

## **Title: The Intelligence Malfunction**

Sub header: The rotation of the heads of three Israeli Intelligence organizations, at the same time, is nothing short of a malfunction, assumes Major General (ret.) Danny Yatom.

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It is during a period of rather complex and multifaceted challenges that the heads of all intelligence organizations of Israel are changing, almost at the same time: The Chief of the IDF's Intelligence Branch was replaced two months ago, the Head of the "Mossad" was replaced during the first week of 2011, and the Head of the GSS will be replaced in the upcoming May.

If you add to that the fact that the replacement of the IDF Head of General Staff and the Commissioner of the Israel Police will also be made during this period, then the chain of exchanges can be seen as more than just poor planning. It is a genuine *malfunction*.

This is certainly not a healthy state of affairs. There is significant importance to the stability of intelligence organizations, since the replacement of the head of each organization is accompanied with a jolt of its own. Command replacements were and will be a necessity. However, appointing new heads at all the sensitive organizations throughout a few months, this is a situation that could cost dearly.

The state of Israel will survive the move; the people who are intended to fill the roles are talented and worthy. All of them (with the exception of the Chief of Intelligence Branch) have emerged within the organizations which they were selected to head, so the process of learning and adjustment will be short compared to those who come from the outside.

However, it is very important to prevent excessive jolting, and therefore, the new commanders will be required to convince the senior officials of their organizations not to retire. The stability of the organization is affected by his head, but also by those who fill key roles within it. There is no such thing as a "one-man organization" - not even the "Mossad", the GSS or the IDF's Intelligence Branch. The senior officials in all the organizations need, for their part, to stay in their roles under the new head as well, so as to enable an orderly and not too turbulent transfer of command.

It is important that the new commanders not rush to make dramatic changes already during the first months of their roles, even if they arrive with pre-prepared plans for far-reaching changes. It is better that they wait patiently, study the role closely, and then implement any changes only after several months - if necessary.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Defense have an important role in the smooth entry of the new commanders into their new roles. They will need to guide those entering their important roles, plot a path for them, define the main tasks by order of priority, and clearly emphasize expectations they have from each organization head and from his organization, as well as closely monitor their activities.

What can be done in order to prevent "wholesale" exchanges in key positions at once, at least in the future?

The appointment of the head of the organization should be allotted with a possibility for extending the term by a year, in special cases. The process in which the terms of the heads of the GSS and the "Mossad" are extended again each year, each time for a single year, as has happened in recent years, should not be repeated. It harms the organization, as the individual heading it is always under the assumption that this is his final year in office, and his subordinates expect to compete for his role, but are disappointed.



Additionally, the heads of the organizations should be required to "raise" a number of potential replacements and preparing them to be appointed to replace them when the time will come.

Above all else, the duration of the tenure of new organization heads already needs to be planned, so that at least they will not be replaced together in the next rotation.

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