

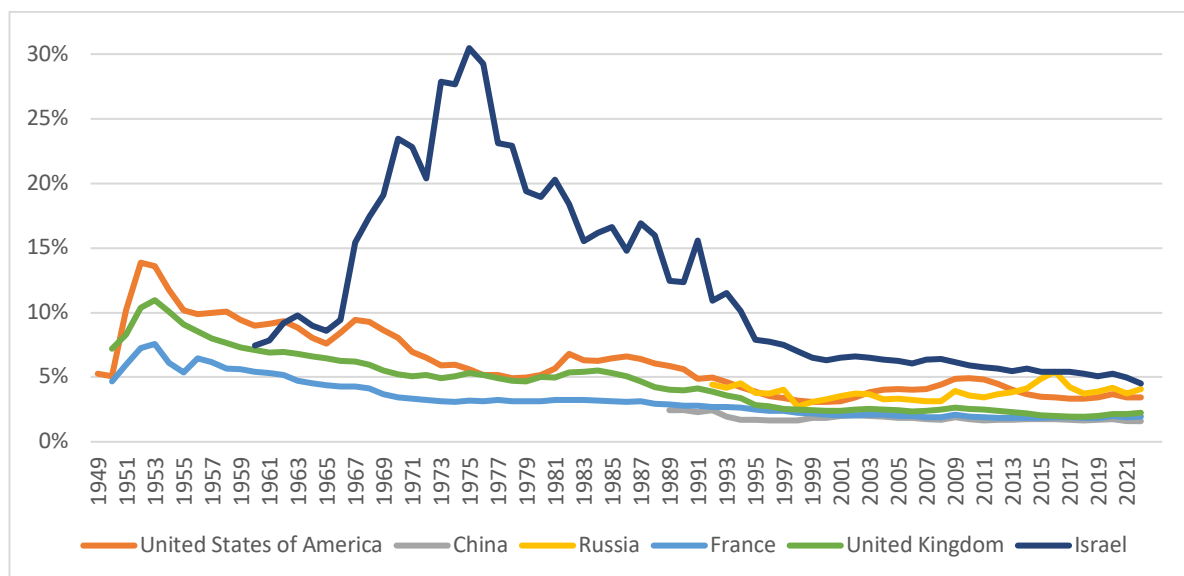
DOC-INTER Case 3.1

Power in terms of military resources: The case of Israel in the 1970s

In 1963, Ygal Allon, the future interim Prime Minister of Israel declared: “Israel won’t be the first state to introduce nuclear weapons in the Middle East, but it won’t be the second either” (Biad 2005: 712). This statement emphasizes the ambition of Israel to be a leading military force within the challenging region of Middle East.

Since its creation, Israel has been spending important amounts of money for its military forces, compared to any other nation, even the most powerful ones (see Graph 1). During the 1970s’, investments in the military went up to 30% of the national gross domestic product (GDP). The country’s arsenal has progressively become ‘comparable with the one of France and of the United Kingdom (*ibid* 718 to 720).

Graph 1. Military expenditure by country as percentage of GDP, 1949-2022



Source: SIPRI.

At that time, Israel has perceived military resources as necessary for its survival. The country was confronted with a hostile environment, without any close ally nearby and surrounded by neighbours with pan-Arab ambitions (Hoyt 2017: 68). Moreover, during these last decades, Israel has also been troubled by sub-state organizations supported by Iran: “organizations such as Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, or Hamas build on a radical Islamist ideology denying Israel's right to exist” (Tabansky, 2020: 46).

To secure Hard Power and become one of the most advanced countries in terms of military technologies in the world, Israel integrated military-industrial development into its economy and facilitated research among its institutions – betting on self-reliance (Hoyt, 2017: 67). The country benefited from its scientists, their experience abroad, and the international network that includes them (Biad, 2005: 713). Nowadays, Israel appears to be a leading country in some markets such as electronics and missiles.

References

Biad, Abdelwahad. 2005. L'armement nucléaire israélien. Un tabou. AFRI 2005, Vol VI.

Hoyt, Timothy. D. 2017. *Military industry and regional defense policy: India, Iraq and Israel*. Routledge.

SIPRI. Military expenditures data, <https://milex.sipri.org/sipri> accessed 9/01/2024.

Tabansky, Lior. 2020. Israel defense forces and national cyber defense. *Connections*, 19(1), 45-62.