Hi everyone and thanks for joining me.

My name is Major Benzi Zimmerman, and I head the U.S Combatant commands cooperation desk in the International Cooperation Division.

In the next couple of minutes I will give you brief, strategic brief. We will discuss the current challenges Israel and the IDF face today.

One of Israel’s greatest challenges is the lack of strategic depth. Israel is “short and narrow”. We are surrounded by extreme adversaries on the borders- and further away in Iran. Practically 360 degrees of threats. Ballistic missiles are the key capability of our enemies. The capabilities increase, and our civilian infrastructure and population centers are at risk.

The Cyber domain, unlike physical warfare in the traditional theater of war, has no borders. Physical location is meaningless and the effects and outcome can clearly shape the war. The cyber domain is changing the region – in steady time, and in war time. Israel’s cyber threats vary – from tradition state actorrs, terror organization and private entities.

Keeping the above challenges above, Israel’s National Security Concept puts a special emphasize on early warning capabilities, and a robust defense array, deterring adversaries and capabilities to lead the force to a decisive victory. These four elements kind of create the strategic depth we do not have.

Ill go ahead and elaborate briefly on the Iranian threat.

Iran is a Shiite country that strives regional hegemony and for a leadership role of the Islamic world under a radical vision. Iran’s subversive actions in the middle east are de-stabilizing the region. As you can see in the map, the Iranian footprint is all over the region, and done by fostering and cultivation proxy forces - with ideology, knowledge and weaponry. Iran continues to threaten and call for the destruction of Israel and for the opening of additional fronts against Israel.

Iran works towards creating a ground “line of communication” via Iraq, Syria and Lebanon to the Mediterranean - all while violating these countries sovereignty. In these countries Iran employs proxies – the most known one – Hizabullah. Iran stages it’s capabilities to deploy advanced weapons system, such as the missile program. Moreover Iran work to create self production capabilities – such as the precision munition project in Lebanon.

Iran continues to push forward with it’s nuclear ambitions, disregarding international law and enriching uranium in a dangerous pace. A nuclear Iran is a world-problem, not just an Israeli challenge.

To counter Iran’s activities, the IDF is conducting a short of war campaign, a proactive approach below the threshold of full scale war.

Iran is in a historical level of low – the maximum pressure campaign, the elimination of quds forces commander soliemani, covid-19 effects, civilian demonstrations and PREASSUE FROM THE IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency). Iran is looking to break the isolation, looking at china. And striving for middle east hegemony.

Countering Iran’s malign activity and destabilizing action, we identify 2 geographical areas that can serve as an anchor for regional stability and cooperation.

To the east, the moderate sunni camp shows the great potential for cooperation and deterrence against iran. Jordan and Egypt are strategic anchors as well. The Abraham accords are historic, a significant paradigm shift in the middle-east.

The EASTMED is a focus for cooperation on many fields – like security, freedom of navigation and energy resources.

The EASTMED became an area of friction, and threated by advanced capabilities. The turkey-lybia exclusive economical zone declared in the EASTMED blocks the eastmed.

So, to sum up the IDF’S REGIONAL STRATEGY….

Lebanon – HIZBULLA, an Iranian proxy is a top national security threat to Israel . UN Resolution from 2006 calls for the disarmament of LH. The Lebanese armed forces lack the power to govern.

THE Lebanese Hizbullah is dominant and is influencing all sectors in Lebanon – undermining the states sovereignty. Israel like many other countries want a sovereign and independent Lebanon. Following the Beirut port explosion in august, the people of Lebanon see the cynical use of LH to its people.

Hizballah is expanding it’s infrastructure in southern Lebanon, while disregarding UN resolution 1701.

Syria – Syria is a complicated arena with many players, and activity since the civil war broke in 2011. Iran is taking advantage of the situation in Syria to build a a bridge into Lebanon and open a new front in the Golan Hights. Israel will act in the short of war campaign to disrupt the Iranian entrenchment and malign activity in Syria