Insights from the Society and South Tours

**Ultra-Orthodox**

1. There is potential to draft thousands of young ultra-orthodox to the military – the state is responsible to find the most suitable way (with the coordination and cooperation from the community), to integrate them into the system of recruitment by creating a creative policy, that is aimed to be long-term and with the objective of bridging the deep culture gaps between the ultra-orthodox and the rest of the population.
2. There is a need to formulate policy aimed to encourage ultra-Orthodox men to integrate into the work force, its implementation will achieve three main goals:
   1. Welfare for the orthodox population and reducing social gaps.
   2. Relieving tensions and bringing together the approaches and perceptions within the society.
   3. Contributing to increasing economic growth.

**Refugees**

The phenomenon of refugees (of which the exact extent is not known) involves many dangers, and it causes many negative effects. The state is required to take all steps and measures to halt illegal immigration into its territory (in addition to legislation and building the fence), such as:

* Setting policies and practices in the field of aviation in the area just south of Tel Aviv to prevent leakage of the refugees to other cities.
* Increased enforcement activities among the refugees, to reduce illegal work that harms Israeli citizens and also indirectly to the economy, and to prevent the increase in crime in areas which they inhabit (we saw during the tour that the establishment of a new station and the deployment of a larger police force resulted in a reduction of crime and violence and increased security and public safety.
* Increasing the actions for the return of refugees to their countries, in order to employ legal Palestinian workers or workers from Jordan is a step for positive strategic implications for the country's security.

**South Tour**

Given the sensitive security situation in the Sinai Peninsula and the strengthening of the powers of the Jihadists, there is great strategic importance in joint and close cooperation with the Egyptian army in the Sinai in two ways:

1. Contain the power and destruction of ISIS and jihadist organizations, with the goal of preventing the leakage of terror in the direction of Egypt, which may endanger the regime and destabilize the security situation in the Egyptian region.
2. In light of the situation, Israel allowed Egyptian tanks, armored vehicles, attack helicopters, and ground troops on a large scope to enter the Sinai region against the peace agreement between the two countries, Israel expects to be prepared for every scenario and change is not expected in the reality of the unconventional Middle East.

* The security fence which was established by Israel is integrated with warning signals meant to stop illegal immigrants coming in from Africa. In light of the information we received during the staff ride, in the area of Egypt there are about another half million refugees. It is important to the IDF and the security forces to prevent every illegal entry to Israel from the direction of the Sinai because it might be that ISIS will blend in with the refugees and turn into sleeper cells that will be activated in the future.
* The fragile and delicate state in the Jordanian Kingdom faces the danger of ISIS from three directions at once; from the south in Sinai, from the north on the border with Syria, and from within (with hundreds of thousands of refugees who enter from Syria and extremist Muslims who are residents in the kingdom). It is appropriate that Israel will take real steps to strengthen King Abdullah such as strengthening trade with Jordan, creating joint economic projects, and in my opinion the most important step which is absorbing thousands of Jordanian workers in Israel (instead of the illegal immigrants) in order to strengthen the Jordanian economy and additionally to strengthen the connection with their population, which will lead to blessings for both sides.
* **Creating an airport in Timna** – the manner of the decision, the plan, arranging a place, the failure to test alternatives, and the lack of consultation with security officials raise doubts in regards to the decision making process by the government. This is for two main reasons:

1. The proximity to the Jordanian border in the fragile and delicate security situation of the region, with many dangers and credible threats to the state as the Jordanian reality changes (the brigade commander of the Beka’a described this in his words as the threat in three circuits).
2. The refusal of Jordan to create an airport at the same site.

* **Train to Eilat Project** - Given that the rail will serve one city where only about 650,000 residents live, and the expected work that will be invested in the project will cost about 30 billion NIS (the forecast can actually add up to much more, according to past experience in similar projects), the project is grandiose and it is important to recalculate the advisability of the economic, security, and national costs and benefits.
* **Derecognition of two brigades from the order of battle of Division 80** – In light of the security challenges and the emerging reality before their eyes in the division’s operating space, in Egypt and in Jordan, and maybe in the future from Saudi Arabia (I expect developments from that direction in the future) it is appropriate in my opinion to make an educated decision and weight the recalculation of the issue, before the unexpected Middle Eastern reality slaps us again.