On Thursday, July 4th, 2019

The Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya resolved to honor

LT. GEN. (RES.) GADI EISENKOT

"Soldier, commander, statesman, moderate, brave, responsible, a first-rate strategist and a people person." These were the words that Israeli President Reuven Rivlin used to describe Lt. Gen. Gadi Eisenkot, the 21st Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces, upon his retirement in January 2019, and there are no words more appropriate to describe him.

Gadi Eisenkot was born in Tiberias in May 1960, the second of four children born to Esther and Meir, immigrants from Morocco. When he was one year old, the family moved to Eilat, where he was raised and educated. In high school Eisenkot specialized in sailing, and met his wife Chana at the municipal sailing club. They married in 1984 and have five children.

In 1978, Gadi Eisenkot enlisted in the IDF and served in the Golani Brigade. Two years later, he completed his infantry officers' training and was sent to command an infantry division on Golani's training base. During the First Lebanon War, he served as a company commander in the Golani Brigade's 51st Battalion, and took part in the fighting in Ain El Tineh, Nabatiyeh, Jezzine and at the Beirut airport.

After his discharge from the IDF, Eisenkot returned to uniform and enrolled as a career soldier. He served in roles including Deputy Commander of the Golani Brigade, Operations Officer of the Northern Command, and Commander of the Erez Regional Brigade. In 1997 he was appointed as Commander of the Golani Brigade 51st Battalion, and took part in the fighting in Ain El Tineh, Nabatiyeh, Jezzine and at the Beirut airport.

In September 2006, Major General Eisenkot was named Head of the Northern Command. During his five years in this position he preserved the deterrence that had been built up against Hezbollah during the war, and maintained quiet on the northern border. Subsequently, he led the team that formed the IDF’s Depth Corps, and in January 2013 was appointed Deputy Chief of Staff.

Major General Eisenkot was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General and assumed the post of IDF Chief of Staff in February 2015. He led the IDF resolutely against multiple challenges in a variety of areas: the threat of Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, the growing presence of Iran and Hezbollah in Syria, the confrontation with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, waves of terror in Judea and Samaria, and Islamic terror in the Sinai Peninsula. Despite numerous effective attacks against Iranian targets in Syria and violence round against Hamas, Lt. Gen. Eisenkot succeeded in preventing the expansion of the hostilities. During his tenure, he formulated the "IDF Strategy" document as well as the multi-year "Gidon" plan designed to improve the efficiency of the IDF by, among other things, improving training, establishing a cyber command and a commando brigade, and reducing manpower.

As Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Eisenkot will be remembered as a commander with values, who attributed great importance to the IDF’s purpose to be not only a professional and efficient army, but also an army committed to ethical and moral principles, in accordance with the Spirit of the IDF and its legacy. Lt. Gen. Eisenkot ascribed a lot of weight to the central and unique rule of the IDF in Israeli society and to the need to preserve it as a state body that remains separate from political disputes.

In January 2019, Lt. Gen. Gadi Eisenkot handed the command of the Israel Defense Forces to Lt. Gen. Aviv Kohavi. Upon his retirement from the IDF, Lt. Gen. (Res.) Gadi Eisenkot joined the Washington Institute for Near East Policy as a Visiting Military Fellow. He holds a BA in History from Tel Aviv University and an MA in Political Science from the University of Haifa. In 2016, he was awarded the Commander of the Legion of Merit by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States, General Joseph Dunford, for his unique contribution to the military cooperation between the two countries.

In recognition of his significant contribution to the strength, security and status of the State of Israel in the world; his influence on the spirit of the IDF and his consistent efforts to maintain its moral code; his contribution to Israeli society and to the preservation of its fundamental values as expressed in the Declaration of Independence; and in appreciation of his friendship with IDC Herzliya and his commitment to its values, The Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya resolved to honor Lt. Gen. (Res.) Gadi Eisenkot, the 21st Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces, upon his retirement in January 2019, and there are no words more appropriate to describe him.

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