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ISRAEL BRIEF

Monday, February 9

Missiles move to the center of the table. Everyone else keeps trying to deal with them later.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

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The War Today

Iran Missile Strategy

Israeli defense officials communicated to U.S. counterparts that “they will strike alone if Iran crosses Israel’s ballistic-missile threshold” while emphasizing Israel has not yet reached that point. The briefing includes specific operational concepts targeting manufacturing sites and production infrastructure.

Incoming Air Force Commander Brig.-Gen. Omer Tishler is accompanying Prime Minister Netanyahu to Washington, representing the chief of staff in discussions about Iran’s missile capabilities.

Iran closed Semnan airspace for missile testing while dispersing launchers eastward.

Gaza Underground Operations

In Rafah, armed operatives surfaced from tunnels and engaged IDF forces. Engineering assessments describe “close to tens of thousands” of shaft systems. Israeli forces discovered approximately 200 tunnels along the 9-kilometer Philadelphi corridor, with destruction methods involving massive concrete pours.

Hamas’s current tactical objective: “not necessarily strategic cross-border corridors today, but the offensive prize that resets everything—abduct a soldier.”

Northern Front Activity

The IDF targeted Ahmad Ali Salami, described as “Hezbollah’s head of artillery in the Yanuh sector,” citing his role in wartime attacks and reconstruction efforts. A separate raid captured Jamaa Islamiya operative Atwi Atwi in the Mount Dov area.

Inside Israel

Land and Governance Reforms

The security cabinet approved measures affecting Judea and Samaria including: - Publishing previously classified land registries - Repealing transaction restrictions on property sales - Shifting planning authority for Jewish areas in Hebron to Civil Administration bodies - Expanding enforcement activities in Areas A and B

Domestic Legal Conflicts

Opposition figures challenged the prime minister's account regarding pre-October 7 intelligence and Hamas funding. The attorney general's office escalated disputes with senior ministers over judicial appointments and administrative delays.

The IDF closed numerous alleged war-crime case files from 2023–2024 and delayed publication, while preparing a comprehensive written response to International Court of Justice allegations due March 12.

Israel and the World

Australia's Legislative Response

Queensland criminalized two eliminationist rally slogans—"from the river to the sea" and "globalise the intifada"—as part of a broader reform package addressing hate speech and harassment. The measures arrived during President Isaac Herzog's visit following the Bondi Beach Hanukkah massacre that killed 15 people.

European Security Incidents

In Paris, three Jewish men leaving a synagogue were confronted by a knife-wielding suspect who demanded "Are you Jews? Are you Israelis?" before pulling a blade. Munich authorities intercepted a mailed bullet cartridge with a threatening message at a Jewish community center.

International Diplomatic Maneuvers

Turkey is "actively pushing political integration of Hamas into future Palestinian governance frameworks," which Israeli officials view as hostile interference. China has reportedly classified Israel as a "high-risk investment zone" and barred new investments since the Gaza conflict began.

Key Assessment

Israel is attempting to establish decision parameters—regarding Iran's missile program, Hamas's tunnel network, and Hezbollah's reconstruction—before diplomatic processes delay action indefinitely.

Regarding Gaza, "Phase Two" negotiations mask the reality that Hamas retains intact underground capabilities and maintains capacity for offensive operations, particularly hostage-taking.

On the northern front, Israeli actions are framed as responses to ongoing violations of ceasefire terms, with Hezbollah embedding military reconstruction within civilian structures.

Domestically, recent legal escalations are characterized as part of pre-election political positioning rather than pursuit of factual accountability.

Netanyahu is specifically pushing intelligence sharing with Trump on ballistic missile programs ahead of their February 11 meeting.

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Uriel Zehavi is the executive director of Mitzpe Institute, where he writes the daily Israel Brief and co-directs its Institutional Intelligence practice with Modi Zehavi. He is the author of four books from Mitzpe Press and advises Israeli and allied clients on strategic communications for Western audiences.



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Mitzpe Institute is an intelligence and strategy organization focused on Israeli security, diaspora threat assessment, and the strategic challenges confronting the Jewish people and the West. We produce daily intelligence, forensic analyses, strategic assessments, and tactical briefings read by policymakers, military leaders, and institutional decision-makers across more than 90 countries and all 50 US states — from the Knesset and the US Congress to allied governments, major policy institutions, and Jewish organizational leadership worldwide.

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