

The Politics of Special Forces Podcast Show Notes

Episode 8 – IDF SOF

Summary

This episode serves a primer of sorts for the role of special operations forces within the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). While the episode begins with a reflection and updated of the analytic framework that the guests first introduced in 2016, it turned into an incredibly valuable discussion on the origins of IDF SOF as well as the challenges facing this organization in the future. Indeed, this episode – for those who are not familiar with the IDF – provides a unique perspective to the way in which SOF is generated and employed today.

About the Guests

Dr Eyal Ben-Ari is a former professor of sociology and anthropology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and currently Senior Fellow in the Jerusalem Institute for Security and Strategy. He has carried out work in Israel, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong. His academic career spans more than forty years but during the past two decades he has focused on issues related to the armed forces to include work on special forces and the way social changes have influenced how military forces use their destructive power.

Dr. Eitan Shamir is a Senior Lecture at the Political Science Department in Bar Ilan University where he is the head of the MA program in Security Studies and Strategy. He is also a Senior Research Fellow with the Begin Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA Center). Prior to his academic position, he oversaw the National Security Doctrine Department at the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, Prime Minister Office. Before joining the Ministry, he was a Senior Fellow at the Dado Center for Interdisciplinary Military Studies (CIMS) at the IDF General Headquarters. His research interest and publications focus on topics such as strategy, command, military innovation and reforms and military culture

Audio credits

From Storyblocks (<https://www.storyblocks.com/>) and the song is called “A Taste of Victory” by Valentina Griбанova. Produced with Apple’s GarageBand by the hosts.

Further Reading

Shamir, Eitan and Eyal Ben-Ari “The Rise of SOF” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 41, no. 3 (2016).

Ben-Shalom, Uzi, and Yuval Tsur. "Service cultures and collective military action: Successful joint operations by the Israeli Air Force and Special Operations Forces." In *Special Operations Forces in the 21st Century*, pp. 106-119. Routledge, 2017.

Brichta, Lior, and Eyal Ben-Ari. "Organizational entrepreneurship and special forces: The First Israeli Helicopter Squadron and the General Staff Reconnaissance Unit (Sayeret Matkal)." In *Special Operations Forces in the 21st Century*, pp. 212-225. Routledge, 2017.

Drory, Zeev, Eyal Lewin, and Eyal Ben-Ari. "14 Special forces, ethos and technology." *Special operations forces in the 21st century: Perspectives from the social sciences* (2017).

Leslau, Ohad. "Worth the bother? Israeli experience and the utility of special operations forces." *Contemporary Security Policy* 31, no. 3 (2010): 509-530.