

IDF studying how to upgrade its APCs

By Amnon Barzilai
Haaretz Correspondent

The two incidents last month in which 11 IDF soldiers were killed in APCs in Gaza have again raised the issue of how the army should deal with the threat of missiles and bombs against its military vehicles.

The team dealing with the Merkava tank plan in the Defense Ministry is currently building a prototype of a heavy APC ("Nemera") based on a Merkava Mark 1 tank, which is no longer serviceable and whose turret has been removed.

The Nemera's most significant advantage is the high level of protection it provides and its weapons systems: the disadvantage is its high price. The army team believes it will cost some \$750,000 to build one APC of this type.

Israel is considered a world leader in armored protection, and some of the Israeli security industries have developed a revolutionary approach to armored combat vehicles. They believe that adding armor-plating to an APC is an old-fashioned approach that has outlived its usefulness, as new missiles are capable of piercing armor or finding weak spots in the seams of the protective armor. The new approach is protection based on radar and electronics that can deflect an approaching missile.

Following long-range assessments, the ground corps forces have concluded that light infantry should be given precedence over heavy infantry. Next month three American Striker APCs will arrive here for a long series of examinations and experiments. When the results are collated, the army will decide what kind of protection is needed for the infantry.

The decision in principle to acquire the Striker was preceded by visits to Fort Knox, Kentucky, by Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon and the commander of the ground forces, Yiftah Ron-

Tal. IDF officers are pleased with the APC's ability to perform and its relatively light weight, and are not particularly worried about criticism in the U.S. about the Striker's faulty protective system.

The Striker, which rides on wheels, is an expression of the move toward a different type of warfare which is expected to take place to a large extent in urban areas. This assessment is based to a certain extent on guesswork, but military intelligence does not believe that large-scale battles of the type fought in the Yom Kippur War are likely in the foreseeable future.

Until the IDF gets its Strikers, the ground forces have decided to rely on the Achzarit heavy infantry assault vehicle built on the basis of the Russian T-55s, and to try to upgrade the M-113s.

Last week, after a year-and-a-half's delay, the deal known as Project Bazelet was signed with Israel Military Industries for improving the protection of 50 M-113 APCs. It includes adding protective covering of three tons, a new engine, new tracks, and a driver's seat with power steering. The cost will be \$20 million. Although the APC is 35 years old, the IDF is considering gradually upgrading hundreds of the old APCs because of their availability and relatively low cost.

No tank or APC stands a chance against a roadside bomb or mine in war time, and the enemy can always increase the quantity of explosives. But here too there is good news. A group of scientists at Rafael is developing an electronic system that can discover explosives deep beneath the ground. The solution therefore does not lie in passive protection, but development of the new system is still a long way off.

The budget of the ground forces for 2004 stands at NIS 1.3 billion, 23 percent less than last year. Ron-Tal believes that money can be saved by combining the Ground Forces and the

Technological and Logistics Division of the army, as many similar functions are performed by both. The chief of staff thinks otherwise.

Ron-Tal claims that the slashed budget has put the ground forces' flagship project - "a digital ground force" - at risk. The project involves the development of a command and control system which apparently has no equal in any army in the world today. It would put the senior officers of the entire IDF, as far up as the chief of staff - on the ground, in the air, and at sea - on one communications system. The project, which would take eight years to complete, is expected to cost some NIS 5 billion.

In order to save the project, Ron-Tal has proposed to the German chief of staff to fund half of it in return for Israeli technological know-how. The Germans have not yet given their response. If they turn down the offer, the IDF is expected to seek another partner.



5 settlers held for attack on Palestinian

Violent clashes broke out yesterday afternoon between settlers from Yitzhar and police, after officers arrived at the settlement to investigate a complaint filed by a local Palestinian shepherd that his sheep were stolen. The police found the Palestinian's sheep in a pen next to Yitzhar, Israel Radio reported. When the officers attempted to return the sheep to their Palestinian owner, five settlers arrived and proceeded to attack the Palestinian. The settlers resisted arrest and fled into the settlement, locking its front gate. Police called for backup and were reinforced by officers from the Yasam special patrol unit, who were able to enter the settlement, overpower the five settlers and arrest them. Elsewhere in the territories, three Palestinians were injured during a demonstration against the separation fence in the village of al-Zawiya, Palestinian sources told Army Radio. Hundreds of villagers clashed with troops during the demonstration. The section of the fence there is intended to separate Ariel from nearby Palestinian villages, including al-Zawiya, southwest of Nablus. (Haaretz Staff)

Jewish residents join appeal against separation fence in J'lem

By Yuval Yoaz
Haaretz Correspondent

Some 20 Jewish residents of Jerusalem have joined the appeal of the Arab neighborhood of Jabal Mukhabber against the Defense Ministry's order to confiscate their lands to build the separation barrier. The appeal is to be heard in Tel Aviv's Magistrate's Court today.

The Jewish petitioners, who have been joined by Rabbis for Human Rights, are from the neighborhoods Abu Tor, Arnona, Baka, Talpiot and the German Colony, close to Jabal Mukhabber.

The Defense Ministry plans to expropriate lands in the heart of Jabal Mukhabber, cutting the village in two and severing it from its southern quar-

ter, Sheikh Sa'ad.

The Jewish appellants say they are "deeply worried by the severe blow the barrier will inflict on the Arab neighborhood's residents." Since the fence is being built in their name as well, and to preserve their security, the petitioners say the barrier's construction directly pertains to them.

The barrier's planned route "will enclose and strangle the residents of Jabal Mukhabber, separating parents and children, brothers and relatives, and depriving the residents of access to medical services, schools, employment, family visits and any contact with the world outside their restricted neighborhood," they say.

They say that if a barrier must be built, it should be built

so that the entire village, including the Sheikh Sa'ad quarter, "is on one side of the barrier without dividing the village in two."

Another statement attached to the appeal is from Amir Cheshin, who until 1994 served for many years as advisor for Arab affairs to Jerusalem's mayor. "Sheikh Sa'ad quarter has always been part of the area in south Jerusalem called west Sawahara (Jabal Mukhabber), and Jerusalem's municipality recognized this reality and the fact that Sheikh Sa'ad is an enclave that is part of west Sawahara, and provided the quarter with municipal services, although the municipality knew that formally this quarter is outside the municipal border," he wrote.

Jane's Defence Weekly: Israel develops its first cruise missile

The Associated Press

Israel has developed its first surface-to-surface cruise missile with a range of at least 300 kilometers, according to a report to be published in Jane's Defence Weekly next week.

Called the Delilah-GL (ground launch), the missile could reach into the territory of all of Israel's neighbors and fulfills a 10-year quest for a such a missile, experts told the London-based publication.

The Delilah-GL (ground launch) is an adaptation of the Delilah, its air-launched predecessor, Jane's said, quoting officials at Israel Military Industries, where the missile is made.

The missile powered by a

turbojet engine has a range of 250 km, IMI said. Defense officials told Jane's the missile could reach "well beyond 300 km."

The advanced missile includes a high explosive 30-kg warhead and is GPS guided (global positioning system). The missile can also hover over an area before confirming its target via real-time visual intelligence transmitted back to the operator, Jane's reports.

The missile can be fitted with various payloads. One is an infrared device with electro-optical seekers for target

acquisition and guidance. It can identify a target from a range of 16 km, Jane's said.

Israel developed the new technology after a decade of trying to obtain surface-to-surface cruise missiles. The United States has twice denied Israeli requests to purchase Tomahawk land-attack cruise missiles, Jane's reported.

In the 1980s, Israel developed a long-range surface-to-surface missile, called Jericho II. Foreign reports say it has a range of at least 1,500 km, can carry a payload of 1,000 kg and is suitable for nuclear weapons.

Please find today's TV and cinema listings inside the International Herald Tribune.

Gallery

Surroundings / Esther Zandberg

All dressed in white

There's something optimistic about the idea of installing special sidewalk markers along the perimeter of Tel Aviv's White City, as permanent and orderly pavements are almost as rare a sight in Tel Aviv as clean ones. Markers were put on the sidewalk at the corner of Rothschild and Nahmani on Sunday, as part of the special events marking Unesco's (the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) designation of Tel Aviv's White City as a World Heritage Site.

The White City is a collection of beautiful buildings in the International Style of architecture, known as Bauhaus, built in the city's center from the 1930s until the 1950s. Euphoria prevailed during the week of the Unesco declaration, and one could believe for a moment that a bright future also awaits the city's paving stones.

Unesco's recognition came 20 years after Tel Aviv began to be called the White City in the wake of an exhibition in the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, and 10 years after an international conference in Tel Aviv that advertised its name internationally as the Bauhaus city.

This week's announcement covered the city with a sweetish cloud of optimism, promises and honors, flying flags and a few thought-provoking moments. For example, the special session of the Tel Aviv Municipal Council, at which the official plaque was given by Unesco representatives, was festive and moving. The declaration mentioned the architectural and urban uniqueness of the White City, and it was read aloud to those present in the hall in Hebrew, English and Arabic. Deputy Mayor Rifat Turk, an Arab resident of Jaffa, was chosen to read the declaration in his native

tongue, and found himself praising the city whose explicit goal was the rejection of his city, Jaffa, and of his culture.

At the end of the session, there was an unveiling ceremony for a plaque with the text of the declaration, which was affixed at the entrance to City Hall - which may be slated for demolition or having its characteristic facade removed during these days of recognition of the value of Tel Aviv's architectural legacy. The participants in the meeting could have seen how the concrete parts of the facade of the building facing Rabin Square were being dismantled, and demolition threatens under the guise of building an underground parking lot. Hebrew Book Week, traditionally held in the square, opened this week - transferred to Yarkon Park at the edge of the city.

Another architectural site endangered by proposed renovations and changes is the Mann Auditorium, a magnificent scion of the International Style. On Monday, the theater was the venue of a performance in honor of the Unesco declaration, entitled "This Summer You'll Wear White." For many in the audience, this may also have been the performance marking a farewell to the theater in its original form. As many types of local entertainment as possible were stuffed into the performance - song and dance, rap and Naomi Shemer, the Batsheva Company and Shimon Peres, Mayumana and veteran actress Hannah Meron, and Maya Buskila, who sang an old Tel Aviv song, "Gan Hashikimim" (Sycamore Park). All these passed in a procession on the stage for three whole hours without intermission, and represented familiar items that don't need the stamp of an international organization.

On Monday, the exhibition



Classic Bauhaus: 3 Ben Ami Street in Tel Aviv

"To Live on the Sands" opened at the Helena Rubinstein Pavilion of Contemporary Art in the Tel Aviv Museum. It presents the White City's architectural assets and perpetuates the myth that Tel Aviv arose *ex nihilo* on the sands, or on a "tabula rasa" (in the words of the curator, architect Nitza Szmuk, in a film clip that was screened). The exhibition is as beautiful as a lyrical black-and-white photo from the archives and like the Bauhaus buildings at their best. But one could have expected more pointed, relevant, and courageous information and viewpoints from Szmuk, who has accumulated battle scars in the service of

the White City, after heading the municipal preservation department and conducting house-to-house battles in preparing the urban preservation plan and wording the request for the Unesco declaration.

The decision to add the White City to the World Heritage list was made last July. The declaration applies to the areas of Rothschild Boulevard, the Zina Dizengoff Circle and Bialik Street, which include the characteristic architectural totality and the urban lines that endow the city with its unique quality, according to the declaration. As a condition to the city's being added to the World Her-

itage Site list, the municipality promised to refrain from building additions and from irregular construction in the areas covered by the declaration, and to approve the preservation plan, sitting with the Tel Aviv District Committee for Planning and Building. About 400 objections and threats of lawsuits for loss of rights in the buildings slated for preservation plan and its approval, whose monetary value is estimated at NIS 1.5 billion.

The questions of whether Tel Aviv can abide by Unesco conditions, and what their cost is, were the major issues during the second session of the architectural conference that took place on Tuesday at the Tel Aviv Museum. From what was said at the conference by City Engineer Danny Kaiser, the financial adviser to the preservation plan Hagai Yaron and architect Zofia Santo, who is in charge on behalf of the municipality of the constitutional aspect of the plan, it emerged that without government intervention in preservation and a change in the law, there is little chance that Tel Aviv will long remain on the World Heritage list. At present, says Santo, "the planning and construction law is hostile to preservation."

In ordinary times, preservation is a stepchild of the Tel Aviv Municipality. The preservation department has been operating for years with insufficient manpower; nor was it reinforced in honor of the Unesco declaration. The burden on the department causes exhausting bureaucratic foot-dragging, which arouses hostility among all those who are in need of its services. The municipality, which has invested considerable resources in the declaration events, has never found it necessary to invest in proper publicity and in explana-

tions to the public regarding the preservation plan and its importance. This vagueness is very convenient for opponents of the plan, so they may exaggerate the difficulties and the financial losses of preservation and rake in large profits from new construction.

The future of the White City as a World Heritage Site doesn't look rosy even after the speech by Prof. Natalia Dushkin, who was appointed by the UN to prepare the declaration file. Although she found vestiges of an authentic heritage in Tel Aviv, her words imply doubt as to whether a city like Tel Aviv - a new city with tremendous pressure for development, which doesn't see itself as a museum - is really worthy of being included in the World Heritage list.

While she was showing photos that she took in Tel Aviv and speaking in horror about the construction of additional stories in buildings slated for preservation (an original Israeli invention whose validity she doesn't accept), she almost seemed to regret her recommendation.

At the convention, which aroused a great deal of interest in the architectural community, there was no criticism of preservation as a process that leads to gentrification, and to the forced departure of low-income population, due to an increase in the value of the assets. Maybe the time is not yet ripe for criticism, but it certainly is appropriate, so steps will be taken to regulate and moderate the process, and so the protection of architectural values will not come at the expense of damage to humane values. In any case, if Tel Aviv survives the declaration week, it will only emerge stronger as a city of which they say that there are some more beautiful than it, but not one that is beautiful like it.

Letters to the Editor

Radical agents

Arab Israelis are correct to be concerned about statements such as those made by former minister Avigdor Lieberman. However, they should be much more concerned about Arab MKs vocally supporting terrorists who call for the destruction of Israel. They should care more about the much stronger demands of the Arabs for yet another ethnic cleansing of Jews from the West Bank. They should do more to close summer camps in the Galilee that are run by terrorists and teach Israeli children that suicide bombers are good.

Most Jewish Israelis disagree with Lieberman, and there's no chance of his words receiving serious consideration. Until the Arab Israelis can say the same about calls from fanatic Arabs, they have much larger problems than Mr. Lieberman.

David Teich
Petach Tikva

Border Police abuse

Regarding "Border Police chief orders civil rights lecture for troops" by Jonathan Lis, Yuval Yoaz and Eli Ashkenazi, Haaretz, June 3

As for Border Police being held for alleged abuse of Palestinians, it only reflects a mere fraction of how many Palestinians are abused by the Border Police that we do not hear about - although such abuse is well-documented by various organizations such as B'Tselem - if inquiring minds wish to do their own research. What is particularly reprehensible is that the excuse for such outrageous conduct is that it is the result of the heavy burden, the arduous duties, of the Border Police. To offer such justification for such depraved behavior is almost as bad as the abuse that is carried out.

Marlene Newesri
New York, NY

Finnish and not

Regarding "I'm not Bibi, I'm a Finn" by Yossi Sarid, Haaretz, June 9

Comparison with Finland may be a good point to kick our government, and Mr. Sarid never misses such opportunity. But it is simply not fair, for several reasons:

1. Finland does not have to spend enormous amounts of money on its army.

2. Finland has lots of natural resources.

3. Finland has a hard-working people. There you wouldn't find hordes of pushy "pitiful people" shouting on every corner that they don't receive enough from the government. Probably Mr. Sarid, living in a nice, upscale neighborhood, has not seen them for awhile. I can invite him to visit the place where I live; he will find plenty of them there.

Yes, I'd probably like to be a Finn myself, but as long as I am an Israeli taxpayer, I'd support the government that tries to make my life a little easier. I don't have problems with the fact that it is cutting welfare subsidies to those who don't want to work.

At the same time, I agree with the main point of the article - our educational system requires serious change. It is far even from the standards I was used to in Bolshevik Soviet Union. But I don't believe we'll improve it by increasing welfare payments. We have to change something in the educational system itself.

By the way, I don't recall any major reforms that Mr. Sarid initiated as minister of education.

Alexander Shurygin
Haifa

The burning of wigs

I find it very unfortunate the Orthodox community is so determined to destroy possibly hundreds of wigs that they consider not kosher. Wouldn't donating them to non-Jews who are suffering from the effects of chemotherapy or other maladies that cause baldness be a better example of what it really means to be Jewish? We sell our bread before Pesach for virtually nothing; why not do the same with the wigs?

Richard Tesler
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