

Honored guests, dear families, and visitors,

"...Where there is no vision, the people perish." And without national security, a nation cannot endure—certainly not a nation like ours.

The State of Israel's ability to defend itself, by itself, in a hostile environment is not merely a condition for our physical survival. This capability is the realization of the principles of Zionism: a free and democratic society, marked by technological excellence and cultural and social richness, advancing with a strong sense of national mission.

Graduates of the National Security College, Class 52,

The National Security College graduation ceremony this year is taking place during formative, turbulent, and fateful days for the State of Israel and for the entire Middle East.

The IDF's actions and achievements since October 7th, particularly within the framework of Operation "Rising Lion", have created a significant regional domino effect that impacts the entire Middle East.

Tectonic plates are shifting—some heralding positive strategic opportunities for Israel, and others requiring heightened preparedness.

We must examine each front individually, analyze its unique characteristics, but also be able to recognize its regional context within the not-always-precise puzzle of the Middle East.

Some of the core principles of Israel's security doctrine include the ability to conduct wars with a clear and decisive outcome, maintaining military and intelligence superiority, and maximizing the strategic alliance with our closest friend—the United States.

Operation "Rising Lion", which concluded recently, upheld every one of these principles and integrated them together.

The IDF broke through an aerial corridor to Tehran and carried out precise and lethal strikes on nuclear, surface-to-surface missiles, and surface-to-air missiles, all while maintaining aerial superiority.

Subsequently, the U.S. military, using its powerful capabilities, struck underground nuclear sites. The combined operations significantly contributed to achieving the war's objectives, reinforced security in the Middle East, and underscored the critical strategic coordination between the two nations.

The success of the operation did not divert our attention from the operation in the Gaza Strip.

The war being waged in the south is one of the most complex and difficult wars in Israel's history. Our soldiers are operating with courage, exceptional bravery, and sacrifice, facing a clear mission: to bring our hostages home and to defeat the enemy!

I have said in the past—even before October 7th—that given Israel's unique conditions, the State must maintain wide margins of security and power, while preserving a critical mass of force structure, both in quantity and in quality.

I believe the lessons of this war sharpen that point even further:

We must strengthen our national resilience, significantly expand the circle of service, and ensure that the IDF stands strong, ready, and determined—on every front and at all times.

During Operation “Gideon’s Chariots”, we dealt a severe blow to Hamas’ governing and military capabilities—and thanks to the operational strength we demonstrated, the conditions were created to advance a deal for the return of hostages.

The IDF does not surrender to those who seek to weaken it. From various directions, the attacks and accusations against the morality of our actions are disgraceful. We operate solely based on professional and objective considerations, in pursuit of the war’s objectives and in accordance with the directives of the political level.

The operation will end only when we will win! We will secure our safety and our future. We will not stop until we achieve all the war objectives in the proper operational order.

This is our duty, this is our oath—and this is how we will act.

Tragically, this war is also exacting a heavy price in lives. The soldiers of the Netzah Yehuda Battalion—the IDF’s first ultra-Orthodox battalion—who fell the day before yesterday, along with all the fallen of the “Swords of Iron” War, who died defending the country, are all heroes of valor, heroes of the people of Israel.

I extend my condolences to their families from here. Their memory will forever be engraved in our hearts.

Just two weeks ago, I met with the soldiers of Netzah Yehuda, only hundreds of meters from the border, protecting Sderot and Nir Am. I saw in their eyes the dedication and commitment to their sacred mission.

Dear cadets,

As someone who studied at the National Security College myself, I know there's one word that comes up again and again—and that word is strategy.

I want to pause for a moment on this question: What is strategy? And more specifically, in the context of Israeli security.

Strategy is the ability to maximize our standing under conditions of uncertainty through a deep understanding of the resources at our disposal, the constraints around us, the broader environments in which we operate, and the leveraging of our advantages.

Some mistakenly think that a strategist is someone who observes reality from above—from the heights of Olympus, detached from the field.

But that is a mistake. True strategy is born from the ground. To borrow an image from the Armored Corps, even someone who wins a glorious tank battle must know how to get their hands dirty in the grease.

Strategy is not a collection of empty slogans. Strategy is hard work that begins from the ground up and grows upward; it requires leadership and making crucial decisions at the right time.

When one is satisfied with merely “thinking big,” there is a danger that the small threat—the one seemingly on the margins—slips past attention and brings us to the most painful of places.

That is why a real, effective strategy must draw its insights from all levels—from the female observer at the post, from the company commander, the battalion commander, the division commander, from external critiques, and up to the Chief of the General Staff.

It must stay grounded, with a listening ear, open to criticism, and built on a culture of professional humility and determination in action.

Graduates of Class 52,

Soon you will return to your security and civilian organizations as leaders in public service, equipped with practical strategic knowledge and a strong social-professional network that will help you contribute to the growth and prosperity of the State of Israel. Act and work to lay the foundation for our future here.

Dear families, partners in bearing responsibility over the years, your loved ones are now returning to senior roles in the security organizations and public institutions. I express deep appreciation for the support you have given so far, and for the support you will continue to give.

To the staff of the National Security College, my sincere gratitude for providing training during such challenging times. I am confident that you have equipped the graduates with the ethical and professional tools they need for their roles.

Dear cadets, it is now on your watch. Influence and lead wherever you are.

Best of luck on the road ahead.