

After a Year of War, What Does 2025 Hold for Israel?

written by Prof. Kobi Michael | 31.12.2024

Prof. Kobi Michael: 2025 will not be a less challenging and turbulent year than 2024, but it will be less bloody.

Israel is entering the new year in a much better situation than the previous year. After the attacks of October 7, 2023, Israel's regional partners began to perceive Israel as vulnerable. Allied countries in the region, particularly the Abraham Accords countries, had not anticipated Israel being caught off guard by Hamas, suffering such heavy losses, or appearing unprepared to respond. Israel had built a reputation as the region's leader in countering the threat posed by Iran, and the attacks raised doubts about the value of normalizing ties with Israel.

Israel has had successful military achievements in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Syria, and mainly with Iran, a country that has now been stripped of many of its capabilities and assets. It is now exposed and in a very embarrassing position.

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Houthi missile targets Tel Aviv airport as Israel mulls strike on Iran

written by Prof. Kobi Michael | 31.12.2024

Prof. Kobi Michael: Israel is unlikely to be able to degrade the Yemeni group as effectively as it did Hamas and Hezbollah. They are located across a very large area in mountains and deserts so their locations are not easy to detect. We don't have intelligence as good as we have with regard Hezbollah, Syria, Iran, or Hamas. And we are talking about a distance of 1,200km, so the circumstances are pretty complicated.

Israel is likely to lean on the US-led alliance, which includes the UK, which is already engaged in a military campaign against the Houthis over their attacks on Red Sea shipping, and to try to impose a maritime blockade to cut off the group's weapons supply lines.

Netanyahu is willing to attack Iran and he understands that this is a very narrow window of opportunity, suggesting that president-elect Donald Trump would prefer Israel to strike before his inauguration on 20 January.

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News organization awards U.N. Persons of the Year to Israel's fiercest anti-Semitic critics

written by Arsen Ostrovsky | 31.12.2024

Arsen Ostrovsky on News Organization decision to give its 'U.N. Persons of the Year' award to Francesca Albanese, the head of UNRWA and Antonio Guterres.

Ostrovsky: "The organization claims to be a 'women-led non-profit' that covers the U.N., women's issues and human rights," he added. To honor this group of U.N. individuals who have peddled in relentless Jew-hatred, rape denial and justification of Hamas crimes, is obscene, unconscionable and just inexcusable. They may as well have given the award posthumously to Yahya Sinwar."



Israel's Efforts to Counter Iran's Regional Aggression

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 31.12.2024

Dr. Yossi Mansharof : I believe the main idea is to deter Iran from launching an attack against Israel in response to Israel's recent and unprecedented strike on Iranian targets. For the first time in the history of the Iranian regime, it has been attacked at 20 different locations, including one nuclear facility and numerous military installations.

Israel's primary goal now is to prevent Iran from carrying out its promised retaliatory attack. Iran has repeatedly vowed to launch an offensive, and Israel is doing its best to deter such actions. So far, we have seen significant successes on

various fronts. In Gaza, Hamas is nearly eliminated. In Lebanon, Hezbollah has suffered a substantial blow, and the broader resistance appears weakened following yesterday's attacks on Israel.

The interview took place in Al-Arabiya on December 24, 2024.

Israel Destroys Syrian Military Without a War

written by Prof. Kobi Michael | 31.12.2024

Prof. Kobi Michael: The territory guarantees strategic control over the whole southern Syrian arena, which generates an immediate threat to Israel. There is no higher vantage point than the Syrian part of the Golan.

Power in Syria is now de-centralized, with the country fragmented between several groups, most of them extreme Islamist, potentially posing a new array of threats to Israel.

Israel is not looking to apply sovereignty to the buffer zone, but rather to militarily control the area in order to prevent danger under conditions of instability.

This is an unprecedented event in which the Israeli army has the ability to completely destroy an enemy army without a war. This opportunity is being used wisely by Israel in order to ensure a better reality...

Published in The Media Line, December 21, 2024.



Will Washington Back Israel Against Iran's Houthi Proxy?

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 31.12.2024

Dr. Yossi Mansharof: Israeli operations in July and September failed to hit the Houthis hard enough to lower their motivation. Israel is realizing only now the importance of the Yemeni theater. It must cooperate with the incoming Trump administration to hit hard on the Houthis' economy and its military assets.

Published in The Sun, December 19, 2024.



Trump claims Turkey's Erdogan directed rebels behind 'unfriendly takeover' of Syria

written by Ruth Wasserman Lande | 31.12.2024

Ruth Wasserman Lande: Erdogan is a disciple of the Muslim Brotherhood. He is an Islamist radical in Turkey. He is behind Syria's rebels that came from al Qaeda, from Daesh, from other very radical groups.

Turkey, with Erdogan at the helm, is supportive of Hamas and supportive of the Muslim Brotherhood, which are the same thing. And now the entire Syrian gang is going to be governed by rebels who also are supported by Turkey and support Hamas.

These are not disconnected arenas, and the United States needs to put a huge vigilant watch on Erdogan, particularly because he's a member of NATO.

Published in New York Post, December 16, 2024.



Israeli officials concerned Assad's fall risks destabilizing Jordan

written by Ruth Wasserman Lande | 31.12.2024

Ruth Wasserman Lande: after Iran's huge embarrassment, there is an issue of national pride. Following the fall of Assad and the severe damage Israel has done to Hamas and Hezbollah, the Islamic Republic is likely even more keen and eager to make an impact in Jordan and the West Bank, which it would access in part via Jordan.

The leakage of the instability from Syria would galvanize instability in Jordan. The leadership in Jordan is not very strong, and if the instability [from Syria] seeps into Jordan, where the Hashemite Kingdom is already being undermined by Iran ... it's very scary, because the border is not protected enough.

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What is next for Syria and the region after Assad?

written by Prof. Kobi Michael | 31.12.2024

Prof. Kobi Michael : Syria was once a key component of Iran's resistance axis, but its collapse weakens both the axis and Iran itself. However, the fragmented control in southern Syria, where rebels maintain a significant presence, poses security concerns.

Israel's primary objectives are: Preventing threats from Syrian territory to its borders. Ensuring the stability of Jordan, a critical regional interest. Israel has no intention of occupying or annexing Syrian land. Its actions focus on intelligence, operational freedom, and strategic cooperation to safeguard its security. To prevent advanced weapons from falling into rebel hands, Israel may act to

neutralize such threats.

Israel's presence in southern Syria is minimal and solely aimed at protecting its security until the situation stabilizes.

The interview was recorded for Beyond the Headlines on December 13, 2024.

Israel's 'golden opportunity' to wean itself off US military aid

written by Dr. Raphael BenLevi | 31.12.2024

Dr. Raphael BenLevi: U.S. governments have tried to leverage weapons supply before. However, it's been acute and extreme in the past year.

We've dug ourselves into this dependency. It's like welfare. People on welfare get used to having a certain amount of external aid. A day comes when they have to rearrange their affairs in order to manage without it.

At the strategic level, the advantages of independence and moving to a more reciprocal relationship with Washington clearly outweigh the benefits of continuing the status quo of dependence and receiving aid, which are mainly on the immediate economic level.

Published in JNS, December 13, 2024.

