

From Ice-Breaker to Missile Boat: The Evolution of Israel's Naval Strategy (Contributions in Military Studies)

Moshe Tzalel

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As a small nation in a hostile region, Israel has made defense a top priority. Tzalel takes a critical look at the naval branch of Israel's defense forces to consider its history, its performance, and its overall importance to maintaining national security. From a motley collection of illegal immigrant ships operated prior to the birth of the state, the Israelis have since the 1960s established a modern navy. However, Tzalel argues, the modernization and expansion of the Israeli navy has been driven more by an excess of funds and the lack of clearly defined priorities than by any real necessity.

Like most small countries, Israel has no need to command the sea during peace or in wartime. The author examines each step of naval development by direct correlation to the perceived need for each new phase and the circumstances that led naval and military leaders to make specific choices, and he discusses the benefits of these choices on the field of battle. He hopes to map the complex relationship between the navy men, the Israeli government, and public sentiment. Although the nation has managed to create a new and impressive class of warship, the Sa'ar FAC(M) and its larger derivatives, Tzalel contends that the military logic behind such naval construction was faulty and that the nation's submarine flotilla constitutes a sheer waste of monetary and human resources.



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