Simulating the Contact Zone

Corporate Mediations of (Less-Lethal) Violence in Israel, Palestine, and Beyond

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In 2014, as photos emerged of armed police with combat uniforms, assault rifles, and armored vehicles on the streets of Ferguson, Missouri – where demonstrations had ignited over the deadly shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, at the hands of Darren Wilson, a white police officer – many Palestinian Twitter users expressed solidarity with the demonstrators and offered advice on how to deal with tear gas. Palestinian photographer Hamde Abu Rahme shared a photo of himself on Facebook holding a sign that read, "The Palestinian people know what it means to be shot while unarmed because of your ethnicity. #Ferguson, #Justice." Activist Mariam Barghouti wrote on Twitter: "Solidarity with #Ferguson. Remember to not touch your face when tear-gassed or put water on it."[1] Many pointed out that the U.S. company that supplies the Israeli army with tear gas – Combined Systems, Inc. (CSI)[2] – is the same company that supplies the police in Ferguson.

By now, these stories are familiar. Over the past few years, journalists and scholars have cited the ways in which the occupied West Bank serves as a "laboratory" for certain types of technologies, whereby CSI tear gas, for example, is first "tested" on Palestinians so that American companies can market its "proven effectiveness."[3] Israeli authorities and security forces have consistently used non-lethal weapons as a feature of population and territorial control on both sides of the Green Line,[4] most visibly to suppress resistance in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Much of the popular weekly demonstrations in the West Bank are structured locally around villages, cities, and refugee camps, a result of the fragmentation of Palestinians into camps and enclaves.[5] For example, since 2005, there

have been weekly unarmed demonstrations organized by a local popular committee in the village of Bil‘in against the Israeli separation wall and the confiscation of lands. Demonstrations also take place regularly in the villages of Ni‘lin, Budrus, al-Nabi Salih, al-Walaja, Burin, and other areas threatened by demolitions or land confiscation. These demonstrations, effectively banned under Israeli military order, generally follow a particular performative order, in which protesters march from the village to the site of the wall, where Israeli forces intervene with a barrage of rubber bullets, tear gas, and Skunk – a foul-smelling liquid fired from truck-mounted water cannons.

As Neve Gordon argues, the ability to "test" these products not only allows Israeli and other companies to improve their goods through trial and error, but also enables the companies to "establish or demonstrate some 'truth' about their products and services, which both 'certifies' them and provides them with credit."[6] These critiques also draw attention to Israeli involvement in the training of U.S. police personnel, such as those organized by the Anti-Defamation League, where police get "strategies and best practices in fighting terror" from "Israeli experts."[7] This results in a particular "Israelization" of the American police force, marked by the increased use of deadly force, military weapons, and munitions, as well as military armored vehicles and military tactics and techniques.[8]

These "laboratory" critiques are essential to an understanding of the rise of Israel's security industry, but they often take for granted the privilege given to a uniquely Israeli position of authority, which is written about as a natural outgrowth of the country's militarism or experience with warfare and occupation. Following Rhys Machold's call to pay attention to the "kinds of ongoing *work*" that are involved in staging Israel as a global exemplary on such matters,[9] this article investigates the labor of marketing Israeli-branded "non-lethal" or "less-lethal" weapons to global audiences. Often referred to as "crowd control technology" or "anti-riot equipment," the family of non-lethal weapons includes tear gas, electrical stun technologies, kinetic impact weapons such as bean-bag rounds, and rubber bullets. Newer and less well-known non-lethal weapons include Skunk; the "Scream," an acoustic system that "creates sound levels that are unbearable to humans at distances up to 100 meters";[10] and the stun grenade, labeled as the "Tactical Mini Bang" on the CSI website, which "emits a wave of heat, light and sound intense enough to cause temporary blindness and deafness within a five-foot radius."[11] Although these technologies are labeled as "non-lethal" or "less-lethal," they have proven to be capable of inflicting serious injury and death.[12]

I argue that these weapons gain particular meaning and mobility through their incorporation into visual and performative marketing narratives. Following the turn to visuality in the field of critical security studies,[13] I look at representational strategies used to market Israeli-branded crowd control technologies to global audiences. To do so I investigate plot lines and symbols that continuously appear in web-based promotional material from Israeli companies that specialize in non-lethal products, as well as from U.S.-based companies such as CSI that provide these weapons to the Israeli government. I also draw upon my observations from security expositions

attended over the past three years, paying particular attention to staged simulations in which companies demonstrate product reliability and superiority by embedding their non-lethal technologies into a range of security scenarios.

Instead of emphasizing a distinct brand of Israeli exceptionalism, I find that Israeli companies prefer to market non-lethal weapons by placing them within a hyperreality which is depoliticized and deliberately ambiguous. By doing so, they transform techniques of statecraft into global commodities which can then circulate easily within a variety of global contexts. Crowd control marketing performances work by classifying and redefining who or what embodies a threat, who can claim vulnerability, and above all, what constitutes a solution.

Constructing the Fear Prototype

Marketing videos for non-lethal weapons constitute a distinct genre of visual securitization. They generally begin with vignettes of aggressive mobs that seem not intended to generate actual anxiety, but rather to form a generic "fear prototype" devoid of all political meaning, that can be packaged and commodified within the industry. This genre is reflected in Combined System's marketing video for VENOM, a "lightweight, high capacity, non-lethal grenade launcher," used to disperse crowds with "non-lethal flash and sound, smoke obscuration, irritant, and blunt trauma effects."[14] Scenes of unrest, uncertainty and destruction are carefully curated, to be closely followed by a technological solution. The clip begins with a montage of footage of hooded protesters dressed in black throwing tires into fire, a bus engulfed in flames, and a bird's-eye view of a protest in what looks like Ukraine on a winter's day.[15] A deep voice-over narrates the scene as if it were a trailer of an epic movie: "Civil unrest, disorder, military confrontation, asymmetric warfare environment. Today's forces need solutions they can depend on to disperse crowds, deny areas, determine violent intent, restore order and increase force response." The video then switches to a close-up of the VENOM launcher, the camera circling it from all angles atop a tank.

Marketers of non-lethal weapons are what Frank Furedi calls "fear entrepreneurs" who "exploit fear in order to gain some direct benefit."[16] Under this assumption, rather than being something natural or purely psychological, fear is a social construct. The dual threat–solution combination in this marketing video, and many others like it, acts as a visual securitizing device whereby security is constituted through an "if–then" sequence. Following J. L. Austin's speech act theory, by uttering the word "security" in reference to a particular issue, political elites transform it into an existential threat which requires "emergency measures and justifying actors outside the normal bounds of political procedure."[17] An analysis of marketing materials produced by the security industry, such as the CSI riot control video, can demonstrate how a speech act can be used by the private, profit-making sector to make claims about security, and offer solutions to insecurity. Further, this analysis goes beyond the speech act as a purely

linguistic move to consider the ways in which risk is produced through images, video, and simulation.

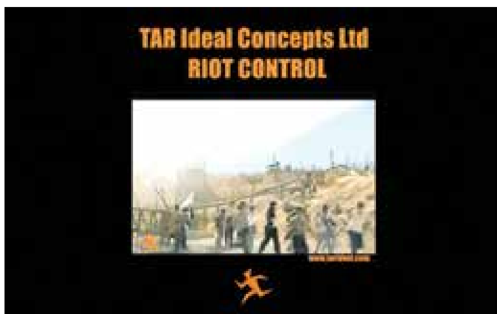
Accompanying texts often reiterate depictions of violent and irrational crowds. For example, the Israeli company ISPRA, a leading manufacturer of "non-lethal devices for riot control," describe how their non-lethal products are meant to cause "confusion" and "disorientation" and "suppress [a crowd's] high motivation and extreme aggression capabilities."[18] On the product pages, they repeatedly identify their targets as "a group of aggressors."[19] A securitizing "if–then" sequence similarly plays out in marketing material produced by Israel's TAR Ideal Concepts, an Israeli defense contracting company whose "One Stop Shop" offers equipment and training in Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), law enforcement, high tech surveillance, and intelligence. TAR's Law Enforcement section warns, "Riots can ignite without warning. TAR helps you to prepare yourself, build your forces, and disperse riots quickly and effectively using non-lethal ammunition to minimize loss of life."[20]

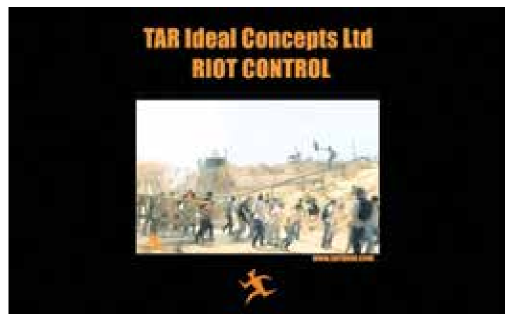
Figures 1–4. Screenshots from CSI VENOM marketing video, posted 29 September 2014. Source: CTS Less Lethal YouTube Channel (accessed 30 April 2018).

In many cases, marketing images blur the line between real and performative: footage of actual protests from Palestine, France, Germany, and Ukraine is interspersed with simulated demonstrations at arms expositions by paid actors. This blurring between reality and simulated contact zones forms what Jean Baudrillard terms "hyperreality," a representation of a sign without an original referent.[21] For example, a video produced by TAR to spotlight Skunk technology begins with a mash-up of footage from protests and riots around the world, though the video's producers provide no indication of when, where, or why they took place.[22] The intended sensation that is manufactured is a global and pervasive instability. As menacing music plays, protesters burn tires, smash windows, and push up against the police. Vigilant viewers may ascertain a brief clip's location as the West Bank from a barely-visible Palestinian flag in the hands of one protester, running down a hill away from the stream of putrid Skunk liquid.

Figures 5–8. Screenshots from TAR Ideal Concepts Ltd. marketing video for riot control weapons, posted 6 November 2013. Source: TAR Ideal YouTube Channel (accessed 30 April 2018).

In another context, this scene could be framed as a visualization of Palestinian resistance, meant to draw attention to "the specific conditions of life under Israeli occupation and segregation policies."[23] In this video, its specificity is warped by its incorporation into an ambiguous generalization of crowds, presented as a universal threat, and is further diminished when the video transitions into a simulated fiction – a theatrical demonstration of riot control products at an arms expo. The original event dissipates into a hyperreal stock image. Here, the critique from the left that "security strategies developed in Palestine/Israel can be moved seamlessly across transnational space" opportunistically becomes a key selling point for TAR, as the company strategically markets their products by leveraging a visual collapse of local specificity.[24]





Figures 9–10. Screenshots from TAR Ideal Concepts Ltd. marketing video depicting Skunk used on a West Bank protest, posted 6 November 2013. Source: TAR Ideal YouTube channel (accessed 30 April 2018).

A photograph published in a press release by the media organization Israel Homeland Security (iHLS) to announce the purchase of Israeli Skunk by U.S. police falls into the

same genre.[25] The photo captures what is often concealed from globalized Israeli brand imagery: a settlement with iconic red roofs, the separation wall, and a Palestinian protester. Yet the accompanying text tells us nothing about the original context in which this image was produced; instead, it focuses on the marketability of the stream of foul-smelling water that shoots across its center, explaining: “The Skunk has attracted the interest of law-enforcement agencies in America, who are looking for better ways to scatter rioters without risking injuries or death after the riots in Ferguson and Baltimore.”[26]

Figure 11. Israel Homeland Security (iHLS) announces the purchase of Israeli Skunk by U.S. police, posted 28 June 2015. Source: iHLS website (accessed 30 April 2018).

The security industry effectively transforms the potential resistance photograph into a stock image, a prototype which can be used repeatedly across industry platforms. The original event dissipates into what Mark Nunes describes as a “culture of noise,” which allows the industry to thrive through communicating ambiguously.[27] Writing on the production of stock images, media theorist Christopher Grant Ward argues that “‘cultures of noise’ reveal how certain ‘asignifying poetics’ might be productive and generative for . . . communication goals.”[28] While the commercial stock image is intentionally produced as undefined raw material lacking a final determination, the security industry actively absorbs the image of resistance into a clutter of semantic ambiguity. By repeating the same frame of an aggressive, unruly mob – depicted not only visually, but also through foreboding music and accompanying text – the industry effectively collapses all events into a singular model for pacification. The village of Ni‘lin becomes Occupy Wall Street becomes Paris becomes Ukraine.

This loss of specificity occurs in Israeli marketing material on a broader scale. iHLS introduces Israeli company Odortec’s Skunk as providing a creative solution to a global

problem: “unrest on a massive scale, especially stormy protests,” which “tend to deteriorate towards violence and clashes with law enforcement officers, damage to property and even grand larceny.”[29] This text is accompanied by a stock image of a protest facing off a row of police officers with a bizarrely placed skunk lurking in the foreground. Although there is a direct reference to “Israeli experience” within the text, the issue is globalized by using broad descriptions and stock imagery.[30]

Figure 12. Protesters flee the Skunk jet in al-Nabi Salih, January 2012. Source: Oren Ziv/Activestills.

Figure 13. iHLS marketing image for Odortec’s Skunk Technology, posted 25 March 2015. Source: iHLS website (accessed 30 April 2018).

In other marketing materials, reality and fiction blur into one. Israeli defense company Rafael’s video for its Samson Non-Lethal Remote Weapon Station, which allows in-vehicle operation of a range of non-lethal weapons, begins by zooming in on a generic picture of the earth, bringing the viewer into an unnamed urban location consumed in unrest.[31] Silhouettes of police officers roam the fiery streets and a text on the screen reads, “Riot Control: A Major Challenge for Current Law Enforcement.” The video then becomes a messy montage of actual footage of protests around the globe. The screen splits into four simultaneous clips of police swarming into crowds, and devolves into a “culture of noise” where it is impossible to pay attention to one event, let alone decipher the original meaning and location of such events.

The second half of the video is filmed from inside the vehicle, as it drives through a landscape of burning tires and masked protesters throwing stones. The vehicle operator demonstrates all of the non-lethal devices one can attach to the vehicle: acoustic

Figure 14. Screenshot from Rafael’s marketing video of the Samson Non-Lethal Remote Weapon Station, posted 13 November 2013. Source: Rafael YouTube channel (accessed 30 April 2018).

device, tear gas, and an optical dazzler to temporarily blind people. Reaching a crescendo, the driver pinpoints a particular protester on his screen and flicks his joystick. We hear the sound of a rubber bullet firing before the scene cuts out. These elements are realistically styled and displayed, but the steadiness of the camera and the calm, controlled movements of the vehicle operator betray the scenario to be a marketing performance.

By denying the original, the hyperreal denies the authenticity and lawfulness of any political gathering, while simultaneously legitimizing the use of force across global contexts. The potency of the visual lies in its reliability, in its ability to capture an ever-present moment. It gains its realist authority from what Ernst Bloch called "the cult of the immediately ascertainable fact."[32] Yet in industry simulations, the opposite is true: "a cult of ambiguity" allows hyperreality to legitimate the use of force.

Figures 15–18. Screenshots from Rafael's marketing video of the Samson Non-Lethal Remote Weapon Station, posted 13 November 2013. Source: Rafael YouTube channel (accessed 30 April 2018).

Collapsing Threats

Simulations at the Parisian Eurosatory security exposition always start the same way: armored vehicles drive up and down the tarmac, drones buzz overhead, and the presenter lists the names of featured companies. This time, however, a man runs into the audience and grabs the woman in front of me, dragging her by the ponytail as she cries out. My first thought is that this is an anti-war protest against the exposition, the largest international defense and security industry trade show in the world. Other protesters flood the stage as audience members scream. The announcer instructs everyone to calm down, as the police have everything under control. It soon becomes clear that this is just another industry presentation, featuring Israeli-produced riot control equipment. James Bond music continues throughout. The rowdy "activists" are taken off stage but soon start

throwing stones at the police. A riot control vehicle emerges, and the police form a line; a few begin to throw the protesters onto the ground, beating them with batons. The activists, some with scarves reminiscent of Palestinian *kufiya*s wrapped around their necks, some wearing balaclavas, continue to throw stones in a cloud of fake tear gas. But they are no match for the technologies that the announcer continues to list, his upbeat voice booming as if advertising laundry detergent.

Figure 19. Still from video recording of crowd control simulation, Eurosatory 2016, posted 17 June 2016. Source: TacticalBlackCats YouTube channel (accessed 30 April 2018).

A similar scenario was staged two years earlier, at Eurosatory 2014, in which the French company Alsatex simulated the use of tear gas to disperse protesters. The presenter once again narrated the "potential riot situation on our hands" as masked actors burned tires and smashed baseball bats against garbage cans. The fake tear gas was so out of control that it became hard to see what was happening. The presenter announced that the equipment demonstrated had been previously "tested during combat in Iraq, Kosovo, and the Ivory Coast; in extreme conditions during riots in Ulster, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and El Salvador"; and "in major sporting events such as the 2010 Football World Cup in South Africa." The same tear gas had also showed up in Bahrain, used by security officers against people protesting the government between 2011 and 2013 and later in February 2015.[33]

Figures 20–23. Stills from video recording of crowd control simulation, Eurosatory 2014, posted 21 June 2014. Source: TacticalBlackCats YouTube channel (accessed 30 April 2018).

While crowd control weapons on display in the Eurosatory simulations in 2014 and 2016 are not all Israeli-produced, their marketing fits within a larger trend in which Israel plays a leading role: the portrayal of internal dissent as insurgency or terrorism. Particularly since 2011, "teargas, and the wide array of projectiles that 'weaponise' it, make up just one part of [a] vast counter-uprising economy."[34] The counter-terrorism industry has actively cultivated this expanding market, and an ad for the Israeli company MGM, for example, explicitly depicts the dual usage of their riot gear for military and law enforcement. While Israeli security companies frame their founding history as one based upon an experience with terrorism and warfare, in crowd control marketing, explicit references to Israeli national involvement with terrorism are somewhat rare. Instead, companies tend to favor ambiguous imagery and symbols, creating a threat which can occur anywhere across the globe under a variety of circumstances, while simultaneously depoliticizing their own management of such threats. The tension that emerges between the specificity of the "Israeli experience" and the need to generalize this experience for a global audience is thus partly resolved by presenting an individualized threat that blurs internal dissent with criminality.

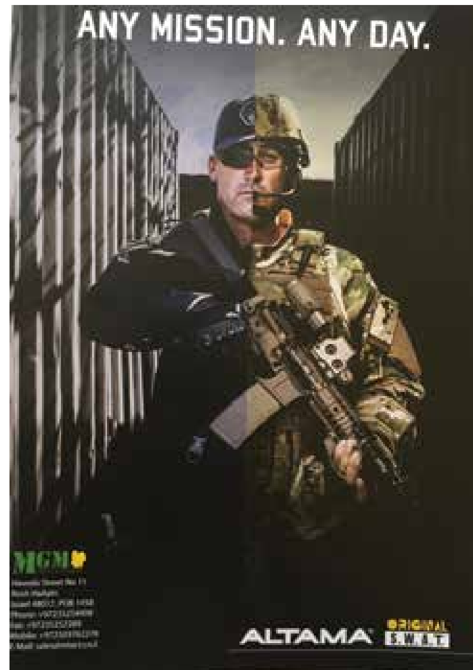


Figure 24. Ad for Israel's MGM Import and Export riot gear company. Source: 2015 ISDEF catalogue, collected by author.

To this end, the security industry crafts an image of "the world's most common criminal," a masked male who embodies the role of rioter, terrorist, and common criminal all at once. This conflation allows the industry to explicitly market their crowd control technologies and expertise toward a global community increasingly invested in the militarization of law enforcement. For example, numerous SWAT demonstrations at the 2015 Israeli Defense Exposition (ISDEF) in Tel Aviv showed crowd control weapons such as stun grenades used to pacify terrorist or drug-related threats, embodied by individual criminals. One demonstration began with three SWAT team members creeping across "enemy territory" in an unnamed Arab country: an empty house on a sand-scattered landscape, complete with a beaten-up car and illegible Arabic graffiti. In this sandy corner of the convention hall, the presenter explained the mission of the Israeli Police Counter-Terrorism Unit (YAMAM): "[We] must clear the house. We have a suspect, a drug dealer. We are also afraid that he is carrying explosives." As three men broke down the door of the enemy's house, the presenter narrated the scene, name-dropping companies producing the featured products: respiratory systems from Avon, a jammer from Netline, a grenade trigger pouch from Advanced Combat Solutions (ACS), and a stun grenade from CSI. "Boom!" he yelled, imitating the sound of the grenade. After removing the suspect, the SWAT team patted him down, bringing him safely to the police car

in the vicinity. The arrest was quick, sterile, and smooth. Representatives of the Los Angeles Police Department stood by, vigorously taking notes. The audience erupted in applause.

The demonstration of crowd control weapons (in this case, the stun grenade) to pacify a possible drug lord/terrorist reflects an ever-increasing dissolution of boundaries within the category of "threat" that in turn justifies militarized responses to demonstrators. As Tyler Wall argues, the "war on terrorism" increasingly slides into other perpetual security projects, such as the "war on crime" and "war on drugs," bringing together techniques of military and police power while ensuring a constant market demand for commodities aimed at pacification.[35] These blurred lines reflect a wider trend of militarized policing, wherein equipment is not simply transferred from the military to the police, but is increasingly "researched and designed to simultaneously counter protest crowds, drug cartels, and combat forces."[36]

The CSI stun grenade showcased in this simulation has been used to disperse Palestinian activists attempting to set up a camp near the West Bank village of Burin in protest of Israeli settlement expansion.[37] In 2014, it was reportedly used on protesters in Ferguson. A journalist at the scene tweeted a photo of a flash bang shrapnel injury and described how after the fiery hot canister singed his leg, a nearby protester's shirt caught fire.[38] Despite such usage against civilian protesters, the ISDEF simulation legitimizes the use of the stun grenade by placing it in the context of a terrorist and/or drug-related threat, embodied by an individual criminal. Although Israeli security companies explicitly brand themselves by emphasizing the country's profound knowledge and experience of terrorism,[39] Israeli security experience also has to be retrofitted to a wide variety of contexts, and, according to anthropologist Erella Grassiani, "this is mostly done by collapsing the terrorist threat with a criminal threat, thus showing how the same security methods can be used for both instances, something which is debatable."[40]

Figures 25–26. The ISDEF Live Demonstration and Display Area, as described on the ISDEF website, features "68 sq. meters of space divided and designed to realistically replicate various combat zones, from a sandy desert or leafy terrain to an abandoned car or empty building, providing exhibitors with an excellent forum to recreate choreographed combat scenarios." Source: ISDEF Expo YouTube channel (accessed 9 July 2018).

This collapse of technological function, which allows for the smooth migration of weapons from counter-terrorism to crowd control, shows up in other security companies' sales narratives. ISPRA introduces their Protectojet Model 5 tear gas ejector as "originally developed as an anti-terror weapon for hostage situations, and later adopted for defensive and offensive riot control use."[41] Similarly, Israeli company ACS proudly recounts how their trigger pouch, featured in the ISDEF demonstration above, was developed from lessons learned during the second intifada.[42]

The imaginary geography of risk materialized in the sandy model home in the ISDEF simulation, and which exists on an even larger scale in sites like the Tze'elim Urban Warfare Training Center known as Baladia City,[43] represents a world of low-tech barbarism, waiting to be defeated by the high-tech "civilization" embodied in the world of the security expo that surrounds it on all sides. Placing the threat inside a house scrawled with Arabic graffiti in the middle of what looks like a Middle Eastern desert town performs a "topographical reductionism," in which the visual motif of the desert "serves as essential decor of Arab history."[44] The "architecture of enmity" needs no real population to inhabit its empty refugee camps. The securitized Other is merely implied. Of course, the ISDEF simulation does not claim a literal relationship to the real. It takes place in a controlled environment, mediated by an animated presenter and surrounded by an audience of flashing cameras. This is a "performative genre," which gains its authority "not from documenting an external reality, but through the productive force of the visual articulation itself: it does not transmit a situation, but acts on and into it."[45] It is this productive force of the visual and performative that allows for a single individual, or even an empty, disembodied space, to stand in for a collective and globalized whole.

Constructing Vulnerability

Furedi writes that the "autonomisation of fear has important implications for identity," not only in terms of who or what constitutes a threat, but also regarding who is considered "at risk."[46] Increasingly, those placed within this category of risk are "seen to exist in a permanent condition of vulnerability," or the state in which "communities lack the emotional or psychological resources necessary to deal with change, to make choices, or to deal with adversity."[47] Weekly Palestinian demonstrations against displacement and ongoing violence may be seen as an expression of vulnerability *as part of* resistance.[48] However, just as images and symbols of activism have been appropriated and alienated from their original contexts in the service of security industry consumerism, so too has the industry appropriated the category of vulnerability. In its visual marketing of combat uniforms, armored vehicles, and shields, the industry in effect claims vulnerability for the police, military, and those rationalizing the subjugation of those without power.

This type of vulnerability is at odds with the image of strength and machismo projected by the global rise of what journalist Radley Balko terms the "warrior cop," present in images of militarized law enforcement patrolling the streets of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina or dispersing protesters in Ferguson.[49] The "warrior cop" roams

the streets of Israel, too.[50] In May 2015, *Ha'aretz* reported with alarm on mounted Israeli police officers using stun grenades, tear gas, Skunk, and water cannons to disperse crowds of young Ethiopian-Israelis: "The images out of Israel this Sunday looked like they could have been filmed in downtown Baltimore."[51]

Despite the ubiquity of the "warrior cop" discourse, which celebrates traits of physical toughness and aggressiveness, in my analysis of industry marketing material, I find what Anna Feigenbaum and Daniel Weissmann call the "rise of the vulnerable warrior."[52] Even with the steady decrease in fatalities among police officers in the United States since the 1970s, officers' vulnerability to attack has become a central justificatory discourse for an ever-expanding arsenal of military-grade equipment.[53] Israeli crowd control industries also market an "understanding that police officers (or military personnel) are at a high enough risk of death that they must be heavily armed and allowed to cause violence to protect themselves."[54] In advertisements for riot control equipment, bodies of law enforcement are covered head to toe in militarized protective gear, their faces barely (and rarely) visible. TAR's "Law Enforcement" catalogue is full of these images, marketing riot suits that cover every inch of skin, all the way down to hand protection. The catalogue also contains pages devoted to types of helmets, gas masks, and shields, the latter containing shields that double as non-lethal weapons by providing electric shocks of 50,000 volts. In all cases, the warrior is represented with the image of a man, the implicit message being the need to protect the male body and masculinity.

Figures 27–30. The "vulnerable warrior" for sale. Source: TAR Ideal's "One Stop Shop" catalogue, collected by the author at ISDEF 2015.

Early images of cultural militarism in Israel are embodied in the status symbols of the Sabra fighters: the stocking cap, machine gun and the open vehicle, expressing the "freedom, machismo, and power" of the "cowboy of the Israeli wilderness."[55] Yet the Israeli security industry today is centered around a vulnerable masculine body that is a hybrid of machine and organism. He inhabits paradoxical identities, "as perpetual victims of civilian violence and [as] strong warriors who should be feared."[56] In denationalizing this body and cross-marketing its needs to both police and military, the industry creates an untouchable cyborg ripe for global circulability.

Figures 31–32. The "disembodied warrior" for sale. Source: TAR Ideal YouTube channel (accessed 30 April 2018).

The intense focus on officer protection runs through marketing videos for riot control. In TAR's riot control marketing video, after a montage of riots flashes across the screen, the camera zooms in on the vulnerable warrior preparing for battle, lingering on the officer tightening the knee pads on his riot suit and adjusting his helmet before taking on the threat outside. Later in the same video, the human disappears completely with only his equipment and outfit displayed.

The security industry not only appropriates vulnerability by granting it to those with power, but also by bestowing it upon the non-human. In almost all marketing videos, the "fear prototype" of the unruly crowd is accompanied by the burning of tires and the smashing of windows. In an image of a city intended to market the products of Israeli company Mifram, ranging from perimeter and border defense to crowd control and vehicle barriers, urban space is transformed into a battlefield in which protesters in the upper left-hand corner are the only visible threats.[57] On the company's website, products are sorted by "Protection Subject," where consumers can choose from city, bank, airport, harbor, perimeter/border, and VIP defense. In the cityscape, the protesters are placed next to a bank and an embassy, effectively framing them as threats to these capitalist and nationalist structures. In this model, the structures themselves are subjects of vulnerability that need protection.

Figure 33. Mifram displays their range of security products. Source: Mifram website (accessed 30 April 2018).

The cooperation between the Israeli state and industry in protecting the separation wall during demonstrations in the West Bank parallel the use of tear gas and stun grenades in "protecting" the Maracana Stadium from anti–World Cup protesters in Brazil last year,[58] or the barrage of crowd control weapons unleashed on indigenous protesters in North Dakota in an effort to "protect" the construction of the destructive Dakota Access pipeline.[59] By placing property at the center of the "fear prototype," the Israeli crowd control industry effectively caters to a neoliberal logic that favors a marketable and militarized approach to the maintenance of the status quo, not only in its own backyard but on a global scale.

Constructing Solutions

Finally, industry marketing performances revolve around an "industry savior complex," in which prototypes of controlled risk or vulnerability are swiftly followed by a range of technological solutions. The technology itself is the protagonist, doing its job with clean professionalism. Such techno-spectacle often works by turning the weapon into an object of beauty.[60] In the CSI video marketing for VENOM, for example, the camera circles the launcher multiple times, almost lovingly. Rafael's video for its Non-Lethal Remote Weapon State emphasizes the comfortable and safe interior of the vehicle, bringing the viewer in line with the perspective of the technology.

Other times, riot equipment is framed through discourses of corporate creativity and future-oriented innovation. Shrouding violent weapons in a discourse of consumerability follows from a longer history of integrated military, corporate, and leisure interests. Logics and technologies of the battlefield have expanded into civilian life.[61] Yet the opposite is also true: technologies of war are increasingly

framed in civilianizing language, and celebrated through the positive affects of hope, opportunity, and belonging. Technologies' usability is emphasized by placing them in the same framework as everyday mobile media technologies. Many of these weapons and the systems that enable their use are marketed through promoting their additional features, including "GPS wireless transmission capabilities, 3G/4G cellular support, and WiFi."[62]

The focus on "smart," WiFi-equipped weapons represents what I call the "iPhonization" of violent technologies. For example, Beit Alfa Technologies, a private company owned by kibbutz Beit Alfa that specializes in water cannon riot control vehicles, uses the language of adaptability and customizability to market its products.[63] A major selling point of the vehicle is that it is "flexible, adaptable, modular, and tailor made to match customer's precise requirements."[64] This customizability allows for different modes of water streams which can all be injected with tear gas, pepper spray, or dye. It also boasts ease of usability as the operator can aim and shoot using "one simple-to-operate joystick type control." The marketing video for ISPRA's cyclone riot control unit emphasizes its camera system that allows "real time control of dynamic riot situations" and "smart solutions for crowd control."[65] These technologies are also advertised as comfortable, light, and flexible. ISPRA's Trx Riot Suit promises to "deliver the highest protection from blunt force trauma without sacrificing comfort and mobility."[66] Mifram boasts that their products offer "portability, modularity," "ergonomic features," and "smart designs, adapted to the client's needs [and] field and local conditions." CSI's[67] VENOM is celebrated as "combat[-ready], lightweight, and portable," with "truly unprecedented versatility and flexibility."[68]

The framing of technologies of violence in civilianizing language is also reflected in "green marketing," in which companies frame their weapons as environmentally friendly. The greening of crowd control is not necessarily only about Israel's distinct brand of environmentalism.[69] Rather, it ensures the circulability of its companies' products on a global stage that increasingly requires "ethical" forms of pacification. ISPRA, for example, has an "Environment" tab on their website which describes their goal of replacing dangerous materials with those that are "user and environment, friendly." Skunk too, is constantly flaunted as an eco-friendly solution. On its website, Odortec describes itself as a "green company," whose ingredients are "100% safe for people, animals and plants, as well as harmless to the natural environment."[70] Yet while the company boasts that its Skunk offers a humanitarian "alternative to rubber bullets and tear gas," the use of the Skunk and other sensorial non-lethal weapons still represent a form of atmospheric policing and collective punishment.[71] Despite its purported organic nature, Skunk turns "the square, the march, the public assembly into a toxic space, taking away what is so often the last communication channel people have left to use."[72] As Feigenbaum writes, "If the right to gather, to speak out, is to mean anything, then we must also have the right to do so in air we can breathe."[73]

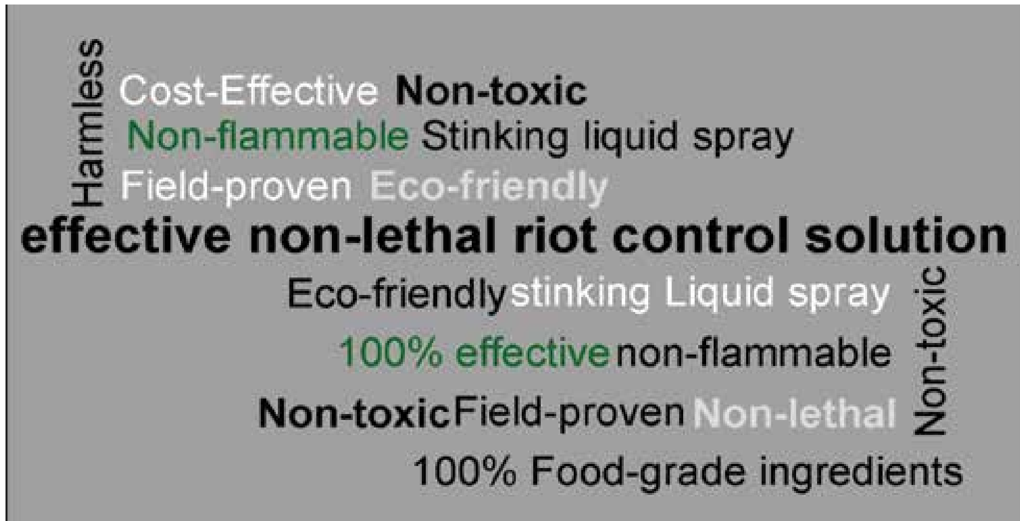


Figure 34. A “dynamic word map” used to advertise the Skunk. Source: iHLS website, posted 22 March 2015, online at i-hls.com/archives/59556 (accessed 30 April 2018).

Even the classification of “non-lethal” allows these products to fit within what Adi Ophir terms “moral technologies,” a complex humanitarian assemblage used to exercise contemporary violence and govern the displaced, the enemy and the unwanted.[74] While the use of tear gas originated in colonial contexts that saw native populations as inferior and in need of management,[75] the contemporary proliferation of such weapons is tied to the growth of a global, corporate PR industry, and the perception that modern forms of policing and occupation must be lawful and benevolent. The Israeli riot control marketplace explicitly caters to that need. In an interview, British non-lethal weapons expert Malcolm Davies spoke about how the “Scream,” an acoustic weapon used to disperse demonstrations in the West Bank, is meticulously tested so as not to cross the line into lethality.[76] While it “could be dialed up for lethal effects,” tests have determined the precise number of feet necessary to keep between the system and demonstrators to ensure its non-lethality.[77] Beit Alfa’s high-pressure water control system similarly specifies that it be kept “131 feet” from “an average-sized human.”[78]

Such information is often to be found in user manuals provided by companies in an attempt to regulate the operation of their weapons on the ground. The ISPRA manual depicts two triangles, representing “common results” and “optimal results” respectively, the latter equally balancing three points: public safety, compliance, and police force safety.[79] The manual goes on to describe different stages of force escalation, introducing new products with each step: first there is pepper spray, followed by tear gas, then rubber pellets, and so on. Similarly, the CSI catalogue features DEFCON: Degree of Force – Consequence, an “escalation of force model” for end-users, beginning with physical presence and moving into verbalization, soft pain compliance, intermediate control technique, suppress and degrade technique, and, finally, lethal force.[80] Each step is represented by a colored icon that corresponds to a different line of associated weaponry.

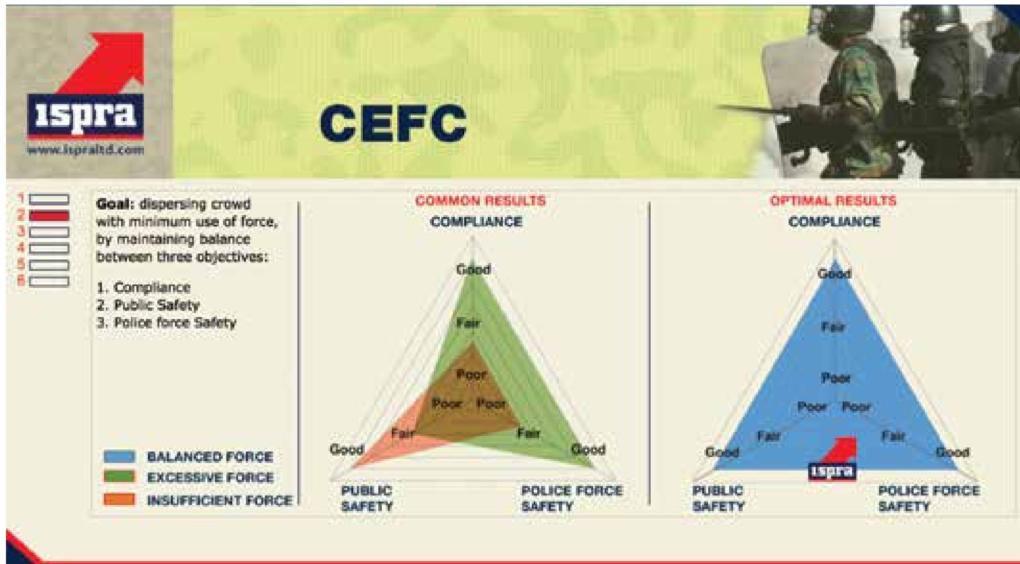


Figure 35. Illustration of ISPRA's CEFC Controlled Escalation of Force Concept, Source: ISPRA 2017 Catalogue, 3 (accessed 30 April 2018).

These manuals provide military and law enforcement a safe script with which to properly use their products on the ground, while offering consumers a different product for every occasion. They also work to flatten and equate all contexts in which such products will be used, once again invoking a gentle "stock solution" that can circulate internationally under a variety of circumstances. Like the demonstrations enacted at ISDEF and Eurosatory, each scenario ends with applause and the targets of violence walk away unscathed.

Conclusion

The Israeli security industry has achieved international recognition in large part through effective branding. It is precisely its use of ambiguous global imagery that grants it circulability. Whether by transforming a West Bank protest into a stock image, using discourses of vulnerability to market a global need, or framing products as ethical or environmental, the industry mediates violence through a sellable script that can be replicated (but also subverted) in protest battlegrounds around the world. In analyzing corporate performances of violence, however, it is crucial to exercise what W. J. T. Mitchell terms a "comparative gaze," an act of double vision that brings together two different scenes.[81] Critical seeing is always an act of double vision: "Either one looks and then looks again at what was hidden or forgotten, or one looks at a view while remembering another view."[82] If industry marketing constitutes an act of ambiguity and erasure, a critical seeing summons the very real and violent effects of crowd control weapons. A critical way of seeing is thus key to understanding how "shared

justificatory discourses" of government, military, and corporation operate smoothly on a global scale, and more importantly, how they can be undone.[83]

Just as the riot control industry obscures symbols and images of resistance by making them into stock marketing material, Palestinians have appropriated objects of control into artistic or memorializing practices.[84] While the industry markets their products for global "events," using the language of "event preparedness," the ubiquity of tear gas canisters and rubber bullets in Palestinian art and memorials delinks them from singular instances and instead declares them as part of an everyday experience of structural oppression. These platforms are essential for unraveling a reductive culture of fear that tells us little about agency or the courage and creativity at the heart of resistance.

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Endnotes

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75 Palestine was the first British territory authorized to use tear gas on civilians, in an effort to counter protests leading up to the Arab Revolt in 1936. See Feigenbaum, *Tear Gas*, 58–61. The rise of non-lethal weapons from Mandate Palestine to the occupied territories today follows from Laleh Khalili's contention that "law and legality are integral to the self-imagining [of modern population control], which shrouds violence in myths of progress and the humanitarianization of warfare." Laleh Khalili, *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 240.

76 Melissa Block, "For a Non-Lethal Weapon, Israel Uses Sound," *NPR*, 13 June 2005, online at www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4701588 (accessed 30 April 2018).

77 Such numerically precise regulations mirror a form of what Sari Hanafi terms "spacio-cide," in which a colonizer's infrastructural support, "which modulates calories, megawatts, water, telecommunication networks, and a spectrum and bandwidth allocation [provides] the bare minimum for survival but minimal enough to attempt to deplete or strip resistance." See Sari Hanafi, "Explaining Spacio-cide in the Palestinian Territory: Colonization, Separation, and State of Exception," *Current Sociology* 61, no. 2 (2012): 190–205. Cited in Jasbir K. Puar, "The 'Right' to Maim: Disablement and Inhumanist Biopolitics in Palestine," *Borderlands* 14, No. 1 (2015): 5.

78 "Water Restraint System (WRS)," Beit Alfa Technologies Ltd., online at www.bat.co.il/products2.htm.

79 "ISPRA 2017 Catalogue," ISPRA, online at sfilev1.f-static.com/image/users/423329/ftp/my_files/Ispra%20Catalog%20(2017)%20-%20ORGINAL.pdf?id=30731723 (accessed 30 April 2018), 4.

80 "Combined Tactical Systems Product Catalogue 2016," 3, online at www.combinedsystems.com/userfiles/CSI_MIS_0716_low_res.pdf (accessed 30 April 2018).

81 W. J. T. Mitchell, "Christo's Gates and Gilo's Wall," *Critical Inquiry* 32, no. 4 (Summer 2006): 587–601.

82 Mitchell, "Christo's Gates," 599.

83 Feigenbaum explains "shared justificatory discourses" as the "increasing conflation of government and business interests" when it comes to counter-terrorism following 9/11. See Feigenbaum, "Security for Sale!" 89.

84 In Bethlehem, CSI tear gas canisters have been repurposed as Christmas ornaments to send a holiday message to the United States about the role of its tear gas and arms manufacturers in the violence of the occupied territories. Palestinian artist Ibrahim Bornat creates art out of his collection of the ammunition (comprised of thousands of rubber-coated and live bullets, tear gas canisters, and sound grenades, among other forms of munitions) that Israeli soldiers fire at Friday demonstrators in Bil'in, effectively "[creating] life out of their instruments of death." Also in Bil'in is a garden of flowers planted in used tear gas canisters that memorializes Bassem Abu Rahmah, who was killed in 2009 after being hit with a high-velocity tear gas grenade fired by Israeli soldiers. See "Tear Gas Ornaments from Bethlehem," YouTube video, 1:00, posted by AJ+, 30 December 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QGWTuYkDCg (accessed 30 April 2018); Hazem Jamjoum, "Ramallah Commemorates the Ongoing Nakbah," *Electronic Intifada*, 28 May 2008, online at electronicintifada.net/content/ramallah-commemorates-ongoing-nakba/7532 (accessed 30 April 2018); and Elias Nawawieh, "PHOTOS: What the Press Missed in Bil'in Tear Gas Flower Garden," *+972 Magazine*, 8 October 2013, online at 972mag.com/photos-what-the-press-missed-in-bilin-tear-gas-flower-garden/80129/ (accessed 30 April 2018).