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BACK TO SCHOOL

These two girls, adorned in their gleaming backpacks, tried out their walking route to school yesterday, ahead of today's traditional September 1 start of the new school year, when they begin their studies in earnest alongside 2.6 million others. (Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

Israel Navy is acting to deter Turkish maritime aggression

ANALYSIS

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB

The Israel Navy is acting to deter Turkish maritime aggression, and in response to the Turkish navy traveling to new points of interest in Israel, *The Jerusalem Post* has learned.

The Israel Navy, in essence, wants to send a message to Turkey: if it thinks it can move its navy freely, it will have to think again.

The *Post* understands that the IDF is on high alert for any Turkish moves, whether it's by sea, land, or air; this

includes areas near Greece and Cyprus, or, in the worst-case scenario, in Syria or Gaza.

The IDF recognizes that Turkey's navy is powerful and cannot be ignored. Still, the largest danger Turkey faces is in Syria, given the IDF's attack on a Syrian air base to prevent Turkey from installing a new radar or other assets that may compromise Israel's freedom of action.

Israel has also staunchly opposed Turkey's involvement with the International Stabilization Force (ISF), a peacekeeping entity for the

Gaza Strip.

The *Post* understands that the IDF sees Turkey as having a deep commitment to the Syrian regime – a commitment rooted in religious doctrine. In contrast, Turkey's commitment to Gaza is more general in nature and involves regional influence, not religion.

On July 26, the *Post* reported that, even as Turkey and Egypt are reconnecting in certain areas, senior Israeli defense sources sense opportunities for Israel and Cairo

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Israel, Greece sign NIS 10 billion air-defense deal to counter Turkey

• By ANNA AHRONHEIM

Israel and Greece have formalized one of the largest defense export agreements in Israel's history. Under the terms of the €3 billion government to government deal, Israel will design and deliver a multilayered national air-defense system for Greece's Achilles Shield project.

Defense Ministry Director-General Amir Baram and his Greek counterpart, Ioannis Bouras, signed the deal in Tel Aviv.

It marks a significant expansion of bilateral defense cooperation and places Israeli missile defense systems as the backbone of Greece's long-term air defense modernization program.

Senior officials from Israel's Defense Ministry's International Defense Cooperation Directorate (SIBAT), the Directorate of Defense Research and Development (MAFAT), and the Israeli Missile Defense Organization attended the signing, alongside the CEOs of Rafael and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI).

Daniel Gold, the head of MAFAT, called

the deal “a badge of honor for Israeli technological power” and said that Jerusalem will continue to develop additional technological breakthroughs to strengthen its standing in the world.

“The ability to field a multi-layered, comprehensive, and modern defense architecture – grounded in proven operational experience and at the forefront of global technology – is what contributed to Greece's choice of Israel as a key strategic partner,” he said.

The project will integrate several Israeli made systems into a unified national network. At its core are David's Sling, BARAK MX, and SPYDER missile defense systems developed by the Israeli defense companies and already deployed operationally within Israel's own air defense array.

The package also includes MMR radars produced by IAI subsidiary ELTA for air surveillance coverage and a new national command and control system developed by Rafael to integrate all layers into a single operational

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Orders, faith and common sense

COMMENT

• By HERB KEINON

On the surface, it appears to be a classic case of religious conscience.

Religious soldiers operating in Gaza refuse an order to board a Namer armored personnel carrier with a female paramedic because of halachic concerns about men and women being together in enclosed quarters.

They are prepared to fight.

They are prepared to risk their lives. But they are not prepared to compromise their religious principles.

Seen that way, the soldiers from the Givati Brigade's Rotem Battalion are the victims here – dedicated fighters being punished for trying to remain faithful to Halacha while defending their country.

But the story is not that simple.

According to reports, the soldiers initially tried to reach the Givati Brigade's rabbi but received no response. They then contacted rabbis from the hesder yeshivot where they had studied, who

instructed them not to enter the vehicle under those circumstances.

Later, however, the brigade rabbi became involved and reportedly ruled that the mission was permissible because of its operational importance and limited duration.

Yet that was not enough. The soldiers continued to refuse, the mission was canceled, and 16 soldiers were subsequently sentenced to terms in military prison – five for 10 days and 11 for five days.

And therein lies the larger issue – one that the country

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Huckabee hopes Turkey can be a stabilizing force

US ambassador says Syria airstrike was a ‘warning’

INTERVIEW

• By AMICHAEL STEIN
and RUTH MARKS EGLASH

US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee is hopeful that Turkey will decide to become a stabilizing force in the Middle East.

“I don't think we know the full extent of it – whether they are helpful or not,” he told *The Jerusalem Post* in an interview on Monday. “Let's hope that they will decide to be helpful.”

Israel attacked Syria's Abu al-Duhur airbase on August 18, shortly before Turkish troops and air-defense systems were deployed there.

Following the airstrike, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said: “Israel will continue to act forcefully against any attempts by Turkey to undermine stability in the region and against any threat to its security.”

The full interview with Huckabee will be published in the *Post's* Frontlines section on Friday, ahead of the US Embassy in Israel's 250th Independence Day event, which is set to take place at Jerusalem's



US AMBASSADOR to Israel Mike Huckabee speaks with ‘The Jerusalem Post’ in June. (Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

Museum of Tolerance.

Huckabee described the airstrike as a warning.

“For those who are familiar with American baseball, I'll give you an analogy,” he said.

“When the batter steps up to the plate and he crowds it, which means he gets a little closer than he really should be, a pitcher, particularly in the major leagues, who

knows how to control the ball will throw one that'll come right across his chest and sometimes touch his jersey...

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MK Segalovitz to run with Ra'am as its first Jewish candidate

• By KESHET NEEV

MK Yoav Segalovitz is joining Ra'am (United Arab List) for the upcoming election after leaving Yesh Atid, Ra'am chairman Mansour Abbas said Monday. He will be the first Jewish candidate for the Islamist and conservative political party.

Segalovitz is expected to receive the second slot on the party's slate, according to reports.

“We have work to do together,” Abbas said at a joint press conference with Segalovitz.

Segalovitz said the country could not bring about political change “without connection, including political connection.”

“I explicitly want to break the paradigm of dividing lines and lines of discourse,” he said. “I also want to break



YOAV SEGALOVICH
(Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

the paradigm of how political partnerships are formed. I am personally joining Ra'am. Some will say that this represents political weakness,

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Trump vows to hit Iran hard after first exchange of fire in a month

• By PARISA HAFEZI
and DAVID LAWDER

DUBAI/ASHEVILLE, North Carolina (Reuters) – US President Donald Trump on Monday promised further strikes against Iran after the first tit-for-tat attacks in a month, as a conflict that had lately settled into an economic standoff threatened to escalate into open fighting again.

Iran launched missiles overnight at two US air bases in Jordan in response to a US attack on Iran's Larak Island, where Washington said it had struck Iranian launchers firing mines into the Strait of Hormuz.

“We're going to hit them hard,” a Fox News reporter quoted Trump as later telling the channel. “There will be a response.”

A senior Iranian source

told Reuters the overnight exchanges of fire, the first since late July, were a “limited and contained confrontation” but said Tehran would deliver a harsh response if attacked again.

Trump said US air defenses had downed all Iranian missiles that could have caused any damage and that new US economic sanctions on Iran were having a big impact, Fox News reported.

Earlier, Trump had posted to social media two videos depicting explosions engulfing Iran's main oil export terminal, with the message “Kharg island being blown to smithereens!!!”

But the videos were generated by AI and no such attack took place. Iran called Trump's post “laughable.”

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Navy's first female corvette commander sets sail

EXCLUSIVE

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB

The Israel Navy's first-ever female corvette commander, Lt.-Cmdr. “R.,” has excelled in her first half-year managing her small warship and is expected to eventually earn additional promotions, *The Jerusalem Post* has learned.

When the IDF announced in February that it had named R. to become its first-ever female boat commander, she had already broken through a glass ceiling in the navy. It now appears that her trajectory is set to break through more barriers.

In recent years, the navy has welcomed more female sailors and officers, but in February, R. became the

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THE ISRAEL NAVY'S first-ever female missile boat commander, Lt.-Cmdr. ‘R.’ (IDF)



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