

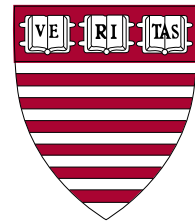
**The Spokesperson—In the Crossfire:  
A Decade of Israeli Defense Crises  
from an Official Spokesperson's  
Perspective**

by

**Nachman Shai**

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# INTRODUCTION

In "The Spokesperson—In the Crossfire," Nachman Shai builds a strong case for the proposition that "truth" rather than "spin" is the basis of effective public information efforts, even in that most trying of situations—a nation at war.

Shai focuses on the turbulent decade in Israeli life that begins with the Lebanon War (1982) and ends with the Gulf War (1991). On the basis of a careful analysis of the interplay of Israel's press, military, government, and people during this conflict-ridden period, he concludes that the only "bulletproof vest" available to the military spokesperson is truthfulness.

Shai writes from experience. When Moshe Arens was appointed Israel's defense minister in the aftermath of the Sabra and Shatila refugee camp massacres, he chose Shai as his media advisor. Six years later, Shai was selected as chief spokesperson for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

He became a widely respected public figure during the Gulf War. He had the task of explaining wartime events to the Israeli press and public, and it was his voice that people heard over the radio as they huddled in bomb shelters during Iraqi missile attacks. One writer said: "Nachman Shai, not Yitzhak Shamir, was the hero of the Gulf War. He was the one who conducted a personal dialogue with the public." A nationwide poll indicated that 67 percent of Israelis regarded him as "completely trustworthy" while 26 percent found him "mostly trustworthy."

But Shai's credibility was sharply questioned shortly after the Gulf War when it was alleged that thousands of defective gas masks had been distributed to the public. Shai had unwittingly assured Israelis that the gas masks were completely safe, but a number of journalists claimed that he had lied to protect his superiors. "It's back to business as usual," wrote one reporter.

"Business as usual" was a reference to the government's false statements during the Yom Kippur War, the Lebanon invasion, and the Intifada. These attempts at manipulating public opinion had poisoned the IDF's relationship with the press and weakened its standing with the Israeli people.

It is a pattern familiar to American citizens and journalists, who have not yet regained the trust in government they had before the Vietnam war.

Shai is too seasoned a practitioner to assume that truthfulness in public information efforts is merely a question of the spokesperson's personal integrity. He proposes organizational systems that are designed to make the spokesperson as fully informed as possible. He recommends, for example, that the defense spokesperson participate in deliberations at the highest levels of the military.

Not everyone will agree with all of Shai's conclusions and recommendations. What cannot be disputed, however, is that the costs of public deception are high and getting higher and the chances that any such deception will escape detection by the press are low and getting lower. Policy makers in all countries and in all sectors of government, not just in Israel and in the military, can gain from a careful reading of Nachman Shai's compelling and insightful paper.

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# The Spokesperson—In the Crossfire: A Decade of Israeli Defense Crises from an Official Spokesperson's Perspective

by Nachman Shai

## Introduction

At a memorial ceremony for late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on October 27, 1996, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin Shahak read an open letter to his former commander:

"Amidst the swirl of emotion and confusion in which we, Israeli society, find ourselves, the IDF you so loved, admired and believed in, the army you led to victory, has fallen from grace. It's true that there are no sacred cows, nor should there be. Yet, sharp criticism, emanating from love and the desire for improvement, has been replaced by alienation. Polarization, hedonism, factionalization, apathy, opportunism, manipulation have penetrated the nation's consciousness, and decimated consensus, transforming the IDF from one of our most hallowed institutions into the collective punching bag."<sup>1</sup>

In all my years covering Israel's defense issues, I had never heard such biting, calculated comments as those I heard that day from the IDF chief of staff. For the first time, Israel's highest military officer spoke openly of the alienation that exists between the IDF and the Israeli public, and between the political and the military hierarchies.

Shortly before the publication of Shahak's letter, the defense minister appointed a special committee to examine the issue of motivation among IDF recruits and reservists. The committee concluded that:

"In the past ten years, there has been a consistent drop in the motivation to serve in the IDF. . . . Political and social events since the Yom Kippur War, Operation "Peace for Galilee," the Intifada and the peace process have all had an impact on motivation."<sup>2</sup>

The ever widening schism between the Israeli public and the military creates a formidable challenge for the chief military spokesperson. Ever since the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the Israeli government and the media have typi-

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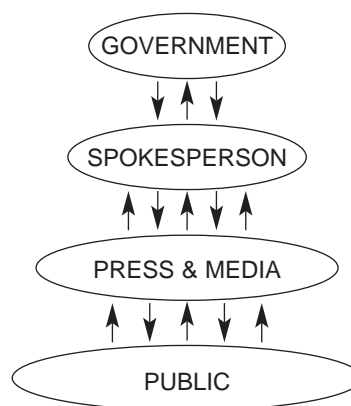
cally achieved a degree of cooperation at the beginning of a given crisis, a period of rallying around the flag, so to speak. But with each subsequent crisis the duration of this period of harmony has shortened and then been followed by an even greater divide between the public and the military, between media and government.

This paper focuses on the role of the spokesperson during a decade (1982–1991) of recurring defense crises. The cumulative effect of these events was a new, evolving reality for the chief military spokesperson in Israel. Little has been written about the role of the spokesperson, despite its increasing importance in Israeli public life.

The spokesperson is the go between. He/she relays information from the government to the public. In ancient times, the individual who brought bad tidings was executed in the hope that the bad news would die with him. Nowadays things are not quite so hazardous for the military spokesperson, but there is still an undesirable element of danger in the job. In times of crises he/she is sent by the military and the government to meet the media on the public relations battlefield and ends up standing in the middle ground, caught in the crossfire.

This paper is written from two viewpoints,

### FLOW OF INFORMATION



those of the participant and the observer. I have included my own personal description of the events in which I played an active part as a spokesperson while also drawing upon academic research, public opinion polls, media accounts and personal interviews.

The objective of this paper is to provide a framework for assessing the future role of the spokesperson. How will he/she survive in the new and continually changing public and media environments of the future? I will attempt to accomplish this objective by examining three defense crises: the Lebanon War (1982), the Intifada (1987) and the Gulf War (1991). In addition, I will discuss a lesser known incident called "Bus #300," which occurred during the time of the Lebanon War and which exemplified the erosion of public trust in one of Israel's most cherished defense institutions, the General Security Service.

### ***The Media Clears its Conscience: The Lebanon War***

#### **The Facts**

The Lebanon War, officially known as Operation "Peace for Galilee," can be divided into two periods. The first period was a conventional war which began on June 6, 1982, and concluded on August 28, 1982. The second period lasted a further three years afterward, ending in 1985, at which time Israel retreated from most of the territories under its control to a twenty kilometer wide security zone in southern Lebanon.

In the initial phase of the war, the IDF entered southern Lebanon with the stated desire of conducting a short war. General (ret.) Yisrael Tal, at the time the most senior general in Israel's military and regarded as one of the world's foremost experts in armored warfare, described the situation on the eve of the operation: "The morale of the residents of Northern Israel was very low. . . . The situation was dire enough that people had begun to leave the area temporarily until the hostilities ended."<sup>3</sup>

The first part of the war was over within a week, but IDF units continued northward. This brought the IDF into contact with the Syrian army, which was deployed throughout Lebanon. The IDF surrounded Beirut. As a result of military and diplomatic pressure, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and his staff left Beirut on August 23, 1982.

The second phase of the war began with the massacre of civilians in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. While Israel was not directly involved in the Sabra and Shatila massacre, the incident nevertheless caused a national and international outcry and led to the establishment in Israel of a government inquiry committee known as the Kahan

Commission. The result was the forced resignation of Defense Minister General (ret.) Ariel Sharon, who was replaced by the ambassador to the United States at the time, Moshe Arens.

#### **The Media**

War is the sad and inevitable reality of the history of the Middle East. Israel has fought seven wars since its establishment as a state in 1948. These wars generally fall into two categories, "no choice wars" and "wars of choice." Initially, the Israeli government claimed that the Lebanon War was a no choice war. Eventually, however, it was forced to admit that Israel had deliberately embarked upon a military operation in Lebanon<sup>4</sup> as a preventive strike against terrorist bases in southern Lebanon.<sup>5</sup>

Contrary to their attitude in prior wars, the media were united in their opposition to military action in Lebanon. Their criticism was a direct result of lessons learned from the Yom Kippur War. In January 1974, leading members of the media admitted to having a sense that the press had not fulfilled its obligations during the so called good years prior to the Yom Kippur War.<sup>6</sup> Lulled by the government's false declarations and promises, the press had fed inaccurate information to the public. This realization led to intense soul searching by the media:<sup>7</sup>

"As a result of the press' changed approach to military reporting [after the Yom Kippur War], the willingness of the press to unequivocally accept the decisions of the military censor is in decline."<sup>8</sup>

"The Yom Kippur War was a turning point with regard to the special aura given to the term 'security' by the public and the press. Public trust was damaged and the tendency to criticize the military and to question its commanders' decisions increased."<sup>9</sup>

"The [Yom Kippur] War shocked the entire Israeli public and raised questions about the relationship between the media and the political and military establishments. The regulations guiding this relationship also came under scrutiny."<sup>10</sup>

After the Yom Kippur War, the media adopted a new style of reporting that was tough and unrelentingly critical towards the defense establishment. This new style was clearly evident during the Lebanon War. For the first time in Israeli history the press conducted a public debate about a war before it broke out, and as it drew closer the press became more vocal in its concerns:

"The Lebanon War was a turning point in the relationship between military correspondents and the defense establishment . . . Just a few months before the war began some the journalists publicly cautioned against this war."<sup>11</sup>

"Since his appointment as minister of defense, some journalists have the distinct sense that [Sharon] intends to go to war in Lebanon and that he plans for it to be a large scale war."<sup>12</sup>

As had been the case in previous wars, the public and the media responded favorably to military action during the first week of the Lebanon War. But by the end of this week the war had expanded in scope. Criticism from the press, directed at Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Defense Minister Sharon, intensified. Sharon's stated objective of bringing about a new order in Lebanon, unprecedented in Israeli experience, shocked both the public and the press.

Military correspondents described their role in reporting the war:

"Right after the fog lifted, and contrary to previous wars, we were no longer willing to comply with the wishes of the IDF or the senior echelons of the defense ministry. We reported and did what we thought was right."<sup>13</sup>

"The public was not only not harmed by the [government's] attempt to distance the media, it actually profited from it. Why? Because the response [of the media] was such that the public received an even more complete picture of the situation [than it might have otherwise]."<sup>14</sup>

"I saw my role as military correspondent in a totally different light than I had in previous wars . . . I wanted to report on and primarily did report on the morale of the army, on the mood of our soldiers who, each day, had a cease fire in the evening, said a prayer of thanks, and in the morning were sent another thirty meters forward."<sup>15</sup>

"This is a situation unlike any other we've seen—a war within a war. The first war is that between the people of Israel and the IDF. The other one is between the media and the political establishment."<sup>16</sup>

The Kahan Commission fulfilled the media's expectations. It was directly responsible for the resignation of Defense Minister Sharon and other senior military officials. Prime Minister Begin left public office and new political leadership took over. Yitzhak Shamir became prime minister.

Not surprisingly, media criticism of the government diminished with the installation of the new leadership. From that point onward there was a correlation between the pace of withdrawal from Lebanon and the intensity of the media criticism, which became particularly harsh whenever Israel suffered casualties. The slowly accumulating number of casualties throughout the lengthy war of attrition was difficult for the Israeli population to tolerate.

Public surveys, conducted from 1985 onward, indicate that approximately sixty percent of Israelis thought that the IDF should have stopped the advance into Lebanon at the forty to forty-five kilometer line.<sup>17</sup> Very few of the Israeli government's goals had been achieved and the price paid was considerable.<sup>18</sup>

Nurit Graetz, an Israeli researcher with expertise in the analysis of media and other public texts, summarizes: "The Lebanese war began with a consensus which weakened as the scope of the battles and its true goals ('a new order in Lebanon and in the Middle East') became known and as the number of casualties mounted. However, even this early consensus could not conceal the divisions between those opposed to and those supportive of the war."<sup>19</sup>

### **The Spokesperson**

In my role as media advisor to the Israeli embassy in Washington (1981–1983) and, later, to the defense minister (1983–1985), I was able to observe the war from two different perspectives.

The role of the Israeli spokesperson in Washington is to influence the U.S. government and the American public through effective use of the media.<sup>20</sup> The Lebanon War, like all wars in the Middle East, endangered U.S. oil supplies and was opposed by the U.S. government. Initial reactions by both the U.S. defense department and the U.S. state department against Israel were harsh, so Moshe Arens, the Israeli ambassador to Washington during the Lebanon War, instructed the embassy to embark on a broad public relations campaign.

As his media advisor, I believed that this PR campaign was futile. The Israeli government and the media were putting out conflicting information and as Ambassador Arens—and the embassy as a whole—were highly credible in Washington I was concerned that this trust would dissipate.

When Arens later returned to Israel to become defense minister he was unscathed by the painful Lebanon episode and was able to formulate a new policy toward Lebanon. Several



of my colleagues and I accompanied Arens back to Israel, to the defense ministry.

The relationship between the defense ministry and the media had been severely damaged during Ariel Sharon's tenure. My first challenge as media advisor to Arens was to restore the trust of the media, especially that of the military correspondents. I hoped to accomplish this by increasing the media's access to Minister Arens and the ministry as a whole. During the Lebanon War, new channels of communication had opened up, making it easier for both the press and the public to obtain information. Under the assumption that they would have access to any and all information, with or without our cooperation and knowledge, we chose an approach whereby we were the first to release information.

The honeymoon between Arens and the press lasted as long as he continued to withdraw Israeli troops from Lebanon. Media criticism resumed when the withdrawal was halted. It was only in 1985, during Yitzhak Rabin's term as defense minister, that troop withdrawal was completed.

When Rabin assumed office, he requested that I remain in my position as media advisor. Rabin articulated his information plan to me: "We never lie to the public. We have an obligation to tell the truth. I've done this throughout my career and will continue to do so."

The high levels of trust that Rabin enjoyed up to that point and beyond, until his assassination, were the result of this principled and practical stance, which I heartily supported. The media respected Rabin for fulfilling his promise to withdraw IDF troops from Lebanon.

### ***Consequences and Lessons of the Lebanon War***

Today, eleven years later, Lebanon remains a staging ground for terrorism. The IDF has undertaken hundreds of forays into Lebanon (the two largest occurred in 1992 and 1996) and it appears the public finds such actions acceptable if the goal is to strike a blow against terrorism.<sup>21</sup>

#### **For the military:**

- Media criticism dictated that the length of any action in Lebanon be short, especially if there was a chance that casualties would result.
- In the future, public opinion must be primed prior to any military engagement.
- In light of the peace process, any "by choice" military action will be difficult to justify.

#### **For the media:**

- The media regained the prestige it lost in the Yom Kippur War.
- The media proved that there are no more sacred cows or taboos with regard to defense matters.
- The media will continue to oppose wars of choice through its news coverage and editorials.

#### **For the military spokesperson:**

- The military spokesperson, trapped in the crossfire between the government and the media, sustained significant damage to his credibility.<sup>22</sup>
- The military spokesperson must be wary of media overexposure of the IDF, which may prove harmful to its future image.
- Effective communication can be achieved only by telling the truth, but it remains to be seen whether or not this is a realistic goal.

#### **Another Sacred Cow: Bus #300**

On Thursday, April 12, 1984, four terrorists took over a public bus that was traveling from Tel Aviv to Ashkelon. Following failed negotiations with the kidnappers, the IDF stormed the bus. Two of the terrorists were killed during the action. The remaining two terrorists, who were taken off the bus alive, were subsequently killed during interrogation. The chief of Israel's General Security Service (GSS) personally ordered the killing.<sup>23</sup>

The press played a pivotal role in exposing the incident and preventing a cover up by the authorities.<sup>24</sup> The photographs of the terrorists coming off of the bus alive were unequivocal proof that they were killed afterward. The Israeli media, by reporting the story, keeping it alive, and demanding accountability from all parties involved<sup>25</sup> performed a great service to Israeli democracy. Zev Schiff describes its impact on Israel and the Israeli media:

"Since [Lebanon] there is no defense matter which the press will not cover. The military censor has also become more liberal, in line with the political changes which have taken place and increased public openness . . . The strength of democracy in Israel is reflected in the military coverage and treatment of sensitive topics such as the incident of the GSS and Bus #300."<sup>26</sup>

During this period, I was media advisor to the defense minister. He was at the scene during the incident and was unaware of what would take place afterward. Later, when the GSS tried

to place responsibility for the incident on him, Arens denied culpability. In order to dispel rumors and doubts, and despite his fears for the reputation of the GSS, he appointed an investigative committee. My job as spokesperson was to protect him from damaging innuendo. Arens emerged unscathed from the episode. The fact that he was not implicated can be attributed to his pursuit of the truth.

Coming on the heels of the scandal of the Lebanon War, the Bus #300 incident represented yet another debacle for the defense establishment; this time one of the most respected institutions in Israel, the GSS, was affected. In the eyes of the public, the integrity of the GSS had been tainted. The Israeli political, defense, judicial and parliamentary institutions endured a subsequent period of trauma.

The GSS had no formal ties to the media and no PR mechanism. This proved damaging when it came under the media spotlight,<sup>27</sup> particularly when its director publicly admitted to lying. The media showed no mercy to the GSS; the incident became known as the "GSS Scandal" and shattered the organization's former invulnerability.<sup>28</sup> GSS ex-chief Yakov Perry admitted that "The GSS is not what it was prior to the Bus #300 incident."<sup>29</sup>

In the past, security matters were exempt from media scrutiny. Now, any individual or organization found to be concealing the truth would be held accountable.

### ***The Role Reversal of David and Goliath: The Intifada***

#### **The Facts**

The popular uprising of the residents of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, known as the "Intifada," began on December 9, 1987, with a car accident between an Israeli and a Palestinian vehicle in which four residents of Gaza were killed. This event triggered a wave of riots and demonstrations in the territories occupied by Israel. According to General Tal, "The conditions for such a revolt had been developing for quite some time and the Palestinian pressure cooker was ripe for explosion. The socio-economic pressure among the Palestinians had been intensifying and was accompanied by deep political frustration."<sup>30</sup>

The extent of the uprising and the tenacity displayed by the demonstrators surprised the Israeli defense leadership. "Surprise" is a loaded word for Israelis, filled with disastrous connotations reminiscent of the Yom Kippur War.

"Everyone was surprised, both the complacent Israeli officials and the leadership of the PLO . . . the Palestinians themselves were surprised."<sup>31</sup>

The IDF, being a conventional army, had no expertise in handling violent civilian demonstrations. The "clubbing policy" instituted by Yitzhak Rabin failed to quell the disturbances and provoked severe criticism. Special units comprised of soldiers dressed as Arabs succeeded in infiltrating terrorist cells and this, too, raised deep moral questions for the military and the public at large. The IDF, which traditionally prided itself on its ethics and humanistic values, was in danger of compromising them. "The Intifada brought about the brutalization of the IDF. This is clear proof that occupation corrupts and cannot, under any circumstances, be considered enlightened."<sup>32</sup>

The Intifada lasted six years. It was a war of attrition, with hundreds of casualties on the Israeli side and thousands on the Palestinian side. Israeli society is extremely sensitive to the loss of life and does not easily endure such a war.<sup>33</sup>

#### **The Media**

In one sense, the Intifada can be seen as the war to win over Israeli and international public opinion. The Palestinians waged this war professionally and with great expertise. The objective of their public relations efforts was to manipulate the Israeli and international press in order to incite strong opposition to Israeli policies and to bring about an immediate political solution.

The Israeli press provided objective, balanced coverage of the Intifada, unlike their coverage in previous wars. Special emphasis was placed on stories about the loss of moral values. Said Ran Edelist: ". . . I am more and more convinced that the media's reporting on the Intifada prevented the IDF from being drawn into even more bloodshed."<sup>34</sup>

The reaction of the IDF to the extensive coverage of the Intifada and the media's sympathetic view of the Palestinians was to limit media access to the territories. The Israeli and foreign press responded by turning to the Israeli judicial system while bypassing IDF restrictions in the field.

For the first time, the IDF was confronted with mini-cams. Scores of mini-cams were distributed to residents throughout the territories by the international press. The term "Restricted Area" no longer had any meaning.

According to Major General (ret.) Yakov Even, a former IDF spokesperson, "The press



coverage of the events was broad. It fought tooth and nail against any deviations and preserved the ethical base of warfare. The press relentlessly exposed any outrageous behavior. . . .<sup>35</sup>

The soldiers' frustrations with the media increased, escalating to the point of isolated street clashes between reporters and soldiers. This behavior so disturbed the IDF that it undertook a massive educational effort among the troops with the goal of reinforcing positive perceptions of a free press in a democratic society.

How much did the Intifada influence public opinion? There does not appear to be clear agreement on this issue. According to political scientist Mark Tessler, ". . . the Intifada has not fundamentally altered the political balance in Israel and it is probable that this polarization [between right and left] which in fact has been deepened by the uprising, will remain the most salient aspect of Israeli political life for some time to come."<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, Asher Arian asserts that "The Intifada had an impact on Israeli public opinion. Israelis said so quite clearly."<sup>37</sup> And General Tal argues that "Israel was forced, due, among other things, to the Intifada, to recognize the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people and to agree in principle to divide the land of Israel among the two peoples."<sup>38</sup>

## The Spokesperson

I assumed my position as chief IDF spokesperson on September 1, 1989. The IDF needed a spokesperson with a journalist's credentials in order to satisfy the demands of a modern, sophisticated press. My only request of the IDF chief of staff, Major General Dan Shomron, was that the IDF spokesperson participate in and have decision making input at the highest echelons of the IDF.

The IDF spokesperson has three different roles. He/she is spokesperson of and media advisor to the chief of staff, sole spokesperson for all members of the IDF, and commander of the IDF media unit with a staff of 250 enlisted personnel and 750 reservists.

As the chief IDF spokesperson, I looked at the Intifada as a war between Israel and the Palestinians, to be waged on the media battlefield. As in any other war, the threat had to be identified and evaluated to prepare both an offensive and a defensive posture. Strategy, tactics, goals, means and fighting forces had to be developed and deployed against the enemy.

## What characterized this new battlefield?

**1. A seemingly omnipresent media.** My policy regarding attempts to obstruct media access was simple: it's not right, it's not worthwhile and it's not possible. It's not right because it's not democratic. It's not worthwhile because it will lead to a hostile press. It's not possible because in one way or another the media will be there.<sup>39</sup>

**2. Fusion of local and international coverage.** The Israeli public quickly learned that stories not covered by the Israeli press could easily be followed in the international media. Several factors made this phenomenon possible:

- the broad and rapid expansion of cable television in Israel;
- the accessibility and affordability of international transmission from Israel;
- the use of mini-cams;
- and the increase in foreign media coverage.

The number of visiting journalists increased, adding to the approximately 300 foreign journalists already stationed in Israel on a permanent basis.

The result of the broad availability of information was that the time frame within which to shape and react to events was greatly compressed. The foreign media, with its need for immediate information and its lack of patience, left the Israeli government no choice but to respond. If it had not, the world—and more importantly, the Israeli public—might have received unbalanced and inaccurate information.

**3. Ascendancy of the electronic media.** Despite the importance of print media in shaping public opinion, the electronic media—particularly television—was clearly dominant in setting the world and Israeli agenda.

**4. Military censorship.** The authority of the military censor was diminished by the Israeli Supreme Court's Shnitzer decision.<sup>40</sup> The ruling stated that the censor is authorized to act only when the information presents a clear and present danger to Israel's security. The dilution of the censor's authority came at a time when the media had deliberately violated the censor's regulations.

**5. The new, aggressive Israeli press.** Increasing commercialization, accompanied by fierce competition, characterized the new era of the Israeli media.<sup>41</sup> There was no sacred ground in this competition. Everything was fair game, including defense and security matters.

The Palestinians were quick to recognize and capitalize on these changes. They established an effective mechanism for providing

information to the foreign press. As for their message, they were clever in reversing the classic David and Goliath roles, becoming David and portraying the Israelis as Goliath. Mortimer B. Zuckerman said at the time that "The images of the Intifada have transformed the perception of Israel and of reality because the Arabs have succeeded brilliantly in shifting the ground of debate."<sup>42</sup>

The Palestinian-Israeli public relations struggle highlighted the issue of speed versus credibility. The Israeli system was built on a labor intensive, time consuming process of checking and re-checking information. Said Brigadier General (ret.) Efraim Lapid, ex-chief IDF spokesperson (and my immediate predecessor), "The key to our success with regard to information lies in the matter of credibility. At the present time when tensions in the territories are so high, it is more important than ever to feel that the spokesperson's reports have been thoroughly checked and are credible."<sup>43</sup>

The need for meticulous verification and the damaging results of a breakdown in the process are described by Major General Even: "Our field reports contain both errors and deliberately misleading statements, even outright lies. As a result the credibility of the IDF spokesperson has been damaged . . . in addition his moral credibility has been decimated."<sup>44</sup>

During the course of the Intifada, Israel's prestigious state comptroller completed an audit of the IDF spokesperson's unit. The comptroller's report stated that "the IDF spokesperson's unit had difficulty reporting on the events of the uprising in Judea, Samaria and Gaza in a timely fashion. This was due to the fact that the reports from the field arrived late thereby delaying the relay of information to the media. At times this led to a decline in IDF credibility in the eyes of both the Israeli and foreign press."<sup>45</sup> Simultaneously, General (ret.) Shlomo Gazit prepared an in depth internal IDF report on the spokesperson's performance during the Intifada. In it, he suggested three operating principles for the unit: openness, independence and apoliticism.

These two reports served as the basis for the implementation of conceptual and organizational changes in the unit. During internal discussions, I expressed my concern about the shortsightedness of our operation and the lack of resources for future confrontations. "The IDF should see itself as moving into a new and different period. I envision direct broadcasts from the battlefield in an attempt to bypass the censor. This possibility is a direct corollary of the

signs we are currently seeing in the massive opening up of the electronic media. . . ."<sup>46</sup>

It was evident that total news management was no longer possible. The government and the army had to recognize the necessity of presenting a full, truthful picture of events to the public in order to preserve IDF credibility. This credibility was vital in order to maintain public morale and national consensus.

I chose to address this issue by making two policy changes. First, there was to be immediate accountability for mistaken IDF reports or announcements. By publicly admitting mistakes, we would strengthen the credibility of all other information issued by the spokesman's unit. Second, information released by the spokesperson's office was to be attributed to "official military sources" rather than the IDF spokesperson. I wanted to utilize the voice and authority of the IDF spokesperson during emergencies only. Little did I know how close we were to a national emergency.

### ***Consequences and Lessons from the Intifada***

The Intifada was Israel's longest war. The IDF and Israeli society were in a continuous violent struggle with the Palestinians. It occurred during a period of continued terrorism that began with the Lebanon War and ended with the Gulf War, a time of crisis upon crisis. The IDF was unable to exercise the full extent of its power against the Intifada because the core of the matter was political in nature. The Intifada ended in September 1993 with the signing of a peace accord between Israel and the Palestinians.

#### **For the military:**

- The Intifada led to a weakening in the primary values of Israel's defense institutions.
- The trauma of yet another intelligence failure reverberated throughout the IDF and Israeli society.

#### **For the media:**

- The media fanned the flames of public debate over the Intifada. They were equally critical of the civilian and military leaderships. The Intifada proved that support is no longer guaranteed even for a war of no choice.
- The media will continue its critical stance towards the government and defense establishments.

#### **For the military spokesperson:**

- The IDF spokesperson failed to bridge the gap between the media and the government.

- He was caught in the crossfire without the support of his superiors. As a result, his best tool for survival was the truth.

### Credibility: The Gulf War

The Gulf War, from Israel's perspective, occurred over two distinct periods. The first period began on August 2, 1990, with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and ended with the first "Scud" missile attacks on Israel on January 17, 1991. The second period was characterized by additional attacks and ended on February 28, 1991, with a cease fire agreement.

#### Period One: The Facts

Israel kept a low profile during the initial invasion of Kuwait. But Israelis had taken note earlier that year, in April 1990, when Saddam Hussein, in a large military demonstration, threatened to destroy half of Israel with missiles. On May 28, 1990, at a meeting of Arab heads of state, Hussein repeated his threat.<sup>47</sup>

By as early as August 1990, there were high level discussions in the Israeli government about distributing gas masks to civilians. The IDF chief of staff favored immediate distribution. Defense Minister Arens disagreed, arguing that the probability of Saddam Hussein's using chemical weapons was low: "The best scenario for us is to prepare for future danger and to maintain a low profile so that Saddam Hussein will not be aided in his attempts to portray the conflict as part of the ongoing Israeli-Arab conflict."<sup>48</sup>

The IDF prepared to confront the Iraqi threat using both defensive and offensive tactics.<sup>49</sup> In accordance with the cabinet's decision, the distribution of gas masks began on October 15, 1990. Israel was the only country in the world whose entire population possessed gas masks, which were kept on hand at all times. As President Bush's deadline of January 15, 1991, for the withdrawal of Iraqi troops approached, Israeli contact with the U.S. defense establishment intensified. The primary U.S. objective was to cement its alliance with Israel and provide assurances that it would defend Israel against Iraqi missile attacks.<sup>50</sup>

#### The Media

The media was low key in its coverage of the preparations for war. It focused on the debate within the government and the military concerning the distribution of gas masks. The media's coverage reflected the Israeli public's deep concern about the possibility of yet another military confrontation in addition to

the ongoing Intifada: engagement in two military confrontations at once would be difficult, even for Israeli's well trained military.

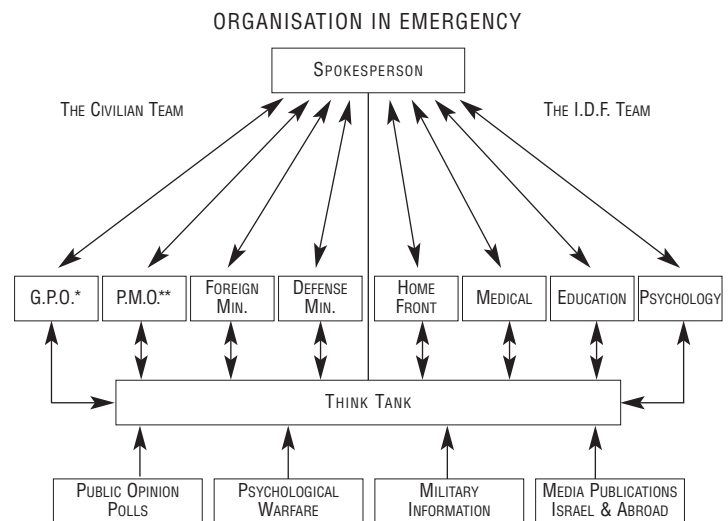
At such times, the Israeli press instinctively assumes a patriotic manner. Yakov Erez: "An Israeli journalist is first and foremost an Israeli and a journalist second."<sup>51</sup> Defense Minister Arens met with the Editors' Committee, which consisted of the chief editors of the Israeli news media. Arens enlisted and received their help in maintaining public calm, telling them that "[A panic] could weaken us."<sup>52</sup> The IDF chief of staff made similar requests of the military correspondents in a meeting on January 15, 1991. "The public is relatively calm. The gas mask distribution was successful," said the chief of staff, "Israel is ready for war."<sup>53</sup>

#### The Spokesperson

As the Gulf War began, the IDF spokesperson's office had just completed its restructuring (see next page). This, along with other considerations, led to the decision of the chief of staff to charge the IDF spokesperson with the task of overseeing all IDF information matters, including defense guidance for the civilian population.

To accomplish this objective, the IDF spokesperson set up three teams: a unit think tank comprised of an array of experts, the IDF Information Team, and the Civilian Information Team. The IDF Information Team was comprised of senior officers representing relevant IDF branches, while the Civilian Information Team was made up of officials representing government ministries responsible for public relations.

The major task during this period was the campaign associated with the distribution of gas



\*G.P.O.-GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE  
 \*\* P.M.O.-PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

masks. The information plan prepared by the IDF spokesperson consisted of six principles: prevent public panic while at the same time spreading messages of defiance against Iraq; take initiative; be open; be credible; create and maintain national consensus; and coordinate efforts so as to speak to the public in a unified voice.

It was imperative that we hold to these principles if we wanted to distribute the gas masks without creating undue panic. We also did not want to give the impression that Israel was initiating the war.

The public information campaign consisted of three phases: preparation for distribution, distribution, and aftermath. The test of the plan's success was public reaction. The response was surprising: people went to the distribution stations, took their gas masks in an orderly and quiet fashion, and went home.

Two issues were still outstanding as we approached war: the "voice of the nation" and the integration of radio and television broadcasts. The voice of the nation is an Israeli concept that refers to an individual who assumes the task of explaining wartime events to the general population. This unofficial role was instituted on the eve of the 1967 war and continued in subsequent wars. There was no one in place to assume this role at the time of the Gulf War.

On January 15, 1991, I was a guest on a television talk show. At the end of the interview, the host, Dan Shilon, one of Israel's prominent television personalities, requested that I look straight into the camera and explain to the public why there was no need to worry. I was taken by surprise. Nevertheless, I turned to the viewers and, drawing on my knowledge and experience, explained at length and in my own words that the army was prepared. "Everyone in Israel can rest assured," I said. "Of course there are threats out there, but we have a strong army. We must remember this."

It was at that moment that I unwittingly assumed the role of the voice of the nation. The difference between my predecessors and me was that while they had been civilians who were chosen for that role, I was in uniform.

The second unresolved issue, the integration of radio and television broadcasts, was more complex than it had been in previous wars. In the past it was customary for the two public radio stations to combine their broadcasts: it was patriotic, it prevented competition, and it allowed for the pooling of resources.<sup>54</sup> Now there were new TV stations, both cable and Channel 2.<sup>55</sup> The competition among the

media engendered opposition to integrated broadcasts. Personally, I was not sure if the old model would work in the new marketplace. The matter was resolved on January 13, 1991. The ministers of defense, education and communication, along with upper management of the electronic media and the IDF spokesperson, decided that the radio broadcasts would be combined and that the television stations would consult with one another but maintain separate broadcasts. The IDF spokesperson was charged with determining the date of integration. On January 16, 1991, joint radio broadcasts commenced.

As the IDF spokesperson, I gave the broadcasters assurances that the IDF would not interfere with content. The joint broadcasts were free of military influence and were composed on the basis of professional considerations only (except for occasional restrictions placed by the military censor which, of course, was still functioning).

The groundwork was now set for our campaign over the next forty days. There were two key informational elements: developing public consensus with regard to a defensive war in which Israel would not respond with force, and reinforcing the impression that Israel had not been taken by surprise.

The stance of non-responsiveness was unusual in light of Israel's history, in which wars were either initiated by its army or were a reaction to enemy attacks. In the case of the Gulf War, however, the Israeli public was reluctant from the outset to embark on a new war and pleased that the Allies were willing to fight in Israel's stead.

### **Period Two: The Facts**

A total of forty missiles hit Israel during the course of seventeen missile attacks. Most of the missiles were aimed at the central and northern areas of the country; a few missiles fell in the south and in the east and landed in Arab populated areas. One death was caused by a direct missile hit and several other deaths resulted from heart attacks and/or misuse of gas masks. There were several hundred injured, suffering mostly minor injuries. Property damage was valued at approximately US\$250 million.<sup>56</sup>

All of the missiles were fired from Iraq. The United States informed Israel that it was taking steps to destroy the missiles but the attacks continued. Israel did not retaliate. Said General Tal: "These missiles bring tidings of the modern strategic threat which will make its mark on Israel's national security and on the type of deterrence used in the future. . . . Despite the



fact that it did not respond to the missile attacks, Israel did not lose its deterrence capabilities during the Gulf War."<sup>57</sup>

### The Media

The previously low key media coverage changed the moment the war broke out.<sup>58</sup> Each daily newspaper followed the war according to its own particular style and editorial slant.<sup>59</sup> *Ha'aretz* was moderate and balanced; *Hadashot* sensationalist; *Yediot Aharonot* (an evening paper) had huge, bold headlines and *Ma'ariv* had a style similar to that of *Yediot*.

The IDF chief of staff, in a meeting on January 24, 1991, informed the Editors' Committee that he found the accounts in their coverage to be highly exaggerated. He reminded them that Saddam Hussein was closely following their coverage in order to judge Israel's response and determine his future course of action accordingly.

Public debate over the wisdom of restraint ensued. At the same time, a number of articles appeared in the press supporting the government's policy that Israel not interfere in the war.<sup>60</sup> Other public controversies—where to hide during attacks (in sealed rooms or in bomb shelters), the effectiveness of the gas masks, whether to leave urban centers for the suburbs—were all discussed at length and received extensive media coverage. The open debate showed that freedom of the press in Israel was alive and well. It helped to maintain national consensus.

The electronic media captured the public's attention during the war. Radio was devoted solely to broadcasting a siren at the time of an attack; at all other times it was silent. This unique Israeli phenomenon is known as "silent radio." According to Uri Paz, "The silent radio was a lifeline for many Israelis as they sat in their sealed rooms, trembling with fear and waiting for the missiles to fall and, afterwards, to hear the outcome of the attacks."<sup>61</sup> Television broadcasts carried reports, commentary and guidelines for the public while at the same time providing entertainment and respite.

The integrated radio broadcasts were controversial throughout the war. Dan Shilon described them as a "violation of the public interest."<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, Arie Mekel, director general of the Israel Broadcasting Authority, said, "It is preferable to speak to the public in a unified, patriotic voice."<sup>63</sup>

My primary concern regarding integrated radio broadcasts was the potential for government interference with content. But the broadcasts

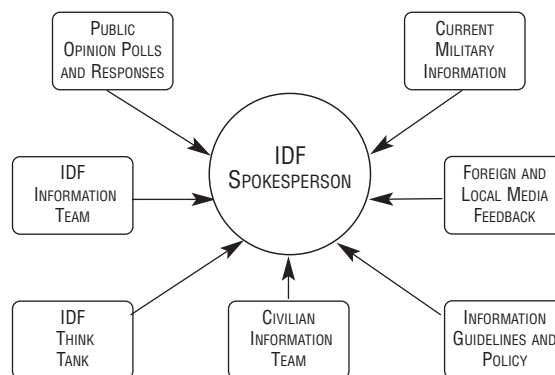
remained totally independent. Chava Tidhar and Dafna Lamish found in their research that public controversies in Israel during the war were fully reflected in the broadcasts.<sup>64</sup> As far as the public was concerned, "[they] loved the joint radio broadcasts. In an audience survey done by Israel Radio, ninety-two percent of the public advocated continuing joint broadcasts, only eight percent wanted to return to the separate broadcasts."<sup>65</sup> This, in my estimation, was proof of their success.

### The Spokesperson

The following charts are designed to illustrate the information flows to and from the IDF spokesperson during the Gulf War. One chart represents the flow of input to the spokesperson, the second represents output.

#### Input

Input consists of all information, evaluations, advice and guidelines received by the spokesperson's unit, which assisted in decision making.

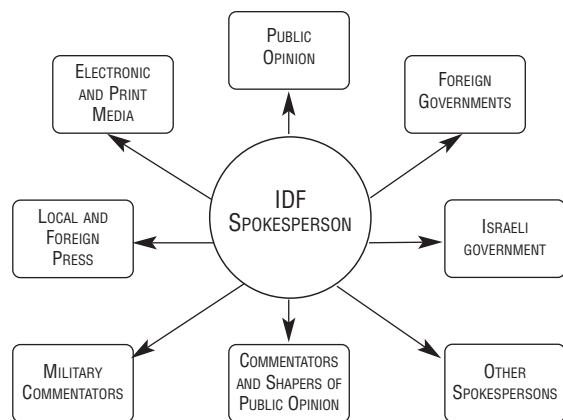


#### Output

Output includes guidelines and information for formulating public statements sent to public constituents and official organizations.

In the early morning hours of January 18, 1991, the first Iraqi missiles fell on Israel. On the way to the IDF underground command center in Tel Aviv, I made a request to go on the air. Up to that moment the media were confused about how to react to the attack. The fact that the broadcasters were unnerved was reflected on the air. Using my cellular phone, I spoke on the air for several minutes. I did not have many details and was not able to relay much information. I said, "This is the chief IDF spokesperson. The IDF is handling the situation. In the meantime, please follow the defense guidelines which you have been given. I will know more in a little while and when I do, I will pass the information

on to you.” In this manner I was able to make direct contact with the public at home in their sealed rooms. This mode of communication continued throughout the missile attacks.



The moment a missile was fired, and immediately following the sirens, I would go on the air, both on radio and television, with instructions on what to do during the next several minutes and, later, during the long hours of waiting for the all clear. According to Tamar Gross, “The soothing tone of the spokesperson, his empathy and his understanding of the difficulties involved in being in a sealed room (for example, his suggestion to drink water in order to calm down), made him resoundingly popular, to the extent that he was almost forgiven for his unit’s oversights earlier in the war.”<sup>66</sup>

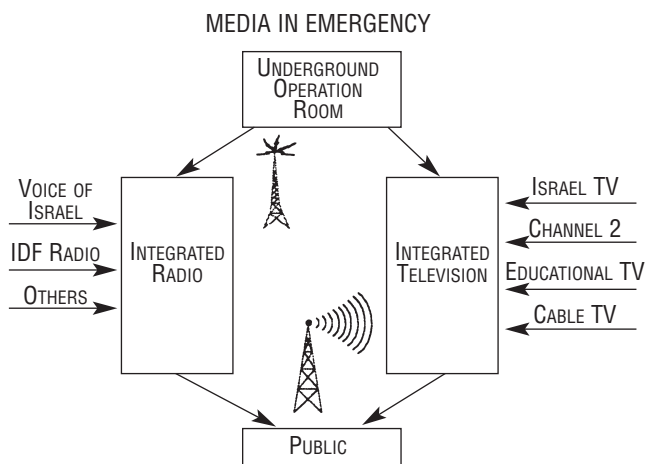
My broadcasts were carried by television and radio simultaneously. The television stations used slides and voice-overs. My preference was to remain close to the information source, in the IDF underground command center, and to give instructions to the public from there. This was to enable people to remove the annoying and frightening gas masks in the quickest possible amount of time. The diagram below illustrates communication procedures during the war.

The newscasters were extremely cooperative with us in our efforts to maintain public calm. According to Colonel (ret.) Moshe Even Chen, chief of the IDF department of behavioral science: “The best of the Israeli press was on display during the war. These individuals are part of this country, they live here and fear for Israel. They acted and spoke accordingly.”<sup>67</sup> But they were to have their regrets after the war was over.

I attempted to focus on the sole objective of guiding the public and maintaining calm. Every so often I would make an exception with a political statement such as: “Israel has a right

to self defense and will act when appropriate,” or “We cannot sit quietly by as these attacks occur.”<sup>68</sup> Overall, however, the tone remained one of understatement.

There were a number of crises. For example, Yitzhak Rabin announced that he did not use his sealed room but instead went into his bomb shelter. This revelation was quite damaging. There was considerable public pressure to hear from government leaders. Where is the prime minister? the media asked. Where is the minister of defense? Our answer was that, at that stage, policy statements were not required. What was necessary was a dialogue with the



public in the time between the siren and the all clear, when people were most frightened and burdened. Said Nurit Graetz: “The fact that the government leaders did not appear very often and the person who was there was Nachman Shai did not contribute to the power and authority base of the leadership. Nachman Shai, not Yitzhak Shamir, was the hero of the Gulf War. He was the one who conducted a personal dialogue with the public. [Shai], with his intellectual, anti-macho image, clear policy, and demands for public cooperation, provided the only leadership.”<sup>69</sup>

The centrality of the IDF spokesperson’s role during the Gulf War drew some critical comment, but the public response was overwhelmingly positive. Evidence of this comes from a poll conducted by the Gutman Institute for Social Research: sixty-seven percent of the public felt that the IDF spokesperson was completely trustworthy; twenty-six percent found him to be mostly trustworthy.<sup>70</sup> Additional research carried out by the ministry of defense<sup>71</sup> determined that:



- the level of public trust in the IDF officers and in their decision making ability was very high (a ninety-two percent approval rating, higher than the normal eighty-one percent);
- the level of trust placed in the IDF spokesperson was extremely high during the entire period of the war;
- eighty percent of those polled found the media reports to be highly credible, while fifteen percent found the reports to be credible some of the time.

A wealth of research also appears in the publication, *Psychology*.<sup>72</sup> The findings confirm that the public was in distress during the initial stages of the war but was calm later on. This is a crucial measure of the effectiveness of the spokesperson.

### ***Consequences and Lessons of the Gulf War***

Israel did not actually fight in the Gulf War. The greatest concern was for the war's effect on Israel's self image and perceived ability to deter enemies. General Tal claims that there was no such negative effect,<sup>73</sup> but this remains to be seen. Memories of the Gulf War surface whenever tensions rise in the region.

#### **For the military:**

- This was the first war which took place exclusively on the home front.
- It was a long range war. There was no ground contact between fighting forces.
- Above all, for the first time there had been imminent threat of the use of non-conventional weapons against Israel.

#### **For the media:**

- The Israeli media supported the policy of restraint until the end of the war, at which time the legitimacy of this policy was questioned.
- The electronic media provided the government with the means to inform and soothe an anxious public.

#### **For the spokesperson:**

- The Gulf War, from the Israeli perspective, was one of words and declarations; therefore, the spokesperson naturally became one of the central figures of the war.
- The direct, unfiltered communication between the spokesperson and the general public proved to be highly effective.

### **Credibility Again: The Gas Masks**

In real life dramas, the occasional happy ending may ultimately be followed by a jolting

epilogue. This was true in the case of the Gulf War. Two and a half weeks after the end of the war, Zev Schiff reported that thousands of gas masks distributed by the IDF to the public were defective.<sup>74</sup> In essence, the article stated that hundreds of thousands of gas masks supplied to the adult Israeli population provided inadequate protection. The article also included the revelation that approximately 170,000 of the gas masks that had been purchased by Israel were old and had been previously sold.

During the war, the state comptroller had questioned the defense minister regarding the effectiveness of the gas masks. At the time the minister denied the allegations, expressing confidence in the quality of the masks. The release of the damaging information just after the war had an explosive impact. Zev Schiff acknowledged that he had been aware of the situation much earlier but had refrained from publicizing it in order to prevent a panic.<sup>75</sup>

The press was outraged. Among the headlines that appeared in March 1991 were "The Public Deserves To Know The Truth" (*HaTzofeh*), "Inadequate Credibility" (*Ha'aretz*), "The Public Has The Sense That It Is Not Getting The Truth About This Matter" (*Ma'ariv*), "Was There An Oversight? Was The Report Wrong?" (*Yediot Aharonot*), "Was It A Lie?" (*Hadashot*), "Protection, Financing And Credibility" (*Davar*), and "We've Been Deceived And Taken For A Ride" (*Al HaMishmar*).

A few of these articles also mentioned the role of the IDF spokesperson. "Something is rotten in the gas mask fiasco. The primary verification for this was provided by none other than the IDF spokesperson, Brigadier General Nachman Shai."<sup>76</sup> Yoel Marcus wrote: "In hindsight I feel like I was taken for a fool. During the entire war I sat in my sealed room with my gas mask on my face listening to the soothing voice of Nachman Shai advising me to be calm and to drink water."<sup>77</sup> Yehuda Meltzer added, "The situation of the IDF spokesperson is a parable about what happens when credibility comes face to face with conflicting values. His soothing tone isn't enough. There must be some clarification. If I am asked to lie, do I? . . . And if I am to believe [Nachman Shai], he must say: If I am pressured to provide false information, I will refuse. It comes as no surprise that he was loyal to his 'client', to his superiors. Now that he's in trouble we know it's back to business as usual."<sup>78</sup>

I attached these articles and others to a letter addressed to IDF chief of staff Major General Shomron on March 22, 1991. In it, I wrote:

"I had no inkling about what was happening, not even when the state comptroller's report was under scrutiny. I hope the report is wrong. If not, it will be difficult for me to accept that I addressed the public as a representative of the defense establishment, in which I believe, when the effectiveness of the protection device provided to the citizens of Israel was under suspicion."

"This is diametrically opposed to my understanding of the role of the spokesperson, who is to be integrated into and knowledgeable about the decision making process. The damage done to the spokesperson's credibility is significant and will only worsen with time. I can see no other alternative but to go public with the appropriate correspondence and information. We must tell the truth, however difficult that may be, if we want to preserve and restore the public's faith in the IDF."

The chief of staff invited me to meet with him. At that time he made it clear that he had not misled me, nor had he caused me to mislead the public.<sup>79</sup> In his judgment, the gas masks provided adequate protection and the state comptroller's assessment was incorrect. This was to be the IDF position in the upcoming public debates, which turned out to be open war between defense and military officials and the state comptroller's office.

Orit Galili wrote, "IDF Spokesperson Nachman Shai played a pivotal role in these discussions, particularly regarding outgoing Chief of Staff Dan Shomron's response. In his briefings, Shai was able to polish Shomron's message and thereby win empathy for the IDF."<sup>79</sup>

The stance of both the defense minister and chief of staff seemed plausible and made it possible for me to engage in the new information campaign. Nevertheless, IDF credibility had been damaged. It is now clear that the IDF did have information regarding the quality of the masks and that there was correspondence with the state comptroller asserting that the masks worked. I was unaware of this at the time.

My information was verified time and again during the war. I did not knowingly release any inaccurate information. The quality of the gas masks was verified as well. My superiors supported me throughout the incident, and in so doing protected themselves. We were all affected, but I felt personally responsible since it had been my role to inform and reassure the public.

The gas mask scandal precipitated a credibility crisis for the IDF and its spokesperson.

Prior to the Gulf War, the media had doubted IDF credibility. During the Gulf War, these doubts were almost completely put to rest. The gas mask incident proved that the doubt and skepticism were justified.

### ***Conclusions: The Bulletproof Vest***

Each war is different from the previous ones. Unfortunately, preparation for future wars is often based on past wars. One can only hope that there will be no more wars in the Middle East. However, Israel takes the threat of a non-conventional war very seriously. In the event of another war, Israel, both as a state and a society, will be different than it is today; the processes described in this paper will continue as the circumstances change.

What will the next war look like? From a military perspective it will be a horrific war in which non-conventional weapons will be deployed from afar. A current opinion is that "This war did not ensure the eradication of the [missile] threat. [Israel's] ability to protect itself from more precise nuclear weapons, conventional or unconventional, is uncertain."<sup>81</sup> Zev Schiff examines Israel's ability to deter the Arabs and is disturbed by the implications for the future.<sup>82</sup>

The media will also be different. We are moving in the new world of information technology. Arnon Zuckerman describes a future scenario in which international networks will engage in fierce competition, leaving no story or piece of information unreported.<sup>83</sup> Professor Elihu Katz is pessimistic about the press of the future: "In a word, the combination of information management, instant news, empty analysis and the best of intentions threatens the future of critical journalism."<sup>84</sup>

Barrie Dunsmore predicts that the next war will be broadcast live.<sup>85</sup> Marvin Kalb agrees: "Will there be 'live' coverage of the next war? Absolutely."<sup>86</sup>

I had the opportunity to address these issues in the spring of 1991. In an article written at that time, I suggested that ". . . The Israeli model of quick, brief wars does not lend itself to keeping the media away from the action. . . . The realities of the country prevent the obscuring of details. Preventing access to and movement in areas of warfare is not possible."<sup>87</sup>

Based on this assumption, and contrary to the experience of the Gulf War, I recommended the attachment of media teams to military units: "[Such a policy] will have a definite impact on local and world opinion and, in the

long run, will be to our benefit."<sup>88</sup> This would be official IDF policy during wartime.

The past twenty years have taught us that, above all, Israel should never again be surprised by a war. The IDF is continuously monitoring the enemy—its troop movements, preparedness, equipment and intentions. Now the IDF must monitor the media in precisely the same manner. The operating assumption is that the media will endeavor to expose the facts in any future conflict; the IDF must be equipped to meet this challenge head-on. Any attempt to hide the truth is doomed to failure. In order to survive the crossfire, the IDF spokesperson must adhere to the truth. The truth is his bulletproof vest.

## Notes

1. Amnon Shahak, "Speech at Memorial for Yitzhak Rabin," *Ha'aretz*, 31 October 1996, B2.
2. *Ha'aretz*, 19 November 1996.
3. See Yisrael Tal, *National Security: The Few Opposite the Many* (Tel Aviv: Zmora Beitan Press, 1996); and Efraim Inbar, "The No-Choice War," in Ian Lustick, ed., *Arab-Israeli Relations: Contending Perspectives After the War* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994), p. 192.
4. See Yisrael Tal, *National Security: The Few Opposite the Many* (Tel Aviv: Zmora Beitan Press, 1996); and Efraim Inbar, "The No-Choice War," in Ian Lustick, ed., *Arab-Israeli Relations: Contending Perspectives After the War* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994).
5. See Inbar, "The No-Choice War."
6. *Journalists Yearbook* (Tel Aviv: The Journalists Association of Israel, 1974), "The Media in the war," Discussion in the Press Council, pp. 109–26.
7. See Moshe Negbi, *Paper Tiger* (Tel Aviv: Sifriat HaPoalim, 1985).
8. Dina Goren, *Defence Secrecy and Freedom of the Press* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1974), p. 220.
9. Menahem Hofnung, *Israel: State Security vs. The Rule of Law, 1948–1991* (Jerusalem: Nevo Press, 1991), p. 189.
10. Dan Caspi and Yehiel Limor, *The Brokers: The Media in Israel, 1948–1990* (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Eshkolot, 1992), p. 247.
11. Ze'ev Schiff, "Information Trapped By Defense," in Tali Zelinger, ed., *From Our Military Correspondent* (Tel Aviv: Israel Defense Ministry Press: 1990), p. 15.
12. Yakov Erez, "The Military Correspondent," *From Our Military Correspondent*, p. 48.
13. Eitan Haber, "A war without consensus" in *Journalist Yearbook* (Tel Aviv: The Journalists Association of Israel, 1938), p. 9.
14. Ze'ev Schiff, "A war without consensus" in *Journalist Yearbook* (Tel Aviv: The Journalists Association of Israel, 1938), p. 11.
15. Hirsh Goodman, *Jerusalem Post*. It should be noted that in previous wars, the reporting activities of military correspondents were in line with IDF policy. In *Journalist Yearbook* (Tel Aviv: The Journalists Association of Israel, 1938), p. 13.
16. Amiram Nir, op. cit, p. 13.
17. Asher Arian, *Security Threatened: Surveying Israeli Opinion on Peace and War*, Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 1995).
18. Ibid.
19. Nurit Graetz, *Lingers in Her Dream: Myths of Israeli Freedom* (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Ofakim, 1995), p. 99.
20. A formidable obstacle is the tendency among the media to side with their own government in matters of foreign affairs; this applies to both the domestic press corps and to correspondents stationed abroad. For an excellent analysis of this phenomenon see Dina Goren. *Communication and Reality*, (Keter Publishing House Jerusalem, 1986), p. 131. Foreign correspondents, it should be noted, can also identify strongly with the country in which they serve. See Thomas L. Friedman, *From Beirut to Jerusalem* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1989).
21. See Arian, *Security Threatened*.
22. This was a further worsening of the military spokesperson's position, following a forced resignation in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War because of the failure of the IDF to adequately manage military information. See Eviatar Ben Tsedef, "Did the Israeli Media Provide Sufficient Warning Before the Yom Kippur War?" *Patuah* 3 (March 1996), p. 48.
23. The Israeli General Security Service (also known as the Shin Bet) is one of the intelligence arms of Israel's defense establishment. It is directly accountable to the prime minister's office and not to the defense ministry.
24. See Yehiel Gutman, *Scandal in the GSS* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 1995).
25. Despite extensive media coverage and wide public attention, the whole story of the Bus #300 incident is still not known. See "7 Days," *Yediot Aharonot*, 26 July 1996.
26. Ze'ev Schiff. *Information Trapped by Defense*. p. 58.
27. See Hofnung, *State Security vs. The Rule of Law*.
28. In the years since the Bus #300 incident, the GSS has attempted to rebuild its relationship with the press. It was fairly successful until Prime Minister Rabin's assassination, which led to the resignation of yet another GSS director.
29. Yehiel Gutman, *Scandal in the GSS* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Arahonot, 1995), p. 5.

30. Tal, *National Security*, p. 194.
31. Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, *Intifada* (Jerusalem: Schocken Books, 1990), p. 7.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
33. It is worth noting, however, that during this period the desire of young soldiers to serve in the army, even in elite combat units, remained high and even increased. A unpublished survey conducted by the IDF department of behavioral science showed that while motivation decreased during the Lebanon War, during the Intifada it returned to the high levels that were typical during the Yom Kippur War. This can perhaps be attributed to the fact that there was greater national consensus of opinion concerning the Intifada than the Lebanon War, hence the morale of enlisted soldiers was higher during the Intifada.
34. Ran Edelist, "With an Iron Fist" *From Our Military Correspondent*, 15, p. 17.
35. Yakov Even, "Lessons of the Dialogue Between the Media and the Military," *From Our Military Correspondent*, p. 25.
36. Mark Tessler, "The Intifada and Political Discourse," *Arab-Israeli Relations*, pp. 364–65.
37. Arian, *Security Threatened*, p. 79.
38. Tal, *National Security*, p. 195.
39. Interview with Yakov Even, *The Media Show*, ITV Channel 4, Great Britain. 3 December 1989.
40. Ze'ev Segal, *Freedom of the Press: Between Myth and Reality* (Tel Aviv: Papyrus, Tel Aviv University Press, 1996), p. 70.
41. See Caspi and Limor, *The Brokers*, p. 125.
42. Mortimer B. Zuckerman, *U.S. News & World Report*, 20 January 1990, p. 78.
43. Efraim Lapid, "Credibility Is the Key," *From Our Military Correspondent*, p. 31.
44. Even, *From Our Military Correspondent*, 25.
45. *State Comptroller's Annual Report*, 1989 (The Government Printer), Jerusalem, p. 7.
46. Nachman Shai, "The Electronic Aspect of Military Coverage," *From Our Military Correspondent*, pp. 22–23.
47. Emanuel Hasidov, *The Gulf War* (Tel Aviv: Saar Press, 1993), p. 226.
48. Moshe Arens, *War and Peace in the Middle East: 1988–1992* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 1995), p. 162.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
51. Shalom Rosenfeld and Mordechai Naor, *Viper: The Gulf War Through Four Israeli Dailies* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1990), p. 170.
52. A meeting between Defense Minister, M. Arens, and Editors Committee 14 January 1991.
53. A meeting between the I.D.F. Chief of general staff, Major General Dan Shomron, and Military correspondents 15 January 1991.
54. Caspi and Limor, *The Brokers*, p. 111.
55. See Orit Galili, "I Saw and Heard," *Ha'aretz*, 16 January 1991.
56. Simply facts.
57. Tal, *National Security*, p. 195.
58. For an interesting study on how the Israeli media satisfies the public's needs in times of emergency, see Ziona Peled and Elihu Katz, "Media Functions in Wartime: The Israel Home Front in October, 1973," in J. Blumer and E. Katz, eds., *The Uses of Mass Communication: Current Perspectives on Gratification Research* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1974), pp. 49–69.
59. Rosenfeld and Naor, *Viper*, p. 44.
60. It is worth noting that each newspaper took this position independently. See *Ma'ariv*, 21 January 1991; and *Ha'aretz*, 23 January 1991.
61. Uri Paz, "Radio Conscripted as an Instrument of War," *The Journalists Yearbook* (Tel Aviv: The Journalists Association of Israel, 1992), p. 146.
62. An Interview with Dan Shilon, *Hadashot*, 2 February 1991.
63. From "Tonight," Israel Television, 5 March 1991.
64. See Chava Tidhar and Dafna Lamish, "Israeli Broadcasting Facing the Scud Missile Attacks," in T.A. McLain and L. Shyless, eds., *The 1000 Hour War* (London: Greenwood Press, 1993).
65. Listeners Poll, Israeli Radio, 23–24 January 1991.
66. Tamar Gross, "The IDF Spokesperson Is Sleeping," in Reno Tzror, ed., *People Died of Fear* (Tel Aviv: Peratim Publishers, 1991), p. 96.
67. Col. Even Chen made these comments to me in a personal interview in October 1996.
68. I made these particular statements on 23 January 1991.



69. Graetz, *Lingers in Her Dream: Myth of Israeli Freedom*, p. 149.
70. Shlomit Levi, "Government Support as in Six Day War," *Ma'ariv*, 1 February 1991.
71. This research has not been published.
72. *Psychology: An Israeli Scientific Journal of Study and Research*, special issue on research about the Gulf War, Volume 4, no. 1–2, 1994, Published by Israel Psychological Association.
73. Tal, *National Security*, p. 196.
74. Ze'ev Schiff, *Ha'aretz*, 17 March 1991.
75. Mr. Schiff said this to me in a personal interview on 8 August 1996.
76. Ze'ev Schiff, *Ha'aretz*, March 1991.
77. Yoel Marcus, *Ha'aretz*, 17 March 1991.
78. Yehuda Meltzer, *Hadashot*, March 1991.
79. The public was smart. According to a defense ministry report, the public's confidence in the gas masks was relatively low before the war. It went up during the war and fell again following the war. It is possible that this ebb in confidence was attributable to the state comptroller's annual report.
80. Orit Galili, "I saw and heard," *Ha'aretz*, 11 April 1991.
81. Noah Milgrom, *Psychology: An Israel Scientific Journal of Study and Research*, Volume 4, 1994. pp. 7–19.
82. Ze'ev Schiff, "Israel After the War," in Lustick, Ian (ed.), *Arab-Israeli Relations: Contending Perspectives after the War*. p. 211.
83. Arnon Zuckerman, *The Seventh Eye: A Bimonthly Journal* (July–August 1996). (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute).
84. Elihu Katz, "The End of Journalism: Notes on Watching the War" (unpublished).
85. Barrie Dunsmore, *The Next War: Live!* (Cambridge, MA: The Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, Harvard University, 1996).
86. Ibid.
87. Shai, "We Are All C.N.N." in Shaham, Nathan and Ra'anani, Zvi (eds.), *The Gulf War*, (Tel Aviv: Sifriat HaPoalim, 1991), p. 151.
88. Oded Ben Meir, "The Media In Wartime," *Davar*, 31 March 1991.