, alongside unexpected acts that undermine regional stability or that endanger one or more of Israel's interests.

In concluding this section, the sea as Israel's strategic depth is to a large extent an asset in flux. The eastern basin of the Mediterranean has been transformed from an unthreatened zone of strategic depth to part of the threatened and sensitive strategic home front, which is liable to become a direct source of confrontation. This is a domain subject to continual threat which requires that Israel significantly strengthen its control over it.

## The security doctrine with respect to the economic waters and the maritime facilities

The military response to the threat in the maritime domain is based on four main principles:

1. The definition of threats and reference scenarios.
2. The buildup of power.
3. The use of power.
4. Command and control.

In addition, it is possible to divide up the security doctrine according to two levels: the tactical level which relates to a limited area in the vicinity of a single facility and the strategic discussion on the level of the maritime domain as a whole.

## Defining the threats and the reference scenarios[9]

In order to define the reference scenarios, it is necessary to first analyze the existing security threat. Clearly, a detailed intelligence evaluation is needed, as well as a continuous analysis of the capabilities of rivals and regional players and the trends in their buildup of power. Even so, it is possible to analyze the spectrum of threats (kinetic and otherwise) to the offshore facilities, which include the following, among others:

**A surface threat from the sea**: Fire from a ship, an intentional ramming by a ship, a suicide attack, a hostile takeover.

9 This section deals primarily with military threats; however, there are also scenarios that include accidents and safety events. For further details, see the section below on rescue and repair capabilities.

**An underwater threat**: Sabotage by divers, torpedoes fired from a submarine.

**Aerial threat**: Suicide attack, drones, aerial attack by a conventional air force.

**Missile and rocket threat**: Including fire from precision or statistical weapons (which can be executed from the land, the sea or even the air).

**Cybernetic threat**: An attack or disruption of the rig and infrastructure by means of a cyber attack.

***Guiding principles in the protection of the overall maritime domain***

**Intelligence, deterrence and interdiction**: Intelligence-gathering capabilities will be based on ships and aerial vehicles out at sea, as well as on coastal facilities. The use of forces in the economic waters will support a response and interdiction capability even without an intelligence warning.

Deterrence is based on the use of land forces, naval forces (both above surface and below surface) and aerial forces in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and beyond it by means of routine patrols for the purpose of demonstrating a presence and projecting power, gathering of intelligence, constructing a maritime picture and protecting the maritime domain and the assets located in it.

**Search, detection and identification**: The navy will employ special advanced systems for the purpose of detecting, identifying and following targets on the surface (ships), submarines (anti-submarine capability) and also the various aerial targets (planes, drones, armaments). This activity will be managed by a maritime command center at the naval headquarters and will be based on the navy's command and control infrastructures (satellite communication networks, full connectedness, sharing of information and work on a network).

**Attack and interception**: Naval forces will carry advanced detection and identification systems. The forces will have attack and interception capabilities to be used against targets in the air, on the surface and below surface. Command and control abilities are based on broadband communication and connectedness with detection and warning systems on land that will enable the identification of a threat and a rapid response to intercept it or alternatively to severely disrupt it. Already today, the "naval dome" system makes it possible to intercept aerial threats from the deck of the Sa'ar 5 class ships. This capability is likely to be strengthened by the ability to intercept missiles and/or rockets possessed by the 'Hamagen' ships (Sa'ar 6 class) which are currently under construction in Germany. This capability will be based

on various defense envelopes that include means for aerial interception, electronic warfare systems, etc.

**Rescue and repair**: The forces operating in the area need to have rescue and repair abilities in order to provide a response during an emergency, in the case of accidents and in safety events, such as a fire at the offshore facility or an environmental disaster.

**Availability**: The forces operating in the area need to maintain a high level of operational readiness and an ability to provide a rapid response to developing crisis situations. Their vessels need to have the ability to remain at sea for a long period and under constraints of weather, supplies, etc.

### *The rules of engagement*

A policy will be decided upon for the use of force in normal times and in an emergency, according to the development of a military doctrine that will determine procedures, inter-corps coordination, means of control etc.

## Buildup of capabilities

Already at this point in time, the navy is in the process of a broad buildup of capabilities that includes the construction of surface vessels and the addition of a submarines from Germany. The design of the Sa'ar 6 class surface ship was adapted to provide the ability to monitor and comb a broad expanse of sea. The naval forces, the types of platforms and other components have been adapted in order to deal with the reference scenarios described above, with the goal of protecting the national assets that are dispersed geographically throughout Israel's economic waters.

The achievement of maritime control in normal times and naval superiority in times of conflict is a necessary condition for the navy being able to defend Israel's economic waters. Therefore, the preference in the buildup of the navy's strength should be given to the forces that are essential for the achievement and maintenance of naval superiority.[10] This is in addition to the surface forces, including the buildup of the navy, the production and acquisition of advanced aerial patrol platforms and the expansion of the coastal detection network, with the goal of controlling the "surface" and also selected underwater zones.

10 Shlomo Ariel, "The Sea as Strategic Depth" *Maarachot*: Ministry of Defense, volume 388. [Hebrew]

Surface vessels will be the main force operating to protect the economic waters. They will manage the control of the maritime space and will constitute the main firepower in meeting the aforementioned threats. Until a few years ago, the navy only operated outside of its territorial waters as part of its operational activity or to secure essential shipping lines during a war. Already at this point in time, the navy is required to maintain continual control of Israel's economic waters, including the shipping routes leading to and from the ports of Israel. To this end, it operates an integrated configuration of surface vessels, aerial patrol forces and submarines, alongside technological means of detection, identification and classification of the various threats. Following are the main systems required to carry out these missions:

**Surface platforms**: Ships comprise the basic strength of the navy. This platform enjoys various capabilities that are derived from its main characteristics, such as size, the types of weaponry on its deck, its ability to carry a helicopter, its sailing range, its maneuvering ability, its ability to remain at sea for long periods, etc.

The ships that will be required to provide an effective defensive response must have a number of capabilities: detection capabilities that include a multi-purpose radar coverage of the sea and the air for a radius of about 200 nautical miles; a system on the ship for submarine detection; and an ability to identify targets by means of aerial vehicles (helicopter / unmanned helicopter / a patrol plane).

The ships will be armed with defensive systems for the protection of the ship itself and also offensive weaponry that include sea-to-sea missiles, a sea-to-air missile system and a torpedo weapon system against submarines.

The ships will have the ability to remain at sea for a long period and will have high maneuvering ability. In order to ensure all of the aforementioned capabilities, the ships will need to be large, it will need to have a large displacement and a high degree of stability and it should have a weight of between 2500 and 3000 tons.[11] This is indeed the size of the ship that the navy has chosen. Four ships of this type are currently being built at the Arge[12] shipyards in Kiel, Germany. This ship will serve as the forward point in the defense of Israel's EEZ and will have capabilities to monitor a vast sea and air expanse, alongside fire capabilities. The ship's capabilities will facilitate full maritime and aerial control and monitoring, including the operation of various aerial systems, such as a sea helicopter that will take off from the ship's deck.

11 Yedidia Yaari, "Large ships for a large problem", *Maarahot*: Ministry of Defense, Volume 419, 2019. [Hebrew]

12 An organizational framework established for cooperation between the German TKMS and GNYK shipyards.

It will be able to stay in the air for an extended period and will provide improved tactical capabilities for constructing a the "combat picture", as well as having warfare capabilities. The activity of the ships will be reinforced and accompanied by drones with autonomous capability, which will be controlled from the coast or from the sea and will be equipped with advanced systems for constructing the "combat picture" – detection, identification and tracking. The aircraft will allow for extended missions, full presence under almost any weather conditions and a large operating range. This buildup of power will boost the navy's current strength and will reinforce its existing capabilities, while facilitating a decisive role for the navy also in supporting the army and the land combat in the future.

Figure 1: Israeli Navy Ship INS MAGEN docks at the shipyard in Germany, November 2020, (IDF spokesman)

**Submarines and underwater vessels**: The submarine is already an important part of the maritime arena. Its operational abilities, which are directed toward its offensive capability, can be exploited for the protection of the economic waters. The ability to operate clandestinely and its acoustic detection capability constitute a major advantage in maritime warfare. These characteristics can serve as deadly weapons against an underwater threat and in particular against enemy submarines. A submarine can be used as part of an ambush in areas where the enemy is expected to operate.

The employment of a submarine in the defensive operations of the Israeli navy will be translated into deterrent ability. Also, in this case, the inventory of submarines should be a dominant component in the ability to manage optimal maritime control in the economic waters, which will strengthen Israel's deterrence.

**Fast-moving boats for interception and attack; surface vessels**: The abilities of the task force will be complemented by small and speed craft whose mission will be interception and attack of threatening targets. These vessels, as in the case of patrol vessels currently in use along the coast, will be characterized by speed of response, firepower, high speed and a small and streamlined crew.

**Vessels to provide techno-logistical service and response, rescue and firefighting ability**: There is a need for ships that will technologically and logistically support the various systems that operate in the maritime space, such as providing fuel, water, food and technical support (repair and spare parts). In addition, these ships will provide a first response to an emergency such as a fire on the production facility, a serious accident or an environmental event (see below for details on the management of a safety event).

## Use of Force

The change that has occurred in the geographic domain and the strategic threat (from the sea or the air) to the EEZ and the facilities located in it creates the need for a response that will ensure the security of the economic waters and thereby control of the maritime space and will deny freedom of action to an enemy navy or a terrorist group.

In an emergency, the navy will need to ensure maritime superiority, similar to the air superiority enjoyed by the air force. To this end, the navy is seeking to achieve early detection of an enemy in wartime and the ability to destroy his forces as quickly as possible. However, in order to protect Israel's economic waters in peacetime, when there are enemy forces or civilians located in the theater, and when there is also commercial traffic through the economic waters, the navy must maintain patrols and a deployment that will itself enable the interception and destruction of any enemy force that is detected.

The use of the naval forces will, as mentioned, achieve control over the economic waters and provide the ability to track all maritime activity in the arena. The use of naval forces in the domain will be on a continuous and routine basis and will provide an immediate response to the various threats. In an emergency, the deployment will be reinforced and there will be continual patrols near essential facilities, according to the reference scenario. Naval forces will have support from the coastal units and the aerial patrol operations. These will create an intelligence picture in the maritime space – layer by layer.

Deployed on the facilities themselves will be a security force with defensive capabilities and the ability to fight independently against an attack of small craft, takeover attempts and divers who threaten the facility. The tactical response will provide protection in the immediate vicinity of the facility. This will be a military/civil force that will be responsible for protecting the facility against direct focused attack, whether by terrorists, pirates or some other groups. The force will be located on the rig and will be equipped with electronic and optical detection systems that will monitor the approach of various vessels that might represent a danger to the facility. The force will be independent and will operate under the command and professional direction of the navy.

### *The intelligence picture and the maritime picture*

Maritime control is a military-professional concept which expresses the ability to monitor a defined maritime space on a permanent and continuous basis. This is based on "constructing an intelligence picture" whose output makes it possible to identify, supervise and control all of the activity in the maritime arena on a continuous basis.

There are numerous vessels operating in the sea simultaneously: commercial ships, passenger ships, fishing boats, research vessels, yachts and also warships of the various navies. In the aerial space, there are civilian and military aircraft and under the surface there are submarines. The ability to create Maritime Domain Awareness that includes an intelligence picture is the ability to recognize and identify the vessels operating in the maritime domain and to categorize them accordingly, with the goal of identifying unusual / enemy / offensive activity. Activity of this type requires continual monitoring the defined arena of activity, intelligence coverage capabilities and the ability to monitor and analyze the maritime arena in real time. The control of the maritime domain will prevent a tactical threat to the offshore energy facilities, will deny freedom of action to terrorist groups, and will track the navies of Israel's enemies in the EEZ. This activity requires advanced abilities for constructing a "status report" based on the abilities of the naval forces combined with aerial patrols. Such control can be accomplished by a deployment of forces in the maritime domain that will facilitate the interception and destruction of a detected threat.

In the context of constructing an intelligence picture, it is also worth mentioning the satellite segment. In recent decades, there has been significant progress in the use of satellites to monitor large areas. Advanced technologies that have matured during the past decade include satellite systems with various capabilities that make it possible to upgrade the process for constructing an intelligence picture, as described above.

Examples include Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) and the Automatic Identification System (AIS).

## Command and Control

Command and control of the maritime domain, which includes economic waters, needs to be technology-based and should include capabilities to monitor the sea surface, the air (radar and satellite) and the sea depths (systems for detecting submarines and/or divers). In the past, the navy has used radar and coastal facilities to monitor the sea surface. The new geographical areas that the navy needs to monitor have been expanded to include Israel's economic waters.

A new zone has been created which will be monitored by the navy, supported by its use of aerial patrols. In this zone, which will be known as the maritime warning zone of the economic waters, intelligence will be monitored and assessed, including a continual tracking of military and civilian activity, whether in the sea or in the air.

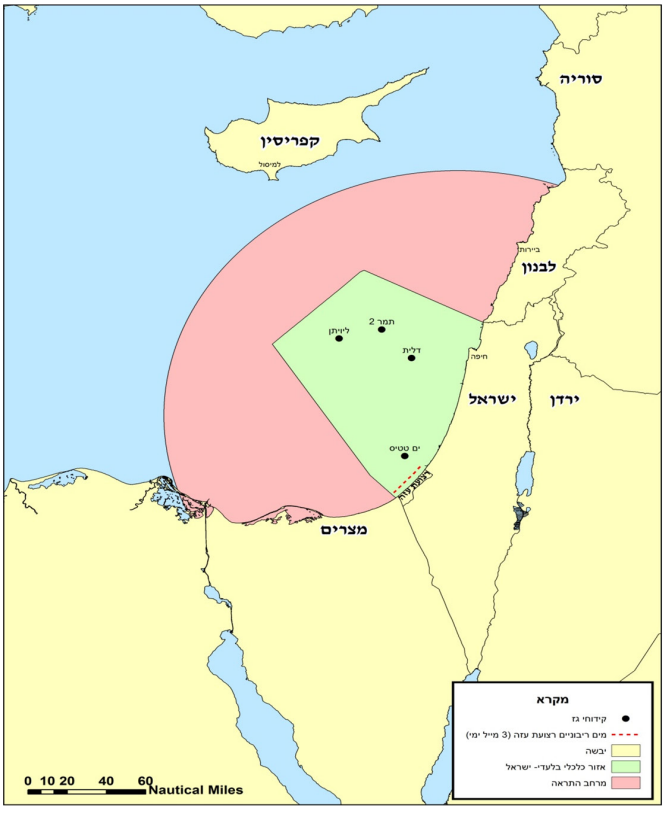


Figure 2: Map of the economic waters and the maritime warning zone

The new zone is broader than the economic waters and will also cover areas that are not part of Israel's EEZ. Within the EEZ, the areas around the facilities that have been designated according to international law are clear of any target or movement (no-sail zones).

The navy has established command and control positions, as well as operational and other procedures, that enable the inclusion of government bodies with an important role in protecting and monitoring the economic waters. It is important to establish a hierarchy and to define responsibilities together with the government ministries that have an interest in this domain, such as the Ministry for the Protection of the Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Justice and others. The division of responsibility and authority should be anchored in legislation which will formalize the framework of cooperation between the IDF and the rest of the government bodies. Such cooperation is important both in normal times and during an emergency, as well as in the case of an accident or safety event that occurs at the facilities (such as the responsibility for rescue forces).

Currently the 'Yam Thetis', 'Tamar' and 'Leviathan' natural gas rigs (and soon also 'Karish') are under a civilian security umbrella that operates in cooperation with the navy, as part of Government Decision 85/b. This decision, which was made in 2003, instructs the IDF to include the 'Yam Thetis' facility within its routine security activities. The decision also specifies that the Prime Minister will appoint the organization that is responsible for the physical security of the facilities. Currently, the IDF is responsible for maintaining its role as the controlling military force in the maritime domain. To this end, the navy will designate the essential facilities and infrastructures within the areas of its security responsibility. In this capacity, the navy will constitute the professional authority in the protection of the facilities and infrastructures against the threats presented in the reference scenarios. The professional instruction of the security of the facility itself is also the responsibility of the navy. Other responsibilities in the economic waters include: safety, quality of the environment, cyber, etc. which are necessary for the routine operation of the facility and its infrastructure according to its purpose and subject to the standards that apply to its operation. The role of the National Cyber Security Authority in providing professional guidance and in the analysis of the cyber threat is essential given the development of these threats to similar facilities and infrastructures around the world.

The activity of the naval forces, the various intelligence -gathering systems and the control and information systems will provide the various government bodies

with the means to enforce Israel's authority in the EEZ. This will be instrumental in strengthening the sovereignty and national resilience of the State of Israel and particularly in the maritime domain.

## Conclusion

The navy and the IDF will in the next few years complete a broad strategic acquisition program that is intended to provide a response to the challenge of protecting Israel's strategic assets near the coast and out at sea.

This program will not be complete without a number of additional and important processes, including the achievement of agreement on maritime borders, the legislating of the Law of Maritime Zones, the strengthening of the alliances and relationships with the other Eastern Mediterranean states and the creation of an organized and professional mechanism that will manage the protection of the various maritime facilities in Israel's economic waters.