
Strategic Survey for Israel 2010

Shlomo Brom and Anat Kurz, Editors



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Contents

Preface	7
PART I: Israel's Domestic Arena	
<hr/>	
The Fight over the Settlement Construction Freeze Yehuda Ben Meir	15
Israel: Hostage to Its Soldiers' Captors? Yoram Schweitzer	25
Arabs in Israel: Between Integration and Alienation Ephraim Lavie	37
The Lebanon and Gaza Campaigns: Operational and Ethical-Legal Lessons Gabriel Siboni	59
Benchmarking Civilian Home Front Resilience: Less than Meets the Eye Meir Elran	71
PART II: Israel and the Middle East	
<hr/>	
The Israeli-Palestinian Political Process: Dead End Dynamics Anat Kurz	85
The Arab World and the Political Process Shlomo Brom	99
Turkey and Israel Oded Eran	109

PART III: Regional Trends: Challenges and Responses

Challenges to the United States in the Greater Middle East

Mark A. Heller 121

The American-Israeli Relationship: Between Crisis and Common Cause

Jeremy Issacharoff 131

The Iranian Challenge

Ephraim Kam 141

The European Union and the Middle East

Shimon Stein 157

Approaching the End of the Mubarak Era: Egypt's Achievements and Challenges

Yoram Meital 175

Lebanon: Between Democratization and Islamization

Benedetta Berti 189

Sunni Islamist Militancy in the Region and Beyond

Yoram Schweitzer and Jonathan Schachter 201

Conclusion

Darkening Clouds on the Horizon

Shlomo Brom and Anat Kurz 217

Appendix: The Middle East Military Balance

Trends in Military Buildup in the Middle East

Yiftah Shapir 229

Review of Armed Forces

239

Contributors

293

Preface

Strategic Survey for Israel 2010 continues the annual series published by the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS). The articles in the volume analyze multiple aspects of the security and political situation in Israel, probing the complex challenges confronting Israel and discussing the various options of dealing with them.

Since last year's publication of the previous book in the series, no breakthrough has occurred that offers Israel a better containment of the strategic challenges that surround it. Moreover, threats in Israel's immediate vicinity and in more distant areas appear to be garnering strength.

The political process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority faces a dead end as a result of a wide gap between the parties' views on the initial terms for talks on an agreement and the very purpose of the dialogue. This gap was clearly manifested in the recourse to indirect talks between the parties, mediated by a third party, the United States. The Gaza Strip blockade has not realized the hope of weakening Hamas to an extent that would either enable the Palestinian Authority to negotiate more concretely with Israel towards an actual settlement or reduce the threat to security from the organization's military entrenchment in the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, the ongoing blockade on Gaza has become the focus of blatant international criticism against Israel, creating the aura of a diplomatic siege against Israel. Hizbollah has also continued to arm itself and gain political power in Lebanon, relying on its close ties with Iran and Syria. Syria in turn has accelerated its resumption of political power and influence in Lebanon. With the stagnation of the political process between Israel and Syria and the regaining of power by Hizbollah, it appears that the front that is forming to the north of Israel is more threatening than in past years.

Iran, which proceeds toward completion of its military nuclear program while it demonstrates the powerlessness of the opposing international forces, has established itself as the leader of the regional anti-Israel camp. Over the past year, Turkey has to a certain extent moved closer to this camp. Indeed, from an ally and strategic partner to Israel, Turkey has become a leading anti-Israel force on this front and is seen as a source of inspiration for militant Islamic forces. Moreover, the deadlock in the political process between Israel, the Palestinians, and Syria has hindered any possibility of preventing or at least delaying Iran's striving for regional dominance by creating a camp that would include Israel and the pragmatic Arab countries, particularly Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.

In the shadow of these threats looms the rising tension between Israel and the US. The differences of opinion between the Israeli government and the American administration originate from the political deadlock and from the popular perception held by President Barack Obama's political circle that the policies of the Netanyahu government are an obstacle to progress towards an Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Syrian settlement – and therefore a barrier to promotion of an American agenda for the Greater Middle East. This development undermines Israel's position in the regional and international arenas and contributes to its delegitimization, while threatening to weaken it in the security realm.

Although Israel has proved its impressive ability to deliver a deterring military message, this achievement also carries a heavy political price. International criticism of Israel's intense response to military provocation may limit Israel's freedom of action when once again there will be a need to take determined measures if its military deterrence wanes and there is renewed interest by militant elements in another round of confrontation. The limitations are the result of decreased international legitimacy for military moves that Israel views as necessary for its self defense. In addition to withstanding international – especially Middle Eastern and European – protest against the use of military force to cope with political-territorial challenges, Israel must also contend with the erosion of one of its most fundamental bases for military deterrence: American willingness to support its policy.

As such, Israel faces a time of difficult decision making in essential political and security issues, and any decisions taken will have an inevitable impact on the domestic political arena. Israel is in a position – not for the first time in its history, and some would say “as usual” – where any attempt to stabilize its regional and international surrounding will destabilize its internal arena, while any effort to prevent internal agitation will incur a steep diplomatic price and difficulty in containing security challenges.

The articles compiled here paint a comprehensive picture of the complex dilemmas Israel faces. Like previous volumes in the series, the articles deal with developments over the past year in the Middle East itself and in the international arena in a Middle East context, with a focus on trends that are not always unique to Israel but have direct and distinctive implications for it. Emphasis on the Israeli angle appears in the choice of subjects, in the arenas that are covered in this volume, and in the analyses themselves.

The first part of the volume, “Israel’s Domestic Arena,” includes discussion of five issues on Israel’s domestic scene. The article by Yehuda Ben Meir discusses the freeze on construction in settlements and the related tension between Israel and the United States. He describes the range of internal Israeli considerations regarding the settlements, which leave the overall issue a source of tension in the Israeli domestic arena as well as a source of disagreement between Israel and the US. Yoram Schweitzer’s article discusses the politically and emotionally laden subject of prisoner exchanges, an issue that Israel has been forced to confront with non-state elements, and analyzes the security, political, and public opinion components inherent in the complex decisions required by this issue, both in the past and in the present. In his article, Ephraim Lavie discusses trends of alienation and integration among Arabs in Israel and proposes ways to ease the tension between these conflicting trends and thus between the Arab public and the state. Gabriel Siboni analyzes the operational and legal lessons of the campaigns Israel conducted in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip in recent years, primarily the need to define realistic goals for dealing with the asymmetric challenges it confronts. These goals include increasing the intervals between rounds of confrontation and shortening their duration. In addition, the author argues that states must be held more accountable for the non-state forces that operate from their territory; this accountability

could provide an ethical-legal basis and ease Israel's military and political confrontation with future asymmetrical challenges. In the fifth article of this section, Meir Elran addresses the management of Israel's civilian front and describes a host of measures taken and those yet to be implemented in order to divide responsibility among the various authorities responsible for the home front in crisis situations, including missile attacks.

The second part of the volume, "Israel and the Middle East," deals with three major regional challenges facing Israel. In her article on the Israeli-Palestinian track, Anat Kurz discusses the preferences by Israel and the PA for an indirect channel of dialogue (proximity talks) over direct negotiations on the permanent status agreement, and the growing interest in the Palestinian and international arenas in the establishment of a Palestinian state not necessarily in the framework of an agreement with Israel. In an essay that focuses on the Arab world and the political process, Shlomo Brom analyzes the impact of the frozen Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Syrian political tracks on Israel's relations with Arab countries. The essay points to the need to recruit Arab support for the process of building PA institutions and for the political decisions the PA will have to adopt towards a breakthrough in the political process. In the article that follows, Oded Eran discusses the deterioration in relations between Israel and Turkey. He analyzes the intensifying Turkish criticism of Israeli policy in the Israeli-Palestinian arena and in particular the Gaza Strip, as an expression of a significant change in Turkey's perception of its status and role in the Middle East.

The third part of the volume, "Regional Trends: Challenges and Responses," focuses on trends in the Middle East that have a direct impact on Israel's strategic situation. Mark Heller refers to the challenges the United States faces in the Greater Middle East and its failure to promote American cooperation with the pragmatic Arab and Muslim states in the region. He estimates that the US difficulties in dealing with this part of the world derive from the hostility and suspicions among the governments and their constituents in regard to American motives, and not from cultural-ideological differences. In his article addressing change and continuity in Israel-US relations, Jeremy Issacharoff focuses on the need for careful management of the bilateral relationship in order to stabilize recent

elements of change in some aspects of the relationship, which, however, do not threaten the unshakable US commitment to Israel's security.

Assessing the Iranian nuclear challenge, Ephraim Kam emphasizes that the confrontation with Iran's nuclear program is approaching a critical decision point. In light of the efforts that to date have failed to delay the progress of the program, the US government will have to decide between military action against Iran or a green light to Israel for such a move, or alternatively, coming to terms with a nuclear Iran. Shimon Stein discusses the relationship between the EU and the Middle East, focusing on the policies of the three leading EU countries – Germany, Britain, and France – on the key issues of the Iranian nuclear program and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The article emphasizes these countries' awareness of the need to coordinate their policies with the United States in order to give it practical meaning.

Turning to the Arab world, Yoram Meital analyzes the developments of Egyptian policy and the challenges it faces toward the end of President Hosni Mubarak's period in power and the possible risks arising from the forthcoming change in government in Egypt. He concludes that Egypt's ability to cope with its domestic social challenges depends on its maintaining a strategic partnership with the United States and a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In her article, Benedetta Berti focuses on trends of democratization and Islamization in Lebanon, and analyzes the ongoing buildup of factional ethnic-political particularism and the increasing political influence of radical Islam in the country as factors contributing to the rising power of Hizbollah and as such, a security challenge to Israel. An article by Yoram Schweitzer and Jonathan Schachter summarizes the developments in Islamic militancy in the Middle East and around the world. Their analysis emphasizes the shift of the center of terrorism from Iraq to Afghanistan-Pakistan, the increasing union between local jihad groups and al-Qaeda, and the escalation in al-Qaeda operations against the United States, both within and outside its borders.

The analytical portion of the volume concludes with an analysis by the editors regarding the political and security challenges facing the State of Israel, primarily the military strengthening of states and non-state organizations in its vicinity as well as its growing isolation in the

international arena. The title of the article, “Darkening Clouds on the Horizon,” reflects both the content of the analysis and its conclusions. The article details the considerations that should guide the Israeli government to formulate responses to long term threats, even if the process of formulating a clear policy is accompanied by an immediate and steep political-internal price.

The appendix to the volume, by Yiftah Shapir, reviews trends in military buildup in the Middle East. The main trends recorded in this area continue the trends of previous years and include substantial acquisition of advanced weapon systems, mostly by the oil-rich states, greater emphasis on development of a local military industry in some of the states, and reduction of defense costs through an upgrade of old weapon systems. The Appendix includes tables and graphs that chart the changes over time, and are based on data collected as part of the INSS Middle East Military Balance project.

The editors would like to thank the authors of the articles, members of the INSS research staff and guest authors. As in previous years, a substantial and important contribution to the writing and publication of this volume was made by Moshe Grundman, the director of publications at INSS, and Judith Rosen, the editor of INSS English publications. To them we extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation.

Shlomo Brom, Anat Kurz
July 2010

Part I

Israel's Domestic Arena

**The Fight over the Settlement
Construction Freeze**
Yehuda Ben Meir / 15

Israel: Hostage to Its Soldiers' Captors?
Yoram Schweitzer / 25

**Arabs in Israel: Between Integration and
Alienation**
Ephraim Lavie / 37

**The Lebanon and Gaza Campaigns:
Operational and Ethical-Legal Lessons**
Gabriel Siboni / 59

**Benchmarking Civilian Home Front
Resilience: Less than Meets the Eye**
Meir Elran / 71

The Fight over the Settlement Construction Freeze

Yehuda Ben Meir

On Wednesday evening, November 25, 2009, in a hastily arranged press conference, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu announced a ten-month freeze on all new construction in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank). The prime minister clarified that the freeze would not apply to construction that had already begun (where the foundation had already been laid), to the 2900 housing units for which permits had recently been issued, to essential public buildings, or to construction within the city limits of Jerusalem. The dramatic announcement by the prime minister culminated six months of tough, behind the scenes negotiations between the United States and Israel and temporarily suspended the tension between the two countries.

The Building Moratorium in the West Bank

The origin of the unprecedented settlement construction freeze lies in the first meeting between then-newly elected President Barack Obama and the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, which took place in Washington on Monday, May 18, 2009. At that meeting, President Obama surprised Prime Minister Netanyahu by demanding a complete freeze on any and all new construction in the settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The prime minister was clearly taken by surprise by such a far reaching demand by the president, especially at their very first encounter; people in his entourage even claimed that the prime minister was the victim of an “ambush” by President Obama. Mr. Netanyahu responded that he could not accept such a demand and indeed could not be expected to accept

a demand to which no other Israeli prime minister had ever agreed, but that he was perfectly willing to live by the understandings on the settlement construction issue reached between President Bush and Prime Ministers Sharon and Olmert.

The Israeli position was that according to the understandings previously reached between Israel and the United States, Israel would not establish any new settlements or expropriate private land, but would be entitled to undertake new construction in existing settlements in order to meet the needs of “natural growth,” it being understood that for the most part such construction would be concentrated in Jerusalem or in the large settlement blocs that presumably would eventually be incorporated into Israel. However, whether such an understanding was indeed ever reached is an open question. Many voices in the United States as well as in Israel claim that this understanding was subject to the demarcation of the actual “building line” of each settlement – something that Israel never did. Others believe that any understanding regarding future settlement activity was subject to Israel’s fulfilling its part of the understanding, namely the removal of 26 unauthorized outposts constructed after March 2001 – another action that Israel did not perform. In any case, President Obama rejected the Israeli position and reiterated his demand for a total settlement freeze. The meeting ended without agreement and on a sour note.

In the aftermath of the unsuccessful meeting between the two leaders, tension between the two countries rose. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton publicly denied that any understandings existed between the United States and Israel with regard to settlement construction. This led to further recriminations between the parties. Key officials of the previous administration, such as Deputy National Security Advisor Elliot Abrams, publicly contradicted Secretary Clinton, claiming that the United States was indeed backtracking on previous understandings with Israel. As the controversy evolved, the crisis deepened.

Eventually, cooler heads prevailed. The Americans seemed to realize that an open-ended, complete, and total construction freeze, including in East Jerusalem – which in Israeli eyes is sovereign Israeli territory and part of its capital – is something that Mr. Netanyahu, and indeed no Israeli prime minister, could possibly accept. The Israelis realized that the

Americans were serious, that former understandings or the readiness of previous administrations to look the other way was not acceptable to the Obama administration, and that Israel would have to accept some form of construction moratorium in the West Bank.

As a result, the parties agreed to commence behind the scenes, clandestine negotiations between the prime minister's trusted advisor, advocate Yitzchak Molcho, and the president's special envoy for Middle East peace, Senator George Mitchell, in order to find a mutually satisfactory arrangement. Given the sensitive nature of the issue, the efforts toward such an arrangement lasted for close to six months. This should come as no surprise. No previous government or prime minister in Israel had ever agreed to publicly declare a complete freeze on housing construction in settlements throughout the West Bank. The sole exception was Prime Minister Menachem Begin's agreement, at the signing of the Camp David accords with Egypt in September 1978, to freeze all settlement construction in the territories for a period of three months. However, this sole precedent should be seen in its proper context: it occurred over thirty years ago, at a time when there were barely a few thousand Jewish residents of the territories – not the 300,000 people in the West Bank alone as is the situation today. Moreover, Mr. Begin's concession was overshadowed by the euphoria of the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement and was indeed limited to three months. Thus for Israel, and especially for the current prime minister and his government, agreeing to a settlement construction freeze was quite a difficult challenge.

The key question here is what prompted the change in American policy that led President Obama to put such emphasis on the issue of the settlements. There is no single answer to this question. Some believe that the Americans simply became fed up with what they viewed as Israeli antics and lack of credibility regarding the whole settlement construction issue or that they wanted to put an end to Israel's foot dragging with regard to its oft-repeated commitment to remove the 26 unauthorized outposts. Others believe that as part of Obama's agenda for an overture to the Islamic world, the new administration wanted to demonstrate a more even-handed approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and chose an issue they believed would invite significant support among public opinion.

That the settlements are not popular with the American body politic or the American Jewish community, or even among many Israelis, has long been documented. In a public opinion study conducted in May 2009 by INSS, as part of its National Security and Public Opinion Project, a representative sample of the adult Jewish population in Israel was asked whether the settlements should be expanded even at the price of a confrontation with the United States. Forty-two percent said that the settlements should not be expanded, 41 percent responded that the settlements should be expanded but not if it would lead to a confrontation with the United States, and only 17 percent were of the opinion that the settlements should be expanded regardless of the United States position. What the administration overlooked, however, was that once the settlement issue was put in the context of a major confrontation between America and Israel, and President Obama was seen as adopting a pro-Palestinian position, the Israeli public, as would be expected, rallied behind the government and the prime minister.

By early November 2009, the United States and Israel had come to an understanding as to the parameters of a limited freeze – both in time and in scope – on construction in the settlements, to be announced unilaterally by Israel. The understanding reflected considerable compromise by both parties and included the following main components:

1. The government would impose and enforce a freeze on new housing construction in all the settlements in the West Bank for a period of ten months – this being a compromise between six months as suggested by Israel and a year or more as requested by the United States.
2. The freeze would not apply to ongoing construction, defined as all buildings for which the foundations had already been laid and completed, nor would it apply to the approximately 2,900 housing units for which permits had recently been issued.
3. The freeze would not apply to public buildings such as schools, synagogues, health clinics, and other such edifices that were necessary to meet the needs of natural growth in the various settlements.
4. The freeze would not apply to East Jerusalem, where no restrictions would be put on future construction.

5. The United States would welcome Israel's unilateral announcement, portraying it as a significant and unprecedented step by Israel, although falling short of American expectations and wishes.

Upon reaching the above understanding with the United States, the prime minister turned his attention to the home front and internal political constraints. Even while the negotiations between Israel and the United States were underway, the prime minister likely devoted a great deal of effort to garner support within his party and within the coalition for the eventual agreement. In this endeavor, Mr. Netanyahu was highly successful, even beyond most people's expectations. To a certain degree, the prime minister also built on the element of surprise. Thus while during the entire six month period between the initial Netanyahu-Obama meeting and the announcement of the construction freeze there were constant leaks regarding the talks, nothing definitive or conclusive was made public.

On November 25, 2009, Prime Minister Netanyahu presented the understanding reached with the United States for a temporary freeze of housing construction in the West Bank to the 15-member ministerial Committee on National Security, otherwise known as the cabinet. The committee approved the prime minister's proposal by a vote of twelve to one. All the ministers from Mr. Netanyahu's party (including the two foremost right-wingers – former IDF chief of staff Moshe Yaalon and Benny Begin) as well as all the Labor party ministers and two of the three ministers from the right wing Yisrael Beiteinu party (including its leader, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman) supported the prime minister. Only Uzi Landau of Yisrael Beiteinu – its most right wing minister – voted against, while the two members (Eli Yishai and Ariel Attias) from the ultra-Orthodox Shas party absented themselves from the meeting.

Within hours of the cabinet decision, strong statements from the office of the defense minister and the office of the Civil Administration in the Territories (who is under the authority of the defense minister) emerged regarding strong steps that would be taken to guarantee full implementation of the government's decision on the construction freeze. These statements were indeed subsequently followed by visits of inspectors from the Civil Administration to almost all the settlements in order to hand out legally binding orders calling for a freeze on all new construction and to assess the

situation on the ground in each of the settlements. The main reason for this burst of activity was the desire of the Israeli government to demonstrate to the United States that it was serious regarding the construction freeze and that it was not playing games (as many claimed it had done in the past). An additional factor was the desire of Defense Minister Barak to use the opportunity to deflect the serious and vocal criticism within his own party for continuing to be part of a right wing government.

The Domestic Response

The decision announced by the prime minister and the highly visible and publicized activity that followed resulted in protests by right wing back-bench MKs of the ruling Likud party and other coalition members, the settlement movement (first and foremost its official organ – the Judea and Samaria Council), and other representatives of the right throughout the Israeli public. Although the rhetoric was at times quite extreme and in many settlements residents physically and sometimes even violently opposed the work of the inspectors, attempting to prevent their very entry into the settlement, in the final analysis the opposition remained little more than howls of protest. The settlers claimed that the decision was illegal, illegitimate, and a clear violation of the promises Mr. Netanyahu had made prior to the elections. They organized demonstrations, acts of non-compliance, and civil disobedience, and even brought an action against the government in the Supreme Court – a petition the Supreme Court rejected, although it compelled the government to grant monetary compensation to individuals (families or contractors) who were financially harmed by the construction freeze (a sum of 150 million NIS was appropriated by the Treasury for such compensation). Nevertheless, in reality and in Israeli terms, the protest barely got off the ground.

There were a number of reasons for this phenomenon. First, the fact that the foremost supporters of the settlers and the settler movement in the government supported the freeze took the wind out of the sails of protest. Indeed, Benny Begin, son of the former prime minister Menachem Begin, even appeared on television in support of the government's decision. Second, it was quite clear that the government enjoyed wide public support for its action. Again, in the INSS public opinion survey of May 2009,

almost half of Israeli Jews were firmly opposed to further construction in the settlements and less than one fifth supported continued construction under any circumstances. In a public opinion poll conducted by Dahaf and reported in *Yediot Ahronot* on March 19, 2010, 44 percent of the Israeli public supported an extension of the construction freeze in the settlements, while 46 percent were opposed. Clearly the majority of the Israeli public was willing to go along with a temporary settlement freeze, especially as it was presented as an act designed to prevent a crisis with the United States.

The main reason for the limited protest, however, was that the West Bank residents themselves did not view the temporary freeze as something that they could not live with. Indeed, had they believed the prime minister's promise that the freeze was indeed temporary and would end on September 25, 2010, there would likely have been even less protest. Given the circumstances of the construction freeze – continuation of construction already underway above foundation level, beginning construction on 2900 new housing units, and almost no moratorium on construction of public buildings, the residents could tolerate such a freeze not only for ten months but for a year and even beyond. What most aroused them, therefore, was not the temporary freeze itself, rather their grave concern that the freeze was merely a harbinger of more drastic steps to come, namely, a permanent construction freeze and eventually an evacuation of certain settlements.

Proponents of the settlements do not trust Binyamin Netanyahu, especially after his public acceptance in June 2009 of the “two states for two peoples” formula. They still have not fully recovered from the trauma of the great betrayal – as they view it – of their mentor and spiritual father, Ariel Sharon, and they have always been suspicious of Netanyahu who, unlike Sharon, was not seen as genuinely “one of their own.” There were voices within the leadership of the settlement movement that expressed concern that if the temporary freeze was not vehemently opposed, Netanyahu would feel free, presumably under American pressure, to further curtail settlement activity and take even more far reaching steps. In the end, the settlement movement decided to undertake a vociferous protest campaign in the political and public arena as well as on the ground, but not to cross red lines and not to burn their bridges with Netanyahu.

On the ground, the construction freeze has by and large been implemented. Since the freeze applies to over 100 settlements and given the lack of cooperation and even resistance by the residents themselves, it would be unreasonable to expect full, air-tight implementation. Nevertheless, the government and especially the defense establishment did make a serious effort to implement the freeze, and with fairly good results. Stop-work orders were issued for over 400 buildings, and over 40 vehicles – mainly tractors – were confiscated.¹

Ongoing Bilateral Tensions

If many in Israel, and first and foremost the government itself, believed that the crisis in American-Israeli relations had more or less ended or at least subsided, they were in for a rude awakening. In less than four months, it became quite clear that the crisis was very much alive and kicking. On March 8, 2010, Vice President Biden began an official visit to Israel, a visit that was supposed to signify the infusion of a new atmosphere. In reality, the visit had the exact opposite effect. The day after Mr. Biden arrived and began to issue what was planned to be a series of declarations of support for Israel and confirmation of the strong and unbreakable ties between the two countries, the District Planning Board of Jerusalem issued a press release announcing its decision to approve the construction of 1,600 new apartments in the Jewish neighborhood of Ramat Shlomo, located in East Jerusalem. The American reaction was immediate and extreme and left no doubt as to the depth of the crisis between the two countries. All the attempts by the prime minister to publicly apologize for the “mishap” and to explain that this was a bureaucratic and not political decision of which he was not even aware were of no avail. The United States did not suffice with public condemnation of Israel’s action but in a tense thirty minute telephone conversation with Netanyahu, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton issued a series of demands from Israel, which reportedly included a demand for a four-month moratorium on all housing construction in East Jerusalem. On March 23, Netanyahu met for close to three hours with President Obama at the White House – a meeting that by all indications was tense and failed to result in any agreement.

Once again, it is hard to know what exactly is behind the American policy, what its real objectives are, and where it is heading. Again, East Jerusalem was not included in the settlement freeze. Nevertheless, what evidently caused the extreme American response was the sheer scope of the building plan, and the blatant embarrassment caused by announcement of the grand project during the goodwill visit of Vice President Biden. At the same time, in this case the administration did not choose an “easy” issue in terms of public opinion, rather an issue on which there is a consensus in Israel as well as among American Jewry, namely, Jerusalem. Indeed, it was the issue of Jerusalem that galvanized noted American Jews, including Elie Weisel and prominent Democratic senators, to come to Israel’s defense and criticize the administration. Do the American actions mean that the administration is ready for an all-out fight with Israel? The events of the last days in April and May suggest otherwise. It seems that once again both sides are making a concentrated effort to calm the situation. The opening of proximity talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority is certainly a major step in this direction. Nevertheless, it would be naive to believe that the profound crisis in American-Israeli relations is over.

The moment of truth regarding the settlement freeze will come on September 25, 2010, i.e., at the end of the ten-month moratorium. If at that time there are no serious negotiations between Israel and the PA or such negotiations will have reached an impasse, Mr. Netanyahu will, in all probability, declare an end to the settlement moratorium – as he publicly promised to do. If on the other hand the parties are in the midst of serious negotiations, with a strong and highly visible American involvement, Mr. Netanyahu will find himself in a highly sensitive situation, poised between Scylla and Charybdis. A formal declaration of an end to the construction freeze would almost certainly result in the Palestinians immediately breaking off the negotiations, which would lead to a major confrontation with the United States. An extension of the settlement freeze would have far reaching domestic consequences for the prime minister. It would question his credibility, endanger his coalition, fuel a revolt in his own party, and bring about a total rift with the settlement movement and with large segments of the right wing.

How will the prime minister solve this dilemma? There is always the possibility that Mr. Netanyahu will not formally extend the moratorium but at the same time will, in effect, prevent any new construction in the settlements. There are even reports – albeit strongly denied by Netanyahu – that this is the de-facto arrangement he reached with the United States regarding East Jerusalem. Such an option, however, necessitates a very tight rope for the prime minister to walk on.

Note

- 1 Amos Harel, “150 Million NIS Allotted for Construction Freeze Compensation,” *Haaretz*, March 21, 2009.

Israel: Hostage to Its Soldiers' Captors?

Yoram Schweitzer

For years Israel has been subject to extortion by terrorist organizations holding Israeli soldiers and civilians hostage, with their release conditional on the release of hundreds of imprisoned members of these organizations. If there was a realistic chance of releasing its citizens by force, Israel chose that route; lacking that option, Israel consistently paid a steep price for the release of its captives. This policy was formulated over decades, starting in the late 1960s. Consequently, terrorist organizations, depending on their capabilities, were encouraged to seek operations where Israel would have no possibility of military action. They were driven to adopt a pattern of “hit and run” with their hostages to areas beyond the reach of Israel’s security services and deny Israel the ability to secure the release of hostages by force.

Among Israel’s enemies, several organizations have stood out for their use of this tactic. Once it was Jibril’s Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command; recently it has been Hizbollah. The latter’s first such operation occurred in 1986 with the abduction of two IDF soldiers, Yosef Fink and Rahamim Alsheikh, in Beit Yahoun. The organization concealed their deaths during the five years of negotiations; in 1996, in exchange for the return of their bodies and the release of twenty South Lebanese Army soldiers, Israel released forty Hizbollah members imprisoned in al-Hiyam and 123 Hizbollah bodies. In 2000, Hizbollah abducted three IDF soldiers at Mt. Dov – Omar Souad, Benny Avraham, and Adi Avitan – and a short while later abducted Col. (ret.) Elhanan Tennenbaum. In exchange for the release of the civilian and the bodies

of the three soldiers, Israel freed 36 prisoners with foreign citizenships, 400 Palestinian prisoners, and 124 bodies of Hizbollah fighters who were buried in Israel.¹

Since the early 1990s, Hamas has tried to abduct Israeli soldiers several times in order to force Israel to release Hamas prisoners. Most incidents resulted in the soldiers' deaths during the attempt, the concealment of their bodies, and the campaign to extort from Israel the release of prisoners in exchange for revealing the location of the bodies. That was the case in the abduction and murder of Border Patrol soldier Nissim Toledano, and the soldiers Avi Sasportas and Ilan Saadon.² In addition, Hamas abducted IDF soldier Nachshon Wachsmann; in this case Israel succeeded in identifying the location where he was held, but he was killed in the course of the attempted rescue operation.

Over the past four years Israel has once again been forced to tackle the dilemma of releasing security prisoners in exchange for the release of abducted soldiers. On June 25, 2006, IDF soldier Gilad Shalit was abducted by a joint Hamas–Popular Resistance Committees cell that attacked an Israeli tank, killed two of its crew, injured a third, and retreated to Gaza with Shalit as hostage.³ Shortly thereafter, on July 12, Hizbollah abducted two IDF reservists in a complex operation that included massive artillery shelling of northern Israel. The shelling deflected attention from the well planned pinpoint attack on the patrol along the security fence. Hizbollah killed eight soldiers and abducted two others, Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser, transporting them deep into Lebanese territory.⁴

Following these abductions Israel conducted indirect negotiations with two organizations that have carried out terrorist activity against Israel for many years and categorically deny the right of its existence as a sovereign state. Since Israel does not maintain any direct contact with them, it was necessary to find a reliable mediator acceptable to both sides who could facilitate exchange deals as soon as possible and at a tolerable cost that would not include Israel's formal recognition of the organizations.

Israel's Dilemmas in Negotiating with Hizbollah

The most recent negotiations between Israel and Hizbollah, conducted on behalf of Israel by Ofer Dekel (the former deputy director of the General

Security Services), took place through the German mediator Gerhard Conrad and lasted close to two years, from August 2006 to July 2008. Among the demands presented by Hizbollah were the release of Lebanese citizens imprisoned in Israel, including one civilian and three Hizbollah fighters who were taken hostage in the Second Lebanon War, and the release of Samir Kuntar, a Lebanese Druze serving five life sentences for his participation in a terrorist attack on Israel as a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). During the attack, which took place when Kuntar was fifteen, four Israelis were murdered. In addition, Hizbollah demanded the release of hundreds of non-Lebanese Palestinian and Arab prisoners.

Israel expressed willingness to release the Lebanese, but argued that Kuntar had engaged in the attack as a member of a Palestinian cell. Israel also refused to release Palestinian and other Arab prisoners to Hizbollah in an effort to deny Hizbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah any kind of legitimate standing in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or in any other matter connected with the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel ultimately released all the Lebanese subjects, including Kuntar. In addition, Israel delivered 199 bodies of terrorists (including eight Hizbollah dead),⁵ and a few months after the deal, it released some 200 Palestinian prisoners who were about to conclude their prison terms.⁶ Israel chose the specific prisoners and did not allow Hizbollah, despite its demand, to participate in drafting the list.

During the entire negotiations process, Hizbollah bargained over information about the fate of the hostages, all the while carefully concealing whether they were still alive or had been killed during the abduction. This tactic marked Hizbollah's conduct in every part of the negotiations with Israel. Only on July 16, 2008 as the soldiers were returned did Hizbollah reveal publicly – in a dramatic and humiliating fashion – that the two abducted soldiers were in fact dead.⁷

The major dilemmas Israel was forced to confront during the negotiations with Hizbollah focused on freeing a convicted murderer who had been sentenced to multiple life sentences and on releasing living prisoners in exchange for what would likely be dead bodies. The first dilemma, regarding Samir Kuntar, whom Israel had refused to release in the past, was mostly symbolic and emotional, because for many Israelis,

he symbolized the monstrosities inherent in Palestinian terrorism. In Israel, Kuntar will be remembered as the one who killed a father and his four-year old daughter on a beach where he and his fellow terrorists had fled after attacking and murdering Israelis in a Nahariya apartment building in the middle of the night. Although Kuntar served 27 years in Israeli prisons, Hizbollah's demand for his release aroused strong feelings and a public debate in Israel, with most people feeling he should spend the rest of his life behind bars. An additional difficulty stemmed from the fear that the release of security prisoners in exchange for the bodies of dead Israeli soldiers was liable to endanger the lives of future Israeli hostages, because abductors would know that they could extract a high price from Israel even in exchange for dead bodies. Therefore, according to this view, terrorists would not bother keeping hostages alive and there would be no deterrence to prevent their being killed.

On the other hand, it was clear to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert that if negotiations with Hizbollah were not concluded, the families of the hostages would remain with doubts about the fate of their loved ones, despite the assessment that it was highly unlikely that they were still alive. Likewise, the prime minister was interested in avoiding a situation in which a woman would remain an *aguna* (literally, "a chained woman"; according to Jewish law, in the absence of concrete proof or eyewitness testimony, a woman remains married and is unable to remarry even if her husband is missing and presumed dead). Such is the plight of Tami Arad, wife of the missing navigator Ron Arad, whose fate has been a mystery for 24 years. In addition, public and media pressure to conclude the deal at the required (reasonable) cost finally tipped the scales in favor of the deal, despite public distress – especially among the families of Kuntar's victims.

In concluding the negotiations, Israel was forced to pay a price that was steep in terms of symbolism and principles, but the total cost of the deal was much lower than what Nasrallah had wanted. Contrary to his hopes of extorting from Israel the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, including senior personnel who had killed many Israelis, and the release of various Arab prisoners from the region, Nasrallah was forced to make do with a much smaller achievement. He was, however, successful in

delivering his promise to secure the release of all Lebanese prisoners held in Israel.

From the perspective of the two years since the deal went through, it seems that its major damage was short lived and essentially symbolic. It does not seem that it had any effect on increasing Hamas demands of Israel.⁸ In the short term, the deal did not generate any increase in attempted abductions by Hizbollah or Palestinian organizations. Samir Kuntar too, who spoke passionately about his intention to continue the fight against Israel, was not assessed as being a particular threat or a significant boost to the power of the organization and its capabilities in a way liable to harm Israel's security. Thus the primary toll was emotional, which is unavoidable in this type of deal.

Israel's Dilemmas in Negotiating with Hamas

The abduction of Gilad Shalit forced Israel to begin negotiations with Hamas. Since the abduction, all Israeli attempts to identify his location and create a military option to secure his release by force have failed. Therefore, what remains is for Israel to negotiate for his release in exchange for the release of Palestinian prisoners. As such, Israel's objective in negotiations is to keep the number of prisoners to the absolute minimum and in particular to prevent the release of prisoners identified by Israel as dangerous and/or of symbolic significance.

The first stage of the negotiations between Israel and Hamas lasted from August 2006 until March 2009, and was conducted by Ofer Dekel at the same time as he was engaged in negotiations with Hizbollah. During this stage in the negotiations, conducted with Egyptian mediation, Hamas presented its starting demands: the release of 1,400 prisoners from a range of Palestinian organizations, headed by 450 prisoners serving life sentences for murdering Israelis; Israeli Arabs; residents of East Jerusalem; women; minors; and Hamas parliament members imprisoned in Israel. From the start of the negotiations Hamas insisted on being the party to determine the prisoners to be released; Israel would have no say in specifying those to be freed.

Negotiations were suspended a number of times, either when the sides reached points of disagreement that couldn't be overcome or as a result

of security events not linked to the negotiations themselves. The longest suspension was caused by the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, which was seen as a threat to Israel and damaged Hamas's relations both with the Palestinian Authority and with Egypt, which was serving as mediator. After Operation Cast Lead (December 2008-January 2009) and with Hamas in its new predicament, the first stage of negotiations was resumed under Egyptian auspices with the intention of concluding them. In mid-March 2009, Israeli and Hamas delegations met in Cairo and with active Egyptian arbitration conducted intensive indirect negotiations, with the Egyptian mediators shuttling between the adjacent delegation rooms in order to bring the negotiations to an end with a signed agreement. In addition to Dekel, the Israeli delegation in Cairo included the head of Israel's General Security Services, Yuval Diskin. Prime Minister Olmert authorized them to close the deal while taking advantage of the maximum flexibility Israel was willing to consider. On Hamas's side were Mahmoud a-Zahar, a member of Hamas's political bureau; a representative of General Secretary Khaled Mashal; Ahmed Jabari, the head of the organization's military wing, which is holding Shalit; and Jabari's deputy.

The negotiations in Cairo focused primarily on the names of the 450 prisoners Hamas was hoping to secure from Israel. Israel agreed to the release of 325 of the people on the list; of these, it demanded that 140 be deported abroad. Israel categorically refused to release 125 "heavyweight" prisoners, sentenced to life in prison for their responsibility for the deaths of hundreds of Israelis in terrorist activities starting in the early 1990s, in particular during the second intifada. In addition, among them were Arab citizens of Israel; Israel on principle refused to discuss their fate with Hamas. That was also the case of East Jerusalem residents (although as a last minute gesture Diskin agreed to the release of six East Jerusalem residents and their deportation once all the other issues were resolved and a deal was signed). For Hamas these 125 were at the top of the list, and it also wanted to establish a precedent by including Israeli Arabs and East Jerusalem residents as part of the deal. Despite the public pressure on Israel to conclude the affair and secure Shalit's release, Prime Minister Olmert viewed the release of these 125 prisoners as an unacceptable

condition. Hamas refused to respond to the Israeli offer, and negotiations were suspended until July 2009.

Negotiations were renewed and entered their second stage after Binyamin Netanyahu assumed office as prime minister. Haggai Hadas, formerly a senior Mossad official, was appointed to conduct the negotiations on behalf of Netanyahu. The Egyptian mediation was exchanged for German mediation under the direction of Gerhard Conrad, who had proven his professionalism after having brought the last deal with Hizbollah to a successful conclusion.

From the details that have been published in the media, it seems that at this stage the two sides have agreed to the framework of the agreement. The deal-in-the-making would involve a total release of 1,000 Palestinian prisoners, 450 of whom would be agreed on by Israel and Hamas and released in a first step in exchange for the release of Shalit. At the second stage, Israel would release another 550 prisoners who would be picked by Israel exclusively. The latter would be released as a gesture to Abu Mazen and Egypt. This list would also include women and children.⁹

In October 2009 and as a trust-building measure, Hamas released a videotape that offered the first visual sign of life of the abducted soldier. In exchange, Israel released 21 female prisoners to Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. And as is wont in Israel, especially in recent years, the second stage of the negotiations was also accompanied by close Israeli media coverage, which generally took a stance favoring a rapid end to the affair.

Around November 2009, the prevailing impression was that negotiations were heading towards a successful conclusion, but in December there were reports that the sides had again hit an impasse because of fundamental gaps regarding the release of the same 125 "heavyweight" prisoners and the expulsion abroad or to the Gaza Strip of about one hundred of the other prisoners to be released. Yet despite the deadlock in the talks, public statements by officials on both sides seem to indicate that no one has given up on the negotiations.¹⁰ The reason for this feeling may be that the gaps between the sides are not seen as unbridgeable or because neither side is interested in being accused of having torpedoed the deal; the sides seem to be waiting to renew the talks under better circumstances.¹¹

In contrast to the relatively low cost Israel had to pay Hizbollah for the return of the IDF deceased soldiers, the cost of the deal with Hamas is much higher and more complex, both because of the large number of prisoners and because of the severity of the crimes attributed to these prisoners. The dilemmas facing the decision makers in Israel, first and foremost Prime Minister Netanyahu, in responding to the Hamas demands lie both in the field of security and in principles, and also touch on Israel's international image as a state that does not give in to terrorism.

From the point of view of security, there is a risk that many of the prisoners demanded by Hamas, with proven leadership and operational skills, are liable immediately upon their release to lead aggressive terrorist cells once again. Similarly, the demand to release many of them to their homes in the West Bank is liable to strengthen both Hamas's political status and its operational military infrastructure in the bitter contest with Fatah, in particular over control of the West Bank.

In addition, the release of dozens of senior prisoners responsible for the murder of Israelis who served only a few years in Israeli prisons (especially those jailed during the second intifada and sentenced to life in prison) might well encourage future murderers. Such a mass release would of course also represent a severe blow to the Israeli public in general and the many bereaved families in particular. Furthermore, Prime Minister Netanyahu has long portrayed himself and Israel under his leadership as engaged in an uncompromising war on terrorism; he is considered one of the major proponents of this policy. This consideration is especially prominent in light of the global campaign against fundamentalist Islamic terrorism. Netanyahu's signature on an agreement that will be seen as surrendering to Hamas is liable to be interpreted as serving the forces supporting global terrorism.

On the other hand, the life of a combat soldier captured by the enemy hangs in the balance. This is part of the Israeli ethos and the country's tradition, whereby the nation does not abandon a hostage in the hands of his abductors and leaves no stone unturned to release him as rapidly as possible. Preserving this core value has moral and ethical importance of the highest degree for the Israeli public in general and in particular for the

families of soldiers, called on to bear the security burden and serve in the IDF regular and reserve forces.

Looking at the other side of the table, there are disagreements at the top Hamas levels whether to accept the deal offered by Israel under the conditions approved by Israel's security cabinet in December 2009 or to reject it and thereby block the release of 1000 prisoners and wait for a possible change in Israel's policy on the matter. While Hamas is attentive to the desires of the Palestinian public in general and in particular to those of its supporters in the Gaza Strip pining to be reunited with at least some of their imprisoned sons and daughters, the Palestinian public supporting the deal does not have the power to influence the organization – especially those opposed to accepting the terms laid down by Israel – to change its position. At this stage the voice of the opponents appears stronger than the voice of those in the leadership who are willing to content themselves with an historic achievement of the release of so large a number of prisoners. The latter apparently presume that in the future they will be able to bring additional pressure to bear on Israel by abducting other soldiers and civilians.

If and when the exchange deal is ultimately carried out, Israel's overall security is not likely to be affected dramatically, despite the high emotional and symbolic price tag involved in releasing Palestinian prisoners under these circumstances. In exchange, the traditional Israeli value of not abandoning its fighters in enemy hands and the ethos of mutual responsibility will be strengthened; their importance to Israel's security is no less than the price that will likely have to be paid.

Indeed, such deals are a part of the range of calculated risks Israel is forced to assume in its ongoing battle against terrorism. This deal, like its predecessors, is not expected to tip the balance of power between the sides. Nonetheless, in light of the serious dilemmas aroused during the negotiations, and the security, political, moral, and public components involved, the need to define principles for making decisions has become more urgent. An official national commission headed by Justice Shamgar has been charged with formulating a principled position on the issue.

Conclusion

The two sets of negotiations Israel has conducted in the last four years with Hizbollah and Hamas have different implications regarding whether Israel will face more abductions in the future. With regard to Hizbollah, scores have been settled: all remaining Lebanese prisoners were released in the deal signed in the summer of 2008. By contrast, even if a deal between Israel and Hamas is concluded, some 6000 Palestinian prisoners will still be left in Israeli prisons. Hizbollah, which continues to abet Palestinian organizations in acts of terrorism against Israel, is liable to be tempted to stage abductions in order to make a demonstration of this support. The temptation to return to the abduction scenario might also grow stronger if there is another outbreak of military hostilities between Hizbollah and Israel, but the cost of abductions, especially in light of the circumstances surrounding the outbreak of the Second Lebanon War, is clear to the leaders and may deter them.

There is no doubt that should a deal for Shalit be concluded, the photographs of released Palestinian prisoners will earn Hamas many propaganda points. This may increase the already strong drive among Palestinian organizations to abduct more Israelis – soldiers and civilians – in order to recreate the achievement and secure the release of prisoners still incarcerated in Israel. At the same time, Hamas and other Palestinian organizations such as Islamic Jihad and rogue cells from Fatah or various global jihadists trying to abduct Israelis are not expected to suddenly abandon their efforts. The issue of releasing prisoners is always on their agenda, as are attempts to wear down the Israeli public and humiliate Israel's government.

The pomp, circumstance, and media celebration attending prisoner exchange deals can be expected to boost the ongoing desire of Palestinian organizations to abduct Israelis and feed the competitive spirit among them. Rival organizations are committed to the goal of proving to Hamas that their militancy is preferable to Hamas's approach, especially if the latter, at least at this stage, restrains its military activity directed at Israel from the Gaza Strip and attempts to secure the release of Palestinian prisoners through negotiations.

Will the price Hizbollah extorted from Israel for the return of the bodies of Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev encourage future abductions, even killings, as the organizations know Israel will pay even for dead bodies? Alternately, will a high price of Palestinian prisoners, including those involved in the murder of Israelis, released in return for a live captive Israeli soldier, arouse a new and rising wave of attempted abductions? These questions cannot be answered unequivocally. Nevertheless, it is clear that the problem of thousands of Palestinian prisoners imprisoned in Israel will continue to be a sizzling coal amid all the other components of the conflict awaiting resolution. It may be that this issue must be solved as part of the comprehensive negotiations between Israel and its Palestinian counterparts, perhaps under the rubric of humanitarian concerns, but this must be on condition that it occurs on the political level rather than the military channel. Whatever conclusions and recommendations are ultimately suggested by the Shamgar Commission, which is currently debating the principles of Israeli policy in future bargaining situations, it is clear that the real test will lie in the ability of Israeli governments to implement them in practice and withstand the anticipated pressure of families, the media, and the public in general to secure the release of hostages even at the cost of releasing many security prisoners, as has happened many times in the past.

Notes

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Arabs in Israel: Between Integration and Alienation

Ephraim Lavie

The disturbances of October 2000 and the conclusions of the Or Commission, the official commission of inquiry established in the wake of those events, prompted a new understanding among decision makers in Israel on the strategic importance of the status of the Arab minority in Israel.¹ Israel has publicly acknowledged its policy of discrimination against Arabs, in effect since the establishment of the state, and admitted that full equality according to the law for this sector, as individuals and as a group, is in Israel's national interest and ensures social stability and economic prosperity.

For at least some of Israel's governments, the Or Commission report (September 2003) has served as a roadmap of sorts on how to promote civil equality for Arabs in Israel and how to cope with both the gaps in social standing and the community's sense of discrimination. In recent years several government decisions were taken and various initiatives were launched to serve this purpose:² the Authority for the Economic Development of the Arab, Druze, and Circassian Sectors was established, designed to encourage investment and sub-contracted employment in various fields such as hi-tech and communications among minority populations; a joint government-private sector investment fund was launched for investing in minority businesses; a multi-year government aid program to assist Arab towns and villages has been approved;³ some government ministries have implemented affirmative action programs,⁴ and fields such as welfare, education, the interior, finance, and infrastructures have all noted progress

on this level. Minister of Minority Affairs Avishay Braverman, backed by the prime minister, is laboring for equal opportunity and development of capabilities in the Arab society in the areas of economics and education, based on the understanding that herein lies major potential for growth in Israel.⁵

It seems, therefore, that in recent years the Arab community in Israel has earned the attention of the Israeli government. Nonetheless, to date only limited progress has been made in civil equality for the Arab minority, in part because of the budgetary, bureaucratic, and political hurdles that make it difficult to implement official policy and the Or Commission recommendations, and thereby effect a real change in the situation.⁶ There are also significant legal issues at stake that have yet to be clarified in terms of the status of Arabs in Israel. In addition, there are socio-political elements within the Arab community delaying its development, such as the traditional local politics and the status of women in Arab society.⁷ Thus, the general picture is one in which the Arabs in Israel are still in many ways a social group that is marginalized, discriminated-against, and lacking civil equality. The group suffers from institutionalized discrimination manifested in legislation;⁸ unequal distribution of resources and budgets;⁹ a lower level of employment in public service positions;¹⁰ and unequal settlement policies,¹¹ as well as non-institutionalized social discrimination. The latter stems from the conflict between the two societies and is manifested in everyday discrimination, such as rejections in job searches,¹² opposition to Arabs living in Jewish cities, prohibitions on Arabs entering places of recreation, and use of racist language toward Arab citizens. The rights of the Arabs in Israel as a national-ethnic minority are limited, and they are not officially recognized as a national minority worthy of collective rights. The gap between them and the Jewish population is widening, even if their socioeconomic situation has improved.¹³

Additional elements affecting Jewish-Arab relations are connected to developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the question of the collective Arab identity in Israel. The PLO's ignoring of the issue of the Arabs in Israel in the peace process, its organizational and ideological decline resulting from the failed political conception, the PLO's conduct in matters pertaining to self-rule, and the years of the second intifada –

along with the events of October 2000 – have shaken Arab society in Israel and aroused questions about the fate of the Palestinian people. The “Vision” documents (2006-2007), drafted by Arab intellectuals and published under the aegis of official institutions, were to serve as the basis for both clarification within the Arab community about its future and a possible dialogue on the issue with official state institutions and its Jewish population.

This essay evaluates the socialization processes underway and the possibilities for integration of Arabs in Israeli society as a minority with equal rights, and assesses the extent to which these processes influence Arab collective identity and the attitude to the state. These are weighed against politically inspired solutions to the Arab situation – both the national Palestinian and the religious Islamic. The assessment suggests that following many years of cultural and social interaction, Arabs in Israel have adapted to the majority group in which they live. Recognition on Israel’s part of the centrality and importance of these processes of socialization and the formulation of long term policies towards its Arab citizens may thus strengthen their sense of belonging to the state without impinging on their cultural and community identities. Such policies would serve Israel’s national interests, whether or not a political settlement with the PLO is achieved.

Socialization Processes and Palestinization as Elements of Influence

History shows that relations between the Arab community and the state with its Jewish majority are dynamic and affected by policies that generate either progress or regression in the welfare and economic status of the Arab community, and by the rate of the community’s integration into society as a whole and its acquisition of civil rights. Over the years the standard of living of Arabs in Israel has risen, albeit slowly; furthermore, there have been improvements in education, higher education, and employment.¹⁴ Although most Arabs in Israel (65 percent) are still employed in fields such as construction, agriculture, and unskilled labor,¹⁵ Arab citizens have entered fields in finance, education, health services, culture, theater, film, television, and sports. At times they have represented Israel on the

international arena in these and other fields. Even though they are still underrepresented in the public sector, an increasing number of Arabs are employed in government ministries, and the business sector is gradually internalizing the importance of investing in Arab society.¹⁶

The proximity and close contact between Jews and Arabs inherent in the Israeli reality plays a critical role in the social relations that go beyond the state's institutional apparatus. In joint places of employment and in the public sphere, there are many kinds of cooperation between Jew and Arab. The integration of Arabs in work settings alongside Jews often creates a situation where professional values become the norm and dictate the relations between them. Trust between Jews and Arabs is built when they work together, cooperate in their professional duties, and help one another, without regard to differences of religion and nationality. This phenomenon is especially prominent in Israeli hospitals, where the day-to-day routine represents a model that fosters cohesion and collaboration, notwithstanding the national and religious divisions and tensions.

An index of Arab-Jewish relations in Israel, directed by Professor Sami Samuha of the University of Haifa, points to a trend of growing extremism among the Arab community over the past few years (since 2003). The State of Israel is regarded with a decreasing sense of legitimacy among many Arab citizens, a trend that is liable to lead to a volatile situation in terms of the attitude of the Arab community towards the state and the Jewish majority. This phenomenon has been enhanced by factors such as the deadlocked political process with the Palestinians, the Second Lebanon War and Operation Cast Lead in Gaza, the lack of significant progress in the implementation of the Or Commission recommendations, the closing of the investigation of the police officers who shot Arab demonstrators in October 2000, and the publication of the "Vision" documents. However, a comparison of Arab positions of recent years with those since 1976 suggests primarily overall stability and the absence of long term deterioration. In Prof. Samuha's opinion, this refutes the common perception among the public, policymakers, and academics that Arabs are undergoing a process of radicalization and are on a collision course with the Jews and the state.

The surveys also demonstrate that the positions held by the Arab community regarding central ideological questions are more moderate

than those of its leaders. While the leadership denies the view that Israel is democratic with regard to its Arab citizens, opposes the definition of Israel as a Jewish state, and rejects specific solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that are acceptable to the Jewish public, the Arab community holds more moderate positions: 57.3 percent of Arabs in Israel feel that Israel is democratic, including with regard to its Arab citizens; 41.4 percent accept the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish democratic state;¹⁷ and 58.8 percent agree that the right of return for Palestinian refugees will be exercised only in a Palestinian state. According to Prof. Samuha, the lack of deterioration suggests that Arabs are undergoing a process of adjustment to the state and the Jewish majority, that they are committed to resolving issues democratically, and that they are striving for parity with the Jews.¹⁸

This assessment is further backed by a survey taken in February 2010 among Israeli Arab teens.¹⁹ According to the findings, about half of Arab teenagers view themselves as Israeli while the other half view themselves as Palestinian; 72 percent feel that they are a part of the state; 45 percent want to integrate into Israeli society; 75 percent accept the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish democratic country; 64 percent feel that Israel is a democracy; 55 percent trust the court system; 74 percent feel that the educational system allows them to express their culture; and 86 percent would be willing to have a Jewish friend or acquaintance of the same age and sex. A survey of Jewish teenagers revealed a disparity between views on the Arab collective and its individual members: 49.5 percent of Jewish teens feel that Arab citizens should not have identical rights to those enjoyed by Jews in the State of Israel,²⁰ and 56 percent feel that Arabs should not be elected to the Knesset.²¹ By contrast, 66 percent of Jewish teens indicated they would be willing to have an Arab friend or acquaintance, and 78 percent responded that the slogan “death to the Arabs” is racist and illegitimate. Other surveys of the last decade (conducted in 2003, 2006, and 2009) by the S. Neaman Institute indicate a rising level of trust among the Arabs in Israel towards state institutions, including the Knesset, the Supreme Court, and the universities.²²

The Israelization processes within Israel’s Arab minority have known ups and downs in terms of the level of identification with the state. They have been affected by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,²³ and in the

second half of the 1970s and during the 1980s an unmistakable process of Palestinization was underway, expressed primarily by solidarity with the members of their people living under occupation and sympathy for the developing Palestinian national movement led by the PLO. In 1987-92 this process grew more intense as the result of the first intifada. At the same time, however, socialization processes of the Arab population in Israel increased the level of its identification with the state, even if there were low points in this pattern. During the 1980s there was an accelerated rise in the Arabs' standard of living, and in the 1990s their legal rights improved in the wake of the constitutional revolution in the state and the development of Israel's civil society.²⁴ They were also affected by the policies of the Rabin government, which changed national priorities and allocated significant resources to improving the Arabs' socioeconomic status. In 1994-95, the Arabs formed a bloc in Rabin's minority government, allowing him a 61-seat majority in the Knesset. At the time, the Arab sector felt that it had political value and weight and was a part of the government's decision making process, and that it had the ability to affect policies that did not impact directly only on them.²⁵

In effect, there was no contradiction between the Israelization and Palestinization processes, and most of the Arab community has adopted both identities. The fact remains that Arabs in Israel have refrained from active participation in the Palestinian national struggle. While they expressed sympathy and participated in informational and propaganda activities, they did not take an active part in the violence of the first and second (al-Aqsa) intifadas. This is significant in assessing their connection and sense of belonging to the State of Israel. However, a dual sense of marginality – both to Israeli society and to the Palestinian national movement – has arisen among them. On the one hand, they sense that their Israeli citizenship is tainted, and that they lack full civil equality. They have a sense of exclusion and discrimination for many reasons, including the state symbols (the flag and the national anthem), the historical events that resulted in the establishment of the state, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the fact that they are seen by some segments of the public as a threat from within. On the other hand the PLO has not considered them a major

player in the political process with Israel, although they are an integral part of the Palestinian people.

A National Minority Pondering its Future

The political process that began in the early 1990s between Israel and the PLO made it clear to the Arabs in Israel that an end to the conflict on the basis of a two-state solution would leave them out of the picture, at least regarding definition of their identity and the resolution of critical problems such as internal refugees and restitution for confiscation of land. They came to understand that the negotiations between the sides were intended to handle the issues of 1967 and not of 1948, which had nothing to do with them except for Israel's demand of the PLO to recognize the Jewish character of the state. Indeed, this is the only element today that links the attempt to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with the attempt to redefine the relationship between Israel's majority and minority. For the PLO this question is of secondary significance, but it makes it more difficult for the Arabs in Israel to identify with the state and be integrated as equal citizens. Defining Israel as a Jewish state is seen by them as designed to exclude them from the Jewish majority and impose discriminatory legislation on them, making their sense of belonging to the state even more difficult.²⁶

The political process has also made it clear to Israel's Arabs that the PLO does not represent them, and that when a political settlement is reached they are liable to find themselves excluded both by the State of Israel and the Palestinian state.²⁷ Public leaders and senior intellectuals face a double dilemma, which has worsened since the 2006 Hamas victory in the PA general elections: one, how is it possible to define the status and collective identity of the Arabs as a national minority in Israel and resolve critical problems; two, how is it possible to stem both the rise of the fundamentalist Islamic movement (the northern faction) in its attempt to take advantage of the PLO's decline and Hamas's drive to rise to the helm of the Palestinian national movement.

As a result, and in light of ineffective political activism by the Arabs as a sector with rights and aspirations in Israel,²⁸ the last decade has seen the beginning of a process that is essentially a heightened search for a solution to the status of Israel's Arabs. In 1999-2001, the Israel Democracy

Institute hosted discussions between Jews and Arabs in order to draft an accord that would contribute to coexistence in Israel, but the inability to reach a consensus brought the discussions to the public sphere.²⁹ Between December 2006 and May 2007, four position papers were published. These papers, called the “Vision” documents, were written by an influential group from within the Israeli Arab public and concerned the future status of this sector.³⁰

While the four documents support the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by means of the two-state solution, they deal primarily with the demand for a constitutional transformation of Israel’s current form of government. They propose the structure of a bi-national, bi-lingual, and bi-cultural state that on the one hand revokes all laws giving preferential treatment to Jews, such as the Law of Return, Law of the Jewish National Fund, and the Law of the Jewish Agency, and on the other hand, recognizes the status of the Arabs as a group with its own national, religious, and cultural character. As such, Arabs in Israel would have the rights of natives to resources and land, have authority for autonomous management of educational and cultural systems, and be partners in government decisions concerning distribution of the state’s resources. This proposed change reflects the Arab desire that the sector be regarded as an indigenous minority whose rights to land and the homeland antedate the establishment of the state, and not regarded merely as a minority living among a Jewish majority.

The documents stress the Palestinian national identity of Arabs in Israel, but it is clear that the authors consider the State of Israel as the preferred political and state framework. They do not link the future of the Arabs in Israel to progress in the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians or to relations with a future Palestinian state. The documents are a form of collective demand put by the intellectual elite to the state and the Jewish public that they must consider the views of the Arab community in determining its future status. The papers propose a sort of “permanent settlement” for Arab citizens of the state, unconnected to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The publication of the documents is evidence that the political process has encouraged the Arab intellectual elite to become a player capable of

challenging the Israeli and Palestinian political agendas. The members of this elite used political and democratic means, including civil organizations, to become agents of change and advance two principal goals: one, to effect a change in the government structure and the definition of Israel as a Jewish democratic state, in order to revoke the dual sense of marginality among Palestinian Arabs;³¹ two, to convey to the PLO that it ought not to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, and resolution of the refugee issue does not lie with the PLO only, as it also affects internal refugees.³² However after the first debate stirred by the documents, interest in them waned, and today there is little consideration of them among the Jewish or Arab publics.

Islamization of the Israeli Arab Community

The Islamic movement in Israel, established in 1972 as part of the return to Islam that has swept through the Middle East, has deepened the Islamic religious identity of the Arab community in Israel, which – as a Muslim minority in a Jewish state – has struggled with the question of identity since 1948. Over the years the movement has succeeded in reviving the Islamic religious heritage of pre-1948 Palestine and in nurturing the symbols of Islamic identity connected to the Palestinians' collective memory. Today, the radical northern faction (which split from the movement in 1996) promotes Islamic separatist tendencies and is developing ideas for the establishment of an independent Muslim community (*al-mujtama'a al-'aitzami*) that would sustain and manage itself independently of the state and the Jewish majority.³³

The uncertainty over the collective status of the Arabs in Israel, especially in light of the state's emphasis on its Jewish identity, contributes to the allure of the Islamic movement. In the eyes of most of the Arab public, the fact that Israel has not taken concrete steps towards civil equality for Arabs since the founding of the state and procrastinates in implementing recommendations by official commissions indicates that the issue is less urgent than Israel's self-definition as a Jewish state. Religion thus becomes an alternative framework for identity and compensates in part for this uncertainty. In order to earn even more legitimacy from the public, the Islamic movement added the national component to its religious orientation.³⁴ Today, unlike the tenuous connection between the national

stream of Arabs in Israel and its parallel in the PA, the connection between the Islamic movement in Israel and the Hamas-led Islamic stream in the territories is growing stronger. Thus, Islamic ideology competes with the platforms of the Arab political parties and with the ideas formulated by the non-religious intellectual elite expressed in the “Vision” documents.

The Arab political parties and the “Vision” documents reflect a desire to work within the Israeli political framework, coupled with the demand to change it. Opposition to this orientation, along with the continued decline of the PLO, has propelled the northern faction to position itself as an Islamic alternative to the Palestinian national movement.³⁵ The faction’s leadership looks askance at the tenor of the “Vision” documents – acceptance of the State of Israel and regulation of the status of the Arabs as a national minority on the fringes of Jewish society in a non-Muslim, heretical state on land that is part of consecrated Muslim territory.³⁶ It also sees the documents as secular in nature and in their calls for internal reform in Arab society. The question of defending Jerusalem and the annual mass events under the banner “al-Aqsa in danger” serve the faction in raising support among both Arabs in Israel and the territories to foment the struggle against Israel and the occupation.

Conclusion

In spite of the socialization of Arabs in Israel and the general recognition of their right to equality under the law, in many ways they are still an excluded social group lacking full civil equality. Their rights as a national ethnic minority are limited and the gap between them and Jewish society is growing, despite improvements in their socioeconomic status. Notwithstanding the awareness that changing the current reality is in the state’s best interests, budgetary, bureaucratic, and political hurdles continue to make it difficult to implement declared policies and prevent practical progress towards full integration of Arabs into the state. In the eyes of most of the Arab public, the fact that over time numerous concrete steps have not been taken to overcome these hurdles indicates that the problem is inherently one of values and is linked instead to the state’s ethnocentrism, given its Jewish majority and its definition as a Jewish state.

One of the results of the socialization processes and their civilian integration is that today there is no unanimity among Arabs in Israel on how they define their status in the state or how they would choose to determine their future status. The political process between Israel and the PLO encouraged the intellectual elite to clarify Israeli Arab identity and examine the civil status of the Arab community in Israel; the Islamic movement and Arab activists in Jewish political parties reject – for opposing reasons – the “Vision” documents; others seek to establish a new social movement that calls for boycotting the Knesset elections. By contrast, the majority of Arabs in Israel prefer not to give up Israeli citizenship in return for any alternative because this citizenship, it seems, offers more hope and better options than the alternatives.

The discussion in the Arab public about defining its status in Israel in the spirit of the “Vision” documents is not over. Lacking leadership of significant stature to lead the internal discussion in Arab society, the documents did not fulfill their mission, and in a certain sense achieved the opposite of what they had set out to do. On the one hand, the Jewish majority saw the documents as expressing radical positions and an intention to erase the Jewish character of Israel; on the other hand, the documents neither blocked the path of the Islamic movement nor led to the desired change. In the years since the documents were published, the northern faction of the Islamic movement has preserved its political standing among the Arab public.

Arabs in Israel appear today to be advancing in opposite directions, questioning their future and status in Israel without knowing where they are going, irrespective of the potential establishment of a Palestinian state. The decline of the PLO and the Palestinian national leadership in the territories, and the inability of Arab leaders to advance a vision jointly with the state and the Jewish public demonstrate the absence of a clear collective identity and generate an attraction to an alternative identity. In this context religion and the Islamic movement are an increasingly natural, legitimate alternative and even present as a successor to the Palestinian national movement.

Uncertainty about their future and their status in the state is also shared by Christians, Druze, and Bedouins. These sectors are gradually distancing

themselves from identification with the state and are pursuing alternate identity frameworks. The Christians have started to turn to nationalist parties such as Balad and Hadash. The Druze community is to a certain extent undergoing a process of Arabization in the nationalistic sense, and among the younger members of the community there is a growing phenomenon of not serving in the IDF. The Bedouin society is undergoing a process of Islamization.

These developments are seen by the Jewish public in Israel as a distinct radicalization of Arab society, marked by ever-deepening nationalism and religiosity. Certain Jewish political circles have proposed seeing the Arabs in Israel as “conditional citizens,” unworthy of equal rights and worthy rather of the ongoing discrimination against them.³⁷ Among their ideas: the proposal to swap populated areas;³⁸ the legislative initiatives to condition the right to vote on an oath of allegiance to the state as a Jewish state (the “loyalty law”)³⁹; and limits on the observance of the Naqba (the “Naqba law”).⁴⁰ These proposals and initiatives, advanced by Yisrael Beiteinu and other elements, deepen the sense of anger and alienation towards the government and the state. They promote a smaller sense of belonging, encourage the Arab community to embrace Palestinian nationalistic ideas, and enhance its desire for autonomy. The results of these processes are mutual feelings of fear⁴¹ and alienation, and estimations that the situation between the Jews and the Arabs in the State of Israel is a zero-sum game.⁴²

In light of these trends, Israel’s national interests obligate it to formulate practical policies that are not affected by budgetary, bureaucratic, and political hurdles, that would deepen the civilian integration of the Arabs in Israel, and that would encourage institutionalization of majority-minority relations on the basis of understandings achieved through a dialogue between the state and representatives of the Arab public. Such joint understandings are likely to lead to the establishment of a constitutional status for Arab citizens of Israel as an ethnic minority entitled to integrate into the leadership and enjoy full equality and appropriate representation in civil service and in institutions connected with public government activity. This would reduce the measure of inequality in Israeli society and likely contribute towards the Arabs’ self-determination as equal citizens, deepen

processes of Israeli civil identification, reduce the appeal of the Islamic movement, and moderate the separatist trend.

This requires multi-year, comprehensive policy planning, to be formulated with a review of the Or Commission recommendations, an assessment of interim actions undertaken to date, allocation of the appropriate budgets, and identification and neutralization of bureaucratic and other hurdles in implementation. Among the major components of this policy would be narrowing educational gaps and supporting young people seeking higher education; reforms in land allocations, including in residential and industrial zones; Arab representation on planning commissions at the national, regional, and local levels; enlarging the municipal areas of jurisdiction of Arab settlements; completing land designation plans and other planning processes connected to residential construction; regulating the problem of Bedouin land and the unrecognized settlements; affirmative action in the public sector, government companies, and government institutions,⁴³ as well as public institutions enjoying government funding; raising the percentage of Arab women's participation in the work force; raising the salaries of Arab men and changing their occupational distribution; and promoting economic projects such as industrial zones.

Although any program to achieve equality and integration of Arabs in Israeli society entails a high financial cost, the Or Commission concluded correctly: "The budgetary consideration recedes when a demand for fulfilling basic rights is made." Long term socioeconomic considerations also require this process. Because no mass immigration from either Russia or the United States is expected, Israel's growth potential lies in the Arab and ultra-Orthodox communities. Therefore, extensive investment in the Arab population is required such that it would enjoy equal allocations of resources for education, occupation, and infrastructures (the same is true for the ultra-Orthodox, in order to spur it to enter the work force). Israel's membership in the OECD obligates it to make these investments in order to tackle the problems of inequality and poverty.

Similarly, the state must recognize the right of the Arab community to both reflect and present Israeli reality, as well as to influence public opinion. It must encourage the inclusion of Arab journalists in the media and coverage of Arab society in the Hebrew press. This change, along with

making Arabic a preferred language, may contribute to a change in the status and image of the Arab minority in the eyes of the Jewish majority. In addition, the state should take advantage of the fact that most Arabs youths (70 percent) are interested in volunteering for community service in their communities, to include Arabs in the national service administration and expand the number of positions in order to allow them to join the service.⁴⁴ Arab leaders must withdraw their opposition to service and even encourage it as a means for Arabs to integrate into the state and expand their rights.

Such a policy towards Arabs in Israel, to be formulated in conjunction with Arab society, will ensure that the definition of a “Jewish state” does not exclude the Arabs and does not constitute discrimination on the basis of nationality or religion. It would also constitute an explicit statement to Jews in the state that the era of discrimination is over and that Israel’s Arab citizens must be recognized as a legitimate party with equal rights, not only in theory but also in practice. It is important to convey to Jewish society that the exclusion of Arabs is detrimental from a national strategic point of view and that it is important, even crucial, to integrate Arabs into the state. In the long run, such a policy would bear fruit: Arabs would feel a greater sense of belonging to the state, mutual adaptation between the Arab minority and the Jewish majority would grow deeper, and a more stable and fair Israeli society would be created as a result.

The policy that should be taken must be accompanied by responsible discourse on the part of both Jewish and Arab leaderships in the state, stressing mutual respect and acceptance. Such a political and public discourse, free of racist overtones from the Jewish side – such as talk about the transfer of Arabs or limits on their political rights as citizens – and Islamic-Arab racist overtones from the Arab side, may generate a transformation of consciousness among large segments of both the Arab and Jewish populations.

Arabs in Israel: Demographic and Social Data

Table 1. Israel: Population size (end of 2008)

Population	Population size	Percentage
Jews	5,569,200	75.5
Arabs and Druze	1,487,600	20.2
Other	317,100	4.3
Total	7,373,900	100.0

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009 Israel Statistical Annual, Table 2.1

Table 2. Breakdown of Arab population by religion (end of 2008)

Religion	Population size	Percentage
Muslim	1,240,000	83.3
Christian	125,700	8.4
Druze	121,900	8.3
Total	1,487,600	100.0

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009 Israel Statistical Annual, Table 2.2

Table 3. Size of Arab population (selected years)

Year	Population size	Percentage of total population in Israel
1948	156,000	17.9
1961	252,500	11.3
1972	472,200	14.6
1983	706,100	17.1
1995	1,004,900	17.9
2001	1,227,500	18.9
2008	1,487,600	20.2

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009 Israel Statistical Annual, Table 2.1

Table 4. Live births, deaths, natural increase, infant mortality and fertility rates by population group and religion (per 1,000)

	Live births		Mortality		Natural increase		Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)		Fertility rates	
	1998	2008	1998	2008	1998	2008	1998	2008	1998	2008
Jews	18.4	20.4	7.0	6.2	11.4	14.2	5.0	2.9	2.67	2.88
Muslims	37.6	28.5	2.9	2.5	34.7	26.0	9.7	6.8	4.76	3.84
Christians	21.6	16.5	4.5	4.7	17.1	11.8	3.6	2.8	2.62	2.11
Druze	27.2	21.0	3.0	2.9	24.2	18.1	8.4	5.5	3.10	2.49

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009 Israel Statistical Annual, Tables 3.1, 3.13

Table 5. Age Stratification by population group and religion (percent, 2008 average)

Age	Jews	Muslims	Arab Christians	Druze
0-14	26.0	41.4	26.0	32.1
0-19	33.4	51.8	35.0	42.2
0-24	41.1	60.0	42.7	51.2
0-34	56.0	74.7	58.3	68.4
Median age (in years)	31.0	19.0	29.7	24.3

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009 Israel Statistical Annual, Table 2.10

Table 6. Poverty among families and children by population group (percent, selected years)

	1995		2007	
	Jews	Arabs	Jews	Arabs
Families	15.1	31.2	15.0	51.4
Children	18.6	40.6	23.8	62.5

Source: Data for 1995 is taken from Ramsis Gara and Refaela Cohen, "Poverty Amongst Arabs in Israel and Sources for Inequality Between Arabs and Jews," *Economic Quarterly* 4 (2001): 556-59; data for 2007 is taken from the National Insurance Institute of Israel, *2008 Annual Survey*. (Jerusalem, National Insurance Institute of Israel – Research and Planning Administration, June 2009), pp. 344, 346.

Table 7. Educational level: Median years of study by population group (selected years)

Year	1961	1970	1980	1990	2000	2008
Arabs	1.2	5.0	7.5	9.0	11.1	11.3
Jews	8.4	9.3	11.1	11.9	12.5	12.8

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009 Israel Statistical Annual, Table 8.64

Notes

- 1 Israel's Arab population stands at 1.5 million, representing over 20 percent of the country's total population. Arabs in Israel constitute most of the non-Jewish minority. See the demographic and social data presented at the end of the chapter.
- 2 On the decisions taken in the prime minister's commission on the Arab sector (July 2008) and on additional government decisions related to minorities in Israel, see the website of the Prime Minister's Office at <http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMO/PM+Office/pmconference/>.
- 3 An update on current activities by government ministries on behalf of Israel's minorities may be found in "An Overview for the Public: Government Ministries Activities at the End of One Year in Office, March 31, 2009 – March 31, 2010," at <http://www.pmo.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/BAD3F87B-C14B-4357-8DEE-55CA26C3CA3C/0/gov32skira.pdf>.
- 4 Ovadia Ezra, *Justice and Equality: Affirmative Action is Needed in Red Line Series* (Tel Aviv: HaKibbutz HaMeuhad, 2006), pp. 216-42.
- 5 Remarks by Avishay Braverman at a seminar "Government Policy Towards Arab Citizens in Israel: Theory and Practice" held by the Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation and the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, on November 12, 2009; see remarks by the prime minister at Tomer Avital, "State to Invest 800 Million NIS in Economic Development of Arab Population," *Calcalist*, <http://www.calcalist.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3399036,00.html>.
- 6 See Shlomo Hasson and Michael Karayanni, eds., *Barriers to Equality: The Arabs in Israel* (Jerusalem: Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies, 2006).
- 7 Professor Ruth Gavison feels that there is no guarantee that ending discrimination will necessarily close the gaps between Arabs and Jews in Israel. Therefore, in her opinion the issue needs to be treated both at the micro and the macro levels before it is possible to advance equality between the two populations. See Ruth Gavison, *Reflections on Commissions of Inquiry and the Status of the Arab Minority in*

Israel (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation; Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 2010).

- 8 Examples of institutionalized discrimination in legislation are: the Law of Return, which allows only Jews to immigrate to Israel and automatically receive citizenship; the Law of Security Service, which exempts Arabs from military service and thus prevents them from enjoying the benefits accorded to military veterans; and the Law of the Jewish Agency, whereby only Jewish population centers receive assistance with absorbing immigrants and with agricultural settlement.
- 9 An example of institutionalized discrimination in resource distribution: the Arab educational system is allotted smaller budgets than the Jewish system, and as a result there are higher dropout rates among Arab students, lower scores on high school matriculation examinations, and less eligibility for matriculation certificates. Welfare budgets allocated to the Arab community are lower than those allocated to the Jewish community, despite the higher poverty rates in the Arab community compared with the Jewish population.
- 10 A parliamentary commission of inquiry on the subject of hiring Arabs in the public sector, established in February 2008, presented findings in May 2010 to the effect that only 6 percent of civil service employees are Arab. In some government offices there are no Arab workers, while in others the level stands at 2 percent or below; there is no CEO, deputy CEO, or legal advisor in the government offices; of the 439 workers employed in the Knesset system, only six are Arab. The situation is similar in government companies such as the Israel Electric Corporation and the Israel Water Authority. See articles of May 5, 2010 in *Haaretz*, *Hamodia*, and *Jerusalem Post*; see also the commission's interim report (February-December 2008), http://www.knesset.gov.il/committees/heb/docs/arab_workers17.pdf.
- 11 Examples of institutionalized discrimination in settlement: the Jewish National Fund (JNF) sells land only to Jews and does not lease state land to non-Jews; the Israel Lands Administration has a policy of allocating land that discriminates against Arabs, whereby Arab settlements receive only 19 percent of the total land designated as agricultural despite representing 86 percent of all rural settlements.
- 12 Regarding the sense of discrimination felt by Arab job seekers in light of their minority status, see the essay by Shuki Handels, who coordinated an employer survey in the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor's Research and Economic Administration: "The Sense of Discrimination of Job Seekers and Employees and What the Public Thinks on the Subject," February 2010, <http://www.moital.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/CD099D08-6BD1-4995-9656-C9DC800E60BF/0/X9841.pdf>.

- 13 On the subject of the alienated citizenship of Arabs in Israel, see Yochanan Peres and Eliezer Ben-Raphael, *Cleavages in Israeli Society* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2006), pp. 52-94; also see Ali Hayder, ed., *The Equality Index Between Jewish and Arab Citizens of Israel: The 2008 Sikuy Report*, Sikuy NGO, Jerusalem, 2009; “The State of Human Rights in Israel 2009,” Association for Civil Rights in Israel, <http://www.acri.org.il/pdf/tmunat2009.pdf>; and “2010 Racism Report,” Mossawa Center for Arab Citizens’ Rights in Israel, <http://www.mossawacenter.org/default.php?lng=1&dp=2&fl=13&pg=2>.
- 14 In the past decade there has been a 150 percent increase in Arab men and women earning BA degrees. The low rate of employment of Arab women, about 20 percent, stems from a lack of accessible workplaces, public transportation, and child care. The rate of participation of Arab female academics in the job market is 68 percent (compared with 81 percent of Jewish female academics).
- 15 See Merav Arlozorov, “Arabs are Employed – Only in Agriculture and Construction,” *Haaretz*, April 13, 2010.
- 16 See Hemi Peres, “Corrective Initiative,” *Globes*, April 19, 2010; Kobi Hoberman, “The Economic Integration Engine as Part of a New Policy Proposal to Develop Engines for Integrating Arab Citizens in Israel,” in Uri Gofer, ed., *The Economic Value of Integration and Equality between Arabs and Jews in Israel*, Abraham Fund Initiatives, September 2008, pp. 25-43.
- 17 Most of the Arab population opposes the Zionist nature of the state, while accepting its Jewish character.
- 18 See 2008 data regarding index of Arab-Jewish relations in Israel presented by Prof. Sami Samuha at a University of Haifa conference on May 18, 2009.
- 19 See survey by Maagar Mohot of February 2010 prepared for the Center for Citizen Empowerment and the School of Education at Tel Aviv University in conjunction with a daylong seminar on the topic “Israeli Teens of Today – The Reality of Tomorrow”: <http://www.news1.co.il/uploadFiles/706295192241669.ppt#747>, slide 1. See Or Kashti’s article on the subject in *Haaretz*, March 11, 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasite/spages/1155708.html>.
- 20 There was a direct correlation between the level of religious observance and the position expressed: the percentage of religious teens who indicated that Arabs should not have the same rights as Jews was about twice as large as the percentage of secular teens – 82 versus 39 percent.
- 21 The religious factor also appears in the question of should Arabs be allowed to run for the Knesset: 82 percent of the religious teens, versus 47 percent of secular teens, answered in the negative.

- 22 The surveys were conducted in conjunction with Prof. Ephraim Yaar and Yasmin Akalai of Tel Aviv University. See Motti Basok, "50 Percent of Israelis are Proud of the Economy," *Haaretz*, April 1, 2010.
- 23 When Israel granted citizenship to all Arabs within its borders at the time of its establishment, Arab identification with Israel was unmistakable, even though until 1966 they were not seen by the state as a legitimate sector. In that period, Arab nations and the PLO (since its inception in 1964) viewed these Arabs as collaborators with Israel in theory and practice for having accepted Israeli citizenship. The claim against them was that concern for their personal welfare had taken precedence over national solidarity.
- 24 The constitutional revolution in Israel was a process that started in 1992 when two human rights laws were passed: Basic Law – Human Dignity and Liberty, and Basic Law – Freedom of Occupation.
- 25 When Binyamin Netanyahu was elected prime minister in 1996, he offered coalition negotiations to the Arab parties. The latter rejected the offer, not because they did not want to be part of the ruling coalition but because they preferred to be part of a coalition that was more convenient for them politically, i.e., a left-leaning government. In the 1999 Knesset elections, Ehud Barak promised to integrate the Arabs into his coalition, but after they voted for him and ensured his victory he reneged on his promise and established a Jewish majority in the Knesset. This resulted in the general sense of disappointment that reached new heights on the eve of the October 2000 events.
- 26 At Fatah's sixth conference in Bethlehem in the summer of 2009, the movement rejected Israel's demand to recognize it as a Jewish state, explaining that doing so would harm the status of their brothers in Israel.
- 27 Matti Steinberg, "The Implications of the Establishment of a Palestinian State on the Relations Between it and the Palestinians in Israel," *The Two-State Solution: Jews and Arabs in Israel*, Netanya Academic College, the S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, January 2010, pp. 15-17.
- 28 See Amal Jamal, "Ineffective Under-representation of Arab Citizens of Israel," in *Obstacles to Equality for Arabs in Israel*, eds. Shlomo Hasson and Michael Karayanni (Jerusalem: Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies, September 2006), pp. 125-40.
- 29 See the book based on the discussions: Uzi Benziman, ed., *Whose Land is it? A Quest for a Jewish-Arab Compact in Israel* (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 2006).
- 30 The four position papers are: "The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel" written by Arab intellectuals and academics and published in the name of the National Committee of the Heads of Arab Local Authorities in Israel; an

essay called “An Equal Constitution for All?” formulated by the legal scholar Yusuf Tayasir Jabarin and published by the Mossawa Center for Arab Civil Rights in Israel; “The Democratic Constitution” published by Adala – the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel; and “The Haifa Declaration,” published under the auspices of Mada al-Carmel, the Arab Center for Applied Social Research. See Sarah Ozacky-Lazar and Mustafa Kabha, *Between Vision and Reality: The Vision Papers of the Arabs in Israel, 2006-2007*, The Citizens’ Accord Forum, Jerusalem, 2008.

- 31 See Honaida Ghanim, *Reinventing the Nation: Palestinian Intellectuals in Israel* (Jerusalem: Magnes, Series Eshkolot 2010). Ghanim states that “the threshold nature [a sense of being on the brink] of the Palestinian plight is twofold: Palestinian, as they are Israeli, and Israeli, as they are Palestinian” (p. 38). “The Palestinians in Israel are part of the Palestinian national landscape outside of the state...on the civilian level they figure on the civilian Israeli landscape...they figure in the vacuum between the two non-overlapping and at time opposing levels” (p. 37), e.g., the divide between Jewish history and Arab history.
- 32 See the lecture by Dr. Amal Jamal, “Arab Citizens in Israeli Politics,” in the course “Arab-Jewish relations in Israel,” at Tel Aviv University April 28, 2010.
- 33 The leaders of the faction recognize that they live in the State of Israel but resist ideological, political, and cultural assimilation into the Israeli experience because that experience does not represent them.
- 34 Similarly, the Hamas leadership added Palestinian national identity to its Islamic-religious identity.
- 35 After the signing of the Oslo agreements and before the split in the Islamic movement, the moderate stream supported a political compromise that would lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, while the radical stream, although it did not reject this outright, expressed its preference for the alternative concept of instituting Islamic rule in Palestine.
- 36 So, for example, the Islamic movement rejects out of hand the willingness appearing in the Haifa Declaration to recognize “the right of the Israeli Jewish people to self-determination,” even if this is contingent on a bi-national state and consociational democracy.
- 37 So, for example, Yisrael Beiteinu proposals, including exchanges of settled land, conditioning the right to vote on sworn allegiance to the State of Israel, and restrictions on marking the Naqba, are viewed by the Arab public as incitements designed to amass political and public power and capital.
- 38 Dr. Ilan Saban explains that the law would lead to severing key ties in the lives of Arabs in Israel – family, work, social, and cultural ties between residents of the Triangle and the rest of the Arab community and overall Israeli society. From

a legal standpoint, land swaps impinge on basic rights, and therefore the idea must be consonant with the basic law of human honor and freedom. The principal legislative hurdle is the proportionality in the swaps. Remarks at the seminar “Government Policy Towards Arab Citizens of Israel.”

- 39 According to Ilan Saban, this conditioning against a native born minority is unprecedented in a modern democratic state. A native born minority has the right to not be loyal to an element that infringes on it – the nationalist character of its state’s citizenship – as long as the resistance is in the form of civil disobedience, and not terrorism.
- 40 Approved in the Knesset in a first reading on March 16, 2010.
- 41 For Arab fears about transfer and strengthening the Jewish character of Israel, and concerns in the Jewish population about the threat to the security of the state as the result of growing Arab nationalistic feelings and the demographic process, see Shimon Shamir’s address at the Herzliya Conference in a plenum dedicated to the government’s responsibility for equality and integration of the Arab sector, January 23, 2008.
- 42 Avishay Braverman, in the seminar “Government Policy Towards Arab Citizens in Israel,” said that one of the problems in Jewish-Arab relations in recent years is the lack of mutual listening between the two societies, leading to ignorance and racism. He views this as a sign of failed leadership. In his opinion, the vast majority of Arabs want to be a part of the State of Israel and therefore, “either we embrace them and they become equal citizens or we press the young people into becoming our enemies. The choice is ours...this is a test for the government.”
- 43 For the need to expand affirmative action programs in Israel, see Ezra, *Justice and Equality*, which explains that because of the structure of the Israeli economy and the fact that former senior personnel in the public sector usually staff senior positions in the private sector, it will not take long for Arabs promoted in the public sector to have an effect also on the private sector.
- 44 See Maagar Mohot survey of February mentioned above. On the limitation of positions in the civil national service administration, see Yoav Stern, “National Service Directorate: Only Half the Arab Applicants Can be Accepted this Summer,” *Haaretz*, May 13, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=1085219&contrassID=0&subContrassID=0>; and Anshel Pfeffer, “HaBayit HaYehudi Undermines the National Service Directorate,” July 3, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasite/spages/1097443.html>.

The Lebanon and Gaza Campaigns: Operational and Ethical-Legal Lessons

Gabriel Siboni

Background

The recent campaigns in Lebanon and Gaza compelled Israel to conduct a serious self-examination and take a wide ranging look at the strategic developments of the past decade. In this period, which began with the second intifada and ended with Operation Cast Lead, Israel found itself facing qualitatively different threats from those it had faced in the first fifty years of its existence. The threat began to change with the awareness on the part of Israel's enemies that they were unable to achieve significant gains against Israel through classical military means.¹ The Egyptian decision to initiate a classical military move – the Yom Kippur War – gained Egypt sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula at the cost of recognizing Israel and signing a peace treaty with it. However, Egypt's removal from the circle of countries in a state of war with Israel intensified the imbalance in military power between Israel and its adversaries in the region. This imbalance led both states and non-state players to seek alternatives to the classical military confrontation between states, which requires extensive national resources.

The threat of Palestinian terrorism as a substitute for classical military confrontations presented Israel with a major challenge. The years of the intifada resulted in nearly 1,200 people killed and a large number injured, and forced Israel's security establishment to introduce far reaching systemic changes. Palestinian terrorism took two main forms. The first was the use of suicide bombers, who came from populated areas in the West Bank, and

to a lesser extent, because of its physical isolation, from the Gaza Strip. The second method, rocket fire at Israeli towns and cities, developed in Gaza – primarily because of its physical isolation. On both fronts the Palestinians used terrorism against Israeli citizens indiscriminately. From the spring of 2002 to 2005, the IDF and the General Security Services labored and ultimately succeeded in thwarting suicide terrorism. However, there was no similar achievement against the rocket fire from the Gaza Strip. The full significance of the threat of rockets and high trajectory fire against Israel was clearly evident in the Second Lebanon War and in the rocket fire that preceded and continued during Operation Cast Lead in Gaza. Both military campaigns presented Israel with complex dilemmas, some of them operational and some stemming from the ethical-legal aspects of the fighting.

This article examines the main lessons in each of these aspects. It begins by comparing the threats addressed by the two campaigns and the adversaries' methods of operation, and compares the organizations fighting Israel in context of the state authority where each was active. The essay then studies the similarities and differences in Israel's use of force, and concludes with an analysis of the ethical-legal aspects as they were manifested in the two campaigns.

Similarities and Differences in the Two Campaigns

The Threat and the Enemy's Method of Using Force

The Hizbollah and Hamas approach dictates that violent action should target what is seen by them as Israel's weakest point, the civilian population. Nasrallah's speech in Bint Jbeil after the IDF withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, when he claimed that even though Israel has tremendous military capabilities Israeli society is as weak as "spider webs,"² expressed this sentiment well. Based on this approach, the Lebanese and Palestinian arenas cultivated patterns of action that aimed to harm the weak link. Palestinian suicide attacks targeted population centers, while Hamas's force buildup and operation in the Gaza Strip focused on the use of high trajectory fire against population centers. Hizbollah's force buildup and operational doctrine are also aimed at the same perceived weak point. In addition, both organizations stress the importance of preserving their organizational

and military capabilities beyond the duration of the actual campaign. Thus Hizbollah and Hamas have developed defensive capabilities against IDF offensive actions on land, in the air, and at sea in order to maintain their long term ability to fire at civilian targets. Here too, there is a significant change in the type of threat, as one of the chief means of preserving long term firing capabilities is deploying them in a civilian environment.

From the perspective of the organizations fighting Israel, force buildup in a civilian environment has several advantages, although it incurs limitations as well. The deployment of firing capabilities in a civilian environment and the use of the civilian population as a human shield make it difficult for the IDF to operate and are liable to constrict its ability to damage and reduce enemy firing capabilities. An IDF action in a civilian environment will naturally cause many casualties, and manipulative use of this kind of action by the enemy allows continuation of the fighting through other means: the media, propaganda, law warfare, accusations that the IDF is committing war crimes, and the like. The desired result for these organizations is an acceleration of the process of delegitimizing Israel.

Yet along with these advantages, the price that residents of Lebanon and the Gaza Strip have to pay during the conflict can undermine the legitimacy of Hizbollah and Hamas. Past experience in both the Lebanon and Gaza campaigns shows that both organizations, weighing the balance of advantages and disadvantages, preferred the method of operation that exposed the civilian population to an Israeli response. At this stage, it is hard to know what conclusions they have drawn concerning future conflicts. For now, Hizbollah is confined in the villages of southern Lebanon because of the political results of the Second Lebanon War, namely, Security Council Resolution 1701 and the beefing up of UNIFIL and Lebanese army forces in the south of the country.

The Responsibility of the State

The Second Lebanon War demonstrated the extent to which a non-state organization at home in a failed state can lead that state to a wide scale confrontation. Israel's distinction between Hizbollah and the Lebanese state made it difficult for Israel to develop an effective strategy in this war. It seems that what happened in Lebanon during the Second Lebanon

War reflected a division of labor.³ Hizbollah, which is deeply enmeshed in Lebanon's political and military realms, succeeded in separating itself from the state in terms of Israel's response. This separation allowed, and still allows, the organization's continued, undisturbed force buildup and the enhancement of all its military measures, sometimes even with the aid of the state. Recently this process has deepened with recognition and agreement from the Lebanese government. However, Hizbollah's deepening infiltration of the political system in Lebanon demands a reexamination of the validity of this distinction. If Hizbollah is part of the Lebanese system, a partner in the Lebanese government that enjoys the support of the government, then a war with Hizbollah is a war with Lebanon.

The depth of the Iranian involvement in Lebanon is also a state-related issue. Particularly since the assassination of Hizbollah activist Imad Mughniyeh, there has been a massive increase in the Iranian presence in Lebanon.⁴ This infiltration poses a significant challenge to Israel, since Iran is deeply involved in the command and control processes of Hizbollah's military wing. In fact, Lebanon has the unconventional distinction of being a sovereign state with a military and political organization that to a large extent is under the command of another state.

While Lebanon has a unique political structure whereby the sovereign government lacks the capabilities and/or the desire to impose its authority to prevent a multiplicity of groups from wielding force in the country, the situation in the Gaza Strip is essentially different. There is an effective central government in Gaza that has the ability to impose its authority over the entire area. It appears, therefore, that the activity of other terrorist elements in the Gaza Strip serves the Hamas government, which is why it allows it. The existence of a central address ostensibly simplifies Israel's use of force, and Operation Cast Lead was carried out against this central government, the Hamas government. This government has assets and interests, and harming them will effectively demonstrate the price of continued provocation against Israel. On the other hand, the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip is not recognized as legitimate by Israel, by most of the international community, and even by the Palestinian Authority.

An analysis of lessons from the campaigns concerning state responsibility allows us to examine the extent to which Israel can achieve long term strategic gains in future conflicts in such an environment.

Israel's Use of Force

In less than three years, Israel found itself embroiled in two conflicts with threats that are similar in many ways. Studying the lessons on the use of force in the Second Lebanon War allowed the IDF and the political leadership to attempt to implement modifications in Operation Cast Lead in the operational realm and in ethical-legal considerations.

A central question concerns the goals of the use of force. It appears that in both campaigns, the political leadership had difficulty providing the IDF with a sharp definition of the political and diplomatic goals of the military campaign. This lack of clarity made it difficult for the IDF to focus its use of force. In both campaigns, it was first decided to use firepower to damage Hamas's and Hizbollah's strength and exact a price from them. In both campaigns, it was decided only after some time to move to a ground force maneuver on enemy territory when it became clear that the rocket fire had not been curtailed enough by the use of firepower. Implementation of the lessons of the Second Lebanon War – the early preparations and the training conducted with an eye toward the possibility that the IDF would be required to act in Gaza – allowed IDF ground forces to operate from a position of greater preparedness and competence than in the Second Lebanon War. In the Gaza campaign, the IDF used its two main tools, firepower and maneuver, more effectively. The results of the campaigns show that an intelligent mix of these tools helped create lasting achievements. The quiet in Lebanon has lasted for nearly four years, while in Gaza, though the quiet is fragile, there has been a very significant decrease in the rocket fire compared with the pre-Cast Lead period.

The conclusion from both campaigns is that there is a need to examine the limitations on the use of force in order to clarify which goals the political leadership can set for the IDF. As such, the IDF can focus and improve its method of operation. Both campaigns have shown that the goal of achieving quiet for a relatively long period is attainable.

Protecting the Civilian Front

In the campaign in Lebanon, those responsible for the civilian front found it difficult to provide appropriate responses. Although there was an essential difference between the two campaigns regarding the strength of enemy fire, Operation Cast Lead showed significant progress. One of the main issues that must be examined in light of the two campaigns is the optimal division of resources between the IDF's offensive capabilities and its defensive capabilities, and the balanced use of defensive resources for both passive protective capabilities and active capabilities.

Ethical-Legal Aspects

The change in the enemy's method of operation and the transfer of the fighting to populated areas make it necessary for the IDF and the State of Israel to understand the ethical and legal implications of this development and to draw the necessary conclusions concerning the use of force. The threat is in the form of a non-state player that operates by using terrorism and hiding among the civilian population. This player does not respect the laws of combat, attacks civilians and civilian targets, and does not differentiate itself from the civilian population among which it operates, which causes difficulty distinguishing between civilians and fighters and between "military targets" and civilian targets. The use of force in the two campaigns made it necessary early on to address the complexity of action in a civilian environment.

The response the IDF formulated and adopted during the Second Lebanon War included a number of components: the first is immediate precision strikes on high value military targets, often located in a civilian environment. The value of the targets is determined by the strength and immediacy of the threat against Israeli civilians. The understanding that developed in the Second Lebanon War was that this use of force requires particular caution and should occur while containing the collateral damage, to the extent possible. The second component concerned the need to separate the uninvolved population from those involved in the fighting. The format developed in the Second Lebanon War was to warn the population in areas where there was fighting so that it would evacuate for their own protection. Only after evacuation of the population did the IDF move to

a wide ranging attack on Hizbollah targets. This pattern of operation was adopted in Operation Cast Lead, with additional efforts to warn civilians of concrete attacks due to the difficulty of widespread civilian evacuation from the especially crowded area in Gaza. Among these were the “knock on the roof”⁵ method and telephone warnings to civilians in the area targeted for attack. These methods did not prevent Hamas from scoring points in the fight for world public opinion after the military campaign through the media, international organizations, and legal means. These publicity stunts caused serious damage to Israel’s image and undermined its legitimacy in the world. Indeed, the Goldstone report, which followed in the wake of Operation Cast Lead, strengthened the understanding that war against the changing threat is not only about the use of military force; a wide ranging battle is needed, through non-military means, to cope with threats that are not physical, but political.

The Main Lessons

The change in the enemy’s pattern of operation created both challenges that require a response and opportunities that can be exploited. An understanding of the similarities and differences in the two campaigns has made it possible for the Israeli leadership to consolidate lessons that if implemented, will raise the chances of postponing the next conflict as much as possible and improve the ability to prepare for it effectively.

Force Buildup against the Enemy’s High Trajectory Firing Capabilities

The main advance in the threat of high trajectory fire is the improvement in lethality, range, and precision, along with the availability of inexpensive weaponry. The improved precision presents a significant challenge both for critical civilian targets and for military combat infrastructures on the home front. The chief response to improved precision will include mainly active and passive defensive means that allow the damage to be minimized, the munitions to be intercepted, and their precision capabilities to be impaired.

Home Front Preparedness

The enemy’s focus on the civilian front compels Israel to prepare its population for a conflict in which massive precision fire will be used

against population centers throughout the conflict. Some of the fire will likely be used against mobilization systems, firing elements, and Israel's critical military and civilian infrastructures. An additional lesson is the need to coordinate expectations among civilians and drill the population for various emergencies. Implementation of these lessons can also help the IDF focus on carrying out its operational plans.

Delaying the Next Conflict

Placement of the enemy's firing capabilities in populated areas creates an opportunity to deter and restrain. Hizbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza have a clear interest in preserving their legitimacy to act. Making clear the damage that Israel will cause in the next conflict can exert a restraining potential on these organizations. However, threats have no meaning if there is no willingness to carry them out when the scenario actually materializes.

State Responsibility

Israel is developing a concept such that in a scenario of conflict with Hizbollah, Lebanon is defined as an enemy state, and overall responsibility for what happens in the Gaza Strip is assigned to Hamas.

Hizbollah's participation in Lebanon's government and the government's recognition of Hizbollah's status as a resistance element allow Israel both to reject the Lebanese government's demand to differentiate between Lebanon and Hizbollah and to undermine international support for this demand. This inference has already been heard in comments by senior Israeli political and defense figures.⁶ Indeed, Israel would do well to reject this division of labor between the state of Lebanon and Hizbollah, and clarify that it will consider Lebanon responsible for all actions carried out from its territory. Accordingly, Israel must announce that in a future conflict, it will consider itself free to attack Lebanese state targets as well as Hizbollah targets.⁷ In order for these positions to be accepted by the international community, Israel must undertake appropriate preparatory action before the next conflict erupts. Instilling this understanding among decision makers and powerful elements in Lebanon and their patrons can delay the next conflict. If the next conflict is forced on Israel, attacking targets of the Lebanese state to implement the concept of Lebanon as

responsible for what is done in its territory and from its territory will create stronger deterrence, and will thus increase the time until the next round of conflict.

Although the Israeli defense establishment takes the approach that Hamas is responsible for every incident that originates in Gaza, from time to time Israeli responses to rocket fire by other organizations in Gaza actually absolve Hamas of responsibility or express “understanding” that the fire is part of the power struggles in the Strip. The lack of consistency in responses to fire from the Strip weakens the ability to place exclusive responsibility on Hamas and deter the organization.

Israel's Use of Force

Clear, simple, and explicit language about the political and diplomatic goals of use of force against the concrete threat must be employed, as well as about the implementation of actions that allow these goals to be achieved.

The State of Israel and the IDF cannot completely remove the threat from Israel's agenda. The main achievement the IDF is required to provide includes certain basic elements: increasing the amount of time between rounds of the conflict, decreasing the duration of the conflict, and reducing the damage to the extent possible. A clear statement by Israel's government to the IDF that these are the main goals it must achieve can help focus force buildup and use. The lack of political focus on the goals of the fighting in Operation Cast Lead showed that this lesson has not yet been learned and internalized.

The IDF'S Method of Operation

An understanding of the goals of the action will allow the IDF to focus its action. The IDF can accordingly activate the two main tools in its possession. The task of the firepower will be to create a deep, ongoing blow that will strengthen deterrence and ultimately postpone the next round of conflict. The task of the maneuvering forces will be to conquer the area from which the high trajectory weapons are fired and gain operational control. Conquering the territory is not a goal in and of itself, but it allows a reduction in the fire and destruction of the enemy's operational

infrastructures until the forces are evacuated. It is best to effect this under international auspices.

Balance between Defensive and Offensive Means

The campaigns showed the importance of creating an optimal blend between the defensive and offensive components in force buildup. An essential change in the balance of the division of resources between the two components is now called for. The defense establishment's decision to implement the Iron Dome project (an active defense system against short range rockets), the investment in protecting critical civilian and military infrastructures, and the decision to distribute gas masks all signal a significant shift in the country's security resources. The search for the optimal point of balance is still underway, and only in the future will it be possible to assess whether the new balance is correct for Israel's needs. One of the weak points in this process is the lack of a conceptual inquiry into the balance between defense and offense in the national security concept.

Ethical-Legal Aspects

It is sometimes argued that the rules of classical warfare are not suited to the present threat. This claim presumes that the classical rules were made for wars between armies and states, not asymmetrical conflicts against non-state organizations. This claim likewise presumes that the rules would be adopted by both sides and are not appropriate to cases where one side does not consider itself obligated to observe them. The attempt to formulate new rules creates substantive difficulties in the current international situation. The prevalent approach in Israel is that it is possible to formulate an ethical doctrine based on principles and rules that were the basis of the classical laws of war, which at the same time will be appropriate for the current situation.

The laws of combat reflect a number of key principles. The first is the need to distinguish between military and civilian targets: a target that is essentially civilian that serves a military need, or a blow to a civilian target that provides a military advantage because of its location or its potential military use, turns into a legitimate military target for attack. This principle is also appropriate for asymmetrical war. The second principle,

proportionality, assumes that damage can be inflicted on civilian targets and that it is permissible to attack civilian targets even if it is known that such damage will be caused. The test is whether the expected damage is excessive. There is a distinction between local and global proportionality.⁸ Local proportionality has to do with the value of the target vs. the collateral damage that will be caused as a result of attacking it. However, since the enemy's strategy is to use human shields by placing its firing capabilities in the midst of civilian populations, implementing local proportionality could create a situation in which it would not be possible to act at all and self-defense capabilities would be denied. In such a situation, it would be possible to apply the principle of global proportionality, which allows local collateral damage in order to bring about the collapse of the enemy's human shield strategy.

What this means is that it is possible to stop trying to change the laws of war or claiming that Israel cannot act in accordance with these laws, an approach that is liable to cause tremendous political damage and harm Israel's image. At the same time, it will be necessary to distinguish between wars in which there is reciprocal acceptance of the laws of war, and those in which one side does not accept them. In the latter case, Israel will need to adopt an ethical doctrine of its own. This must be based on the principles underlying the laws of war and on the examples of other democratic states. Publishing the doctrine's principles in advance could help Israel better clarify its methods of operation in a future conflict.

Conclusion

The Second Lebanon War and Operation Cast Lead presented Israel with a changing military threat and significant political challenges vis-à-vis coping with the threat. The change in the military threat requires that Israel learn the lessons of the fighting in order to better prepare for future conflicts by improving the preparedness of the IDF and the civilian population, and by clarifying the political goals of the use of force. The operational framework of elements hostile to Israel presents new threats, but placing their military capabilities among civilians who serve as human shields can potentially help strengthen Israeli deterrence, as long as the price of the conflict is clear to all of the parties involved.

Notes

- 1 Gabriel Siboni, "High Trajectory Weapons and Guerilla Warfare: Adjusting Fundamental Security Concepts," *Strategic Assessment* 10, no. 4 (2008): 12-18.
- 2 Speech by Nasrallah, al-Manar television, May 26, 2000.
- 3 Remarks by Giora Eiland at the conference "The Response to the Changing Threat," Institute for National Security Studies, January 24, 2010.
- 4 Remarks by Gadi Eizenkot at the conference "The Response to the Changing Threat," Institute for National Security Studies, January 24, 2010.
- 5 Use of warning munitions prior to a strike with destructive munitions.
- 6 Fadi Eyadat, "Barak: Israel to Target Lebanon if Hizbollah Escalates Tension," *Haaretz*, November 24, 2009.
- 7 Yoram Schweitzer, "The Limitations of Fighting a Terrorilla Army: Lebanon and Gaza as Test Cases," *Military and Strategic Affairs* 1, no. 1 (2009): 35-42.
- 8 The idea was presented by Professor Asa Kasher at the conference "The Response to the Changing Threat," Institute for National Security Studies, January 24, 2010.

Benchmarking Civilian Home Front Resilience: Less than Meets the Eye

Meir Elran

The Threat and Consequences of Deterrence

Almost four years after the Second Lebanon War (July-August 2006) and more than a year and a half after Operation Cast Lead against Hamas in Gaza (December 2008-January 2009), it has been demonstrated again that deterrence as a major instrument for defense of the civilian home front works, at least for now. Hizbollah, though building up its military capacities, has religiously observed the ceasefire in the north for what is the longest period of quiet on the Lebanese border in years. Likewise Hamas has refrained from launching rockets in the south and limited the attempts of splinter groups to provoke Israel, while concentrating on consolidating its authority in Gaza and upgrading its offensive arsenal.

However, not many expect this tranquil period to last for long. The basic assumption in Israel is that the country has mostly bought time, and that the threats to the home front are steadily growing.¹ The defense establishment² and pundits alike suggest that Israel has to prepare itself for the scenario of open conflict in the foreseeable future that will involve Hizbollah, Hamas, and possibly Syria, and face a developed capacity on the opposing side to hit any target in Israel with growing accuracy,³ including with non-conventional warheads.⁴ To this threat might be added the Palestinian terror model of extensive suicide bombing experienced during the second intifada, and possibly a direct or indirect Iranian contribution, taking into account the ramifications of a future nuclear option. The latter would necessarily represent a dramatic game changer and demands careful

study to produce a thorough defensive posture. The critical question is to what extent Israel knows how to make the best use of the time until the effect of its deterrence wears out, so that the next round finds the civilian population readily prepared for these acknowledged threats.

To date, the answer to this question is mixed. On the one hand the Israeli government, through its diverse – and sometimes conflicting – agencies, has accomplished a great deal in the complex preparedness process. On the other hand, several basic issues are still unsolved, to the extent that they hamper the progress achieved so far. This article attempts to analyze the equation and evaluate the present degree of preparedness in the home front for another round of conflict.

Assessing the Elements of Progress

In the framework of a multi-layered comprehensive approach, the past year witnessed a remarkable assembly of steps designed to enhance the preparedness of the civilian home front in Israel. Some represent the beginning of a long process; none of them are complete. Perhaps the most encouraging component has been the numerous preparedness exercises at all levels in the system, representing a holistic concept and a long range vision.⁵ The drills engage in different threat scenarios, involve the entire scope of agencies and stakeholders that take part in emergency management, and contribute directly to enhance the professional capacity of the first responder. They also help to educate the public at large – with particular focus on the school system⁶ – on how to handle the consequences of the different hazards.⁷

Another major element that attracts wide public attention is physical protection and sheltering. The official doctrine⁸ entails four parameters. The first is personal protection, which is supposed to be covered by the protection kits, designed to serve as an answer to chemical agents. After much debate and hesitation, the government decided in early 2010 to start a three year distribution project for the entire population. This is the positive side. However, the project has not been budgeted in full, and at present covers not more than two thirds of the population. In addition, the kits do not include the atropine injection, as was the case in the past. The second element, household protection, is based on the government's decision of

1991 to mandate a shelter in each new apartment. Consequently, one third of the apartments in the country are sheltered and provide adequate protection from an explosion of 500 kilos in the range of 15 meters, as well as from chemical agents. However, the program to facilitate the reinforcement of older apartments⁹ has for the most part failed,¹⁰ and awaits a renewed version that will make it more attractive to the public. A specific home sheltering project for the Gaza envelope area is in progress; the first limited stage was completed in March 2010.¹¹ The third element is institutional sheltering, which covers mostly schools and hospitals. Here the picture is even more complicated, and the government's allocation is inadequate. It is usually preceded by much controversy, political arm twisting, and often the intervention of the Supreme Court. Finally, public sheltering is still severely lagging behind the needs, despite some local improvements, particularly due to philanthropic donations to municipalities.¹² Israel thus appears to be vacillating on the issue, pondering how much and where to invest in civilian sheltering. The expenses are high, and the tangible added value is questionable. Still, ongoing political pressure, coupled with the understanding that sheltering also contributes to the sense of security of the civilians, keeps the debate alive and the cost growing, albeit painfully.¹³

The picture is less ambiguous when it comes to the issue of sheltering the civilian and particularly the military infrastructure in Israel. It seems that the defense establishment has internalized the implications of high trajectory weapon systems targeting its installations, particularly the air force, and to a lesser extent the intelligence bases. The understanding now is that if those bases and deployment areas are hit by the more advanced accurate missiles, it will affect IDF capacity to exercise its offensive options freely and continuously. The result is a significant allocation of resources to physical sheltering, as well as mental preparation of the soldiers and families at the air force bases, assuming that they will serve as a "magnet" for the rockets.¹⁴ The threat to civilian infrastructure, including communications and cyber infrastructures, must also be addressed properly, particularly with the acquisition of more precise missiles and possibly cyber terrorist measures by the enemy.

Concurrently, significant progress has been made in developing Israel's military active defense¹⁵ capabilities against the various rocket and missile

threats. While there is a steady advance in the development and deployment of the improved long range ABM Arrow 2¹⁶ and the medium range air defense system Magic Wand, to be deployed in 2014,¹⁷ the most recent addition to the active anti-rocket defense arsenal is the controversial short range Iron Dome system, developed by Rafael and declared operational in the first quarter of 2010.¹⁸ Since its inception following the Second Lebanon War, this system has invited heated debate.¹⁹ Now that the system is available for deployment by the IAF, it is not clear if the next batteries – following the first that is planned to be deployed in one of the air bases – will indeed be procured for the purpose of defending the civilian centers as promised publically by the political leadership, when, and in what quantities.²⁰ The US special decision to finance the procurement of more batteries with the sum of \$205 million will definitely improve the situation, but will not change the dilemma. There is still an ongoing debate in Israel, as the price for covering many of the civilian targets is extremely high, and many argue for giving preference to strategic assets rather than to the civilian population at large.

Implications for Societal Resilience

These and other practical measures aimed to enhance the preparedness and the defensive posture of the home front contribute to augment the social resilience of the civilian population. The principal idea is that in times of crisis the public will be mentally prepared for the severe consequences, and following traumatic events it will be able to rebound quickly to normal – and even improved – function. It is now understood in the field of consequence management that if this rate of resiliency is not achieved and sustained, decision makers may be exposed to severe political pressure from the fragmented public, and its freedom of action in the next conflict would be critically impeded.

Politicians and senior functionaries who are involved with the civilian front often express their understanding that societal resilience is indeed one of the most crucial issues in preparing the civilian front for the next conflict. In many ways the term resilience has become an oft-used buzz word. The commander of the Home Front Command, Maj. Gen. Yair Golan, recently defined resilience as “the capacity of the civilians, organizations,

and institutions of the civil society to successfully cross crisis situations by preserving the functional sustainability, the social cohesiveness, and the legitimacy of the government, in order to mitigate the damage and to bring about the speediest recovery.”²¹

Concrete resilience projects have been conducted in recent years in several towns all over the country. In most cases these projects focus on the community level, and include orientation and restructuring of the local social and political systems to prepare the civilian population for a crisis. The main components of these projects, which vary more in outline and sponsorship than in essence, usually comprise enhancement of local leadership, private-public cooperation, and dissemination of information; and promotion of preparedness, with a strong emphasis on school, social welfare, and public health systems.²² One innovative experiment has been initiated by the Reut Institute to construct a conceptual framework for a statewide civil resilience network.²³

This is a positive, worthwhile trend and indeed, in recent years the field of crisis management has gained a momentous surge of interest in the academic community. Several leading institutions of higher education have opened special programs for the study of consequence management.²⁴ However, the critical question is to what extent these diversified resilience oriented activities indeed promote the resilience of the Israeli public. In fact, the connection and coordination between the different programs is sporadic and unsystematic;²⁵ there are no accepted guidelines²⁶ as to what to do and how to promote resilience; and there are no systematic benchmarks to gauge the outcome of what is being done. There is a need for an accepted methodology to measure and assess the rate of resilience among communities and the public as a whole.²⁷

It is commonly accepted that resilience needs to be planned and promoted in advance – before systems are damaged and undesired consequences occur.²⁸ In terms of concrete actions, there are several leading components to enhance and sustain social resilience. The first, almost elementary precondition is promoting the effectiveness and the professional skills of first responders, to improve initial mitigation. One can assume that the different agencies are indeed doing their best, within their budget limitations, to reach the highest standards. Israel is recognized

as an international leader in emergency response, which does not mean, however, that more cannot be done to maximize the capacities, especially with regard to coordination and cooperation between the different response organs. The critical point of weakness is still that of command and control, or the question of responsibility in a given theater of operations. The last conflict in Gaza manifested the strength of the Home Front Command and its approach that the local governments are the ones to assume operational leadership in emergency situations. This delicate question has not yet been resolved in theory, by regulation, or in practice. It also raises serious doubts as to the present qualifications of most of the municipalities to exercise their authority over the other first responders.

The second goal is to enhance social cohesiveness and community responsiveness. This is a more complex challenge. It is generally assumed that socially stronger communities are likely to be more resilient in times of crisis, which suggests that it is imperative to strengthen the social and economic fabric of the weaker communities. Yet even if true, this is a long process and should not come to the exclusion of work in the stronger communities. Much can be practically achieved under the heading “an active community is a resilient community”: enhancement of the connectivity of the members; their active involvement in preparedness projects; encouragement of public-private partnership; extended engagement of NGOs and volunteers in related issues; and public education towards awareness of its needs and responsibilities. Some initial steps have recently been taken in this direction. One promising example is the initiative to engage high school students in response and mitigation tasks.²⁹ In this context, as in many others, there are more ideas, promises, and hopes than actual progress, and much more remains to be achieved. The question is who will take the lead.

Third, “meta-leadership” on the national and local levels must be brought into play. The most crucial gap as far as the preparedness of the Israeli home front is the issue of leadership and responsibility. This is true mostly on the national level, but in many instances also on the local level. In both cases there is ongoing ambiguity regarding who is in charge of preparing the civilian systems and the population for emergency, and of managing them in times of crisis. Another even more difficult challenge

is the quality of leadership and the degree of commitment of the leaders needed to maximize the public capacities effectively and to bring them to the optimal standard. Leonard Marcus, Isaac Ashkenazi, Barry Dorn, and Joseph Henderson of the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative of Harvard University³⁰ have developed a model to suggest that “meta-leaders” recognize that “achieving genuine national preparedness demands a spirit of cooperation combined with tangible inter-agency mechanisms” to enable connectivity.³¹ The experience of Operation Cast Lead showed that in several localities this model of meta-leadership was evident. The result was a reasonable response to the (moderate) challenge posed by Hamas. This is a positive example to be emulated by others.

Priorities for the Near Future

Over the last decade the Israeli civilian front was severely challenged three times. Even though 2009 (following the operation in Gaza) was the most peaceful in decades, many expect security deterioration in the future to confront civilians with yet another serious threat and trauma. Simultaneously with the long range, ongoing process of preparedness and the consequent promotion of social resilience, there are several urgent issues that should serve as leverage for meaningful progress. They all circulate around leadership, responsibility, and operational capacities.

Three years after the establishment of the National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA),³² the structure of the Israeli home front establishment has not changed in any measurable way to amend its deficiencies. There is still a serious lack of a mechanism that will manifest responsibility and authority to move the system forward in an orchestrated manner. NEMA was designed from the beginning to serve as a “coordinating organ – by the minister of defense – to assist him to materialize his overall responsibility in dealing with the home front in all emergency situations” and in times of crisis to “coordinate between the government ministries and other agencies.”³³ As such, this small outfit, chaired and managed by the deputy minister of defense, is rather limited in its capacities to serve even as first among equals. This is also the case with the potent Home Front Command, which has strengthened its position in the field, the National Police, and the professional ministries such as the

Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Welfare. In fact on the national level, there seems to be presently more bureaucratic and political friction than genuine coordination. This calls for a major revision.³⁴

The consensus is that the local governments should be the cornerstone of disaster management. In principle, it is a valid idea. However, many of the local governments are still far from able to take upon themselves this huge responsibility. Many are struggling to handle their routine missions. If they are to assume their responsibility for emergency management, they must be granted the basic means to do so. The only one that can supply them with these means is the central government, but this has yet to happen. Those municipalities that have reached a reasonable degree of preparedness and have assumed a leading position over the other agencies involved in the field have done so mostly with their own resources. Naturally, most of those are the economically and politically stronger ones. While they would do well to assist their counterparts, the responsibility for the change lies with the central government.

Which brings to the fore the last argument: The deputy minister of defense has steadily advocated for the urgent need to pass a new law³⁵ to settle the political and bureaucratic structure of responsibility and authority over the home front. There are some encouraging signs of progress in this direction. A major concern should be the nature and substance of the new law, and the examination if it adequately meets the serious needs of meta-leadership, orchestration, coordination, budgeting, and effectiveness. It also has to address clearly the question of an earmarked budget for the home front, and include unequivocal provisions regarding the leading role of the local governments. Fresh thinking will be a solid basis that would serve as leverage for improving the defensive posture of the civilian home front and its social resilience.

Notes

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- 2 Matan Vilnai, “The Vision for Home Front Preparedness: The Long Term Action Items,” in Meir Elran, ed., *The Civil Front* (Tel Aviv: Institute for National

- Security Studies, Memorandum No. 99, June 2009). Maj. Gen. (ret.) Vilnai is the deputy minister of defense, responsible for the home front.
- 3 Amos Harel, *Haaretz*, “Missiles Here, Missiles There,” *Haaretz*, April 17, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/objects/pages/PrintArticle.jhtml?itemNo=1163365>.
 - 4 “Turning Point 4,” the annual national exercise held in May 2010, also simulated defensive measures against chemical and biological attacks. In early January 2010 the Home Front Command conducted the largest drill of its kind ever, called “Orange Torch 4,” which dealt with a terrorist’s biological challenge.
 - 5 Since 2007 all exercises culminate in the annual national “Turning Point” drill. For further information on the 2009 exercise see <http://www.gov.il/FirstGov/Special/Mifne3.htm>; <http://www.rahel.mod.gov.il/FrontTrainings/TargilMifne3/Pages/TargilMifne3.aspx>.
 - 6 <http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Units/Shefi/HerumLachatzMashber/herum/HayomSheharei2009.htm>.
 - 7 Homeland Security Institute, “Public Role and Engagement in Counterterrorism Efforts: Implications of Israeli Practices for the US,” Final Report, April 2009.
 - 8 Yair Golan, “The Home Front Command’s Operational Doctrine and Future Challenges,” in *The Civil Front*. Maj. Gen. Golan is the commander of the Home Front Command.
 - 9 Tama 38, the national program for the reinforcement of old buildings, is designed to improve the capacity of houses that were constructed before the new standards for earthquakes were regulated. The public response was so far negligible. See <http://www.tma38.com/tma38-info.html>.
 - 10 Housing Minister Ariel Attias was quoted as saying that “Tama 38 in its present formula... failed,” *Globes*, March 8, 2010.
 - 11 The first stage entails 2,334 units in Sderot and the surrounding settlements. The second phase will include 4000 homes, at the cost of 2 billion NIS, *Haaretz*, March 8, 2010. The project limits the protected settlements to those within 4.5 km from the Gaza border, the range of the basic Qassam rocket.
 - 12 “The Shelters in the North: Dramatic Improvement, at Least for the Jews,” *Ynet*, July 12, 2009.
 - 13 David Klein, “Sheltering the Population: A Limit to Investment,” in *The Civil Front*.
 - 14 “The Air Force Assesses: Hundreds of Missiles toward its Bases in the Next War,” *Haaretz*, March 8, 2010.
 - 15 Active defense is the term used to define military weapon systems designed to thwart high trajectory weaponry, as distinct from passive defense, which refers mostly to sheltering.

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- 17 See http://imda.org.il/hebrew/Defenses/defense_System.asp?missileId=32; *The Marker*, March 21, 2010; Yiftah Shapir, "Anti Rocket Defense: A Waste of Taxpayers' Money?" *INSS Insight* No. 18, May 30, 2007.
- 18 See http://www.rafael.co.il/marketing/SIP_STORAGE/FILES/6/946.pdf.
- 19 Meir Elran, "A Qualitative Leap in the Defense Posture of the Civilian Front?" *INSS Insight* No. 157, January 20, 2010; Uzi Rubin and Meir Elran, "The Case for Short-Range Missile Defense Grows," *Jane's Weekly*, March 10, 2009; Uzi Rubin, "An Active Defense Against Rockets and Missiles: The Lessons of Operation Cast Lead and the 2006 Lebanon War," *BESA Perspective Papers on Current Affairs* No. 69, Feb. 2009; Reuvan Pedatzur, "The Dome of Illusions," *Haaretz*, March 27, 2009.
- 20 Based on an article in *French Intelligence Online* issue No. 614 of March 25, 2010, "Singapore's Arms Test in Gaza," Yossi Melman (*Haaretz*, March 25, 2010) suggests that Singapore financed the development of the system and that perhaps it was not designed to defend the Israeli civilians in the south. He submits that currently there is no budget allocation for the procurement of additional batteries. There is a discussion between the Ministry of Defense and the representatives of the regional councils in the areas facing Gaza on the issue of deployment of Iron Dome to protect civilian centers. The government says it lacks the funds and the locals argue that they were promised to be defended by the system. See *Haaretz*, April 27, 2010. See also the public letter of the chairman of Eshkol local council, Haim Yellin, "Budget and Life Saving," April 29, 2010.
- 21 Speaking at a conference held by Ben-Gurion University, March 15, 2010.
- 22 See for example "Town Resiliency," a project in Beer Sheva carried out by a partnership of the National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA), B. Harris Hossen (Resilience) Center, The Jewish Agency, and others, <http://www.childrenatrisk.co.il/src/file/beer%20sheva.pdf>.
- 23 See <http://reut-institute.org/en/Publication.aspx?PublicationId=3729>.
- 24 For example, at Tel Aviv, Ben-Gurion, and Haifa Universities.
- 25 Zeev Zuk-Ram at Ben-Gurion University, March 15, 2010. Brig. Gen. (ret.) Zuk-Ram is the director of NEMA.
- 26 In May 2007 the Home Front Command issued a publication titled "The Doctrine of Civil Defense in the Local Authority." It mainly defines the legal obligations and responsibilities of the local government in terms of preparations for war and emergency situations. It barely deals with the issue of promoting civil resilience.

- 27 Robert McCreight, “Resilience as a Goal and Standard in Emergency Management,” *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management* 7, no. 1 (2010): article 15.
- 28 Homeland Security Studies and Analysis Institute, “Resilience – Concept Developments: An Operational Framework for Resilience,” August 2009.
- 29 Yair Golan in an interview in *Haaretz*, January 1, 2009, envisages 50,000 students nationwide volunteering in their communities in emergency situations.
- 30 A joint project of Harvard School of Public Health and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, <http://ksgexecprogram.harvard.edu/Programs/npli/overview.aspx>.
- 31 “National Preparedness and Five Dimensions of Meta-Leadership,” <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/npli/PDFs/5DimensionsofMetaLeadership.pdf>. See also <http://www.meta-leadershipsummit.org/documents/FiveDimensionsofMetaLeadershipComprehensiveBrief.pdf>.
- 32 <http://www.rahel.mod.gov.il/ABOUTUS/Pages/AboutPage.aspx>.
- 33 Resolution of the Israeli Government B-43, December 19, 2007.
- 34 The present governing model of NEMA is scheduled to be reexamined in 2012.
- 35 The present Law of Civil defense dates back to 1951 – http://www.oref.org.il/sip_storage/FILES/0/690.doc#_Toc150834608.

Part II

Israel and the Middle East

The Israeli-Palestinian Political Process: Dead End Dynamics

Anat Kurz / 85

The Arab World and the Political Process

Shlomo Brom / 99

Turkey and Israel

Oded Eran / 109

The Israeli-Palestinian Political Process: Dead End Dynamics

Anat Kurz

At the end of the period designated by the Annapolis process for Israel and the Palestinian Authority to reach a set of principal understandings, direct talks between the sides were suspended. The break was not absolute: security cooperation continued, and Israel continued to encourage institution-building and economic growth in the West Bank. Still, differences of opinion over preconditions for renewing the talks and disagreement over discussion of the conflict's core issues prevented renewal of the political process. In an attempt to overcome the stasis, the American administration launched a channel for indirect talks, but the same bones of contention that for years thwarted progress towards conflict resolution through direct talks delayed implementation of the idea. The dead end, and in particular the partial – though significant – congruence between the administration's demands of Israel and those by the PA, have caused a crisis in the Israeli-American relationship. The PA has been relieved of direct pressure to soften its positions, and the burden of renewing the political process has been placed at the Israeli government's doorstep. An additional challenge facing Israel is the mounting interest, both in the PA and in the international community, in the establishment of a Palestinian state not necessarily on the basis of an Israeli-Palestinian settlement.

Lowering Expectations

An Israeli-Palestinian settlement was defined by President Barack Obama as a central component in stabilizing the Middle East and in improving

relations between the United States and the Arab-Islamic world, and therefore as a mission of the utmost importance to American foreign policy. When it entered office, the Obama administration adopted the Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East as the framework for negotiations. The administration's efforts to jumpstart the political process focused on a way to return Israel and the Palestinian Authority – led by Fatah and based in the West Bank – to the negotiations table.

Hamas's refusal to consider a permanent settlement with Israel and the political split in the PA left Hamas outside the diplomatic circle and in effect exempted the administration, as well as Israel, the PA, and the international parties relevant to the political process from having to consider the question of negotiations with a Palestinian national unity government. In light of the difficulty of renewing the political process, the threat that violence by Hamas would interfere both with the talks and with the attempt to implement understandings was pushed aside. At the same time – and contrary to the American approach whereby a political settlement would weaken Hamas – the European Union supported the establishment of a Palestinian national unity government on the assumption that this would make it easier for the Palestinians to accept and implement a compromise. Indeed, prompted by the influence of the EU, the Quartet's announcement of support for America's policy was accompanied by a call for regulating relations between Fatah and Hamas

Israel and the PA continued to take measures according to the stipulations of the first stage of the Roadmap. The administration insisted that Israel fulfill its commitments and enact a sweeping and immediate freeze on settlement activity in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The freeze, demanded with more force than had been sounded by previous administrations, was presented as a confidence building measure and a means of creating closer security cooperation between Israel and the PA. In response, Israel took some steps toward a freeze in settlement construction – and thereby walked a fine line between American pressure and the right wing factions in the Netanyahu coalition. For its part, the PA was expected to continue the comprehensive institutional reform underway in the West Bank. Originally undertaken to deflect international pressure, the reform

over time assumed the dimensions of a national project that sought to build an infrastructure for the future Palestinian state.

At the same time, Israel demanded a return to the negotiating table without preconditions. The PA, however, enumerated a string of conditions for mere renewal of the dialogue. The respective demands and conditions had one element in common: broad national consensus among the respective publics. The rejection by each side of the other's demands reflected the assessment, shared by the two leaderships, that the public and internal political price tag of concessions would be intolerable.

In light of the deadlock, different ideas to change the reality in the conflict arena arose in the international community. Some entailed a loose – if at all existent – link between the establishment of a Palestinian state and an agreement-based settlement. Javier Solana, responsible for the EU's foreign policy, called on the United Nations to accept the two-state principle as a preliminary stage for accepting the Palestinian state as a member; Sweden spearheaded an EU move to recognize Jerusalem as the capital city of the two states; and the French and Spanish foreign ministers tried to promote European recognition of a Palestinian state before the conclusion of the political process. Although met with Israeli protest, without the participation of the United States these initiatives lacked any kind of immediate, practical significance. While they were a response to the administration's failure to jumpstart the political process, the very absence of the American imprimatur limited the PA's ability to translate them into a concrete achievement.

In an attempt to break the deadlock, Obama arranged a meeting in New York in September 2009 with Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Mahmoud Abbas, but the three-way summit was of ceremonial value only.¹ In addition, the administration sought to build an inter-Arab setting to support the political process that would offer confidence building gestures towards Israel and back Palestinian concessions. This intention too was never fulfilled. Arab states did not soften their conditions for thawing their relations with Israel: a final settlement as outlined in the Arab initiative.² In January 2010, as his first year in office ended and after the mediation attempts of his Middle East special envoy George Mitchell failed to bear any fruit, President Obama was forced to admit that the administration's

assessment of the chances of promoting peace in the region had been unrealistic. More realistic was the president's assessment of the reasons for the failure to restart the process: Israeli and Palestinian opposition to the ideas underlying the entire political process,³ i.e., the political concessions intrinsic to any settlement and the incurring of security risks entailed by territorial compromise.

The failure to get the political process back on track was underscored by the administration's intention to formalize the indirect talks that had taken place via the United States since the direct talks were suspended in late 2008 – when Ehud Olmert's term in office was winding down, George Bush was preparing to leave the White House, and Israel embarked on an extensive military campaign against Hamas in the Gaza Strip. In March 2010, during Vice President Joseph Biden's visit to Israel and the PA, the administration announced its drive to launch proximity talks. The PA and the PLO's Executive Committee approved the program, though subject to the conditions determined by the foreign ministers of the Arab League, namely limiting the talks to a four-month period if direct talks were not launched in that time. Netanyahu estimated that the conditions for renewing the talks were ripening, "even if we are only talking about proximity talks."⁴ However, the start of the talks was delayed. Differences of opinion between Israel and the United States about the opening conditions of the talks and their purpose generated a crisis between the two countries. Negotiations between Israel and the administration, which from Israel's perspective were meant primarily to end the crisis between it and the administration, replaced the talks that were supposed to be conducted with the PA with the administration's mediation. In early May, after weeks of intense discussions, the administration announced the opening of the indirect channel.

In any case, in order for the dialogue to be maintained and then lead to direct negotiations, Israel and the PA will have to recede from demands presented to the other side and settle for only a part of what they asked for. In light of the gaps between the two sides' positions, however, it seems that the prospects for realizing these conditions are highly unlikely.

Israel: No Preconditions, as it Were

The establishment of Netanyahu's government heralded a change in Israel's policy on negotiations with the Palestinians. It took until June 2009, more than two months after the new government rose to the helm, for Netanyahu to recognize the two-state solution publicly, and he subsequently insisted that any Palestinian state be subject to severe security restrictions, including demilitarization. In addition, Netanyahu demanded Palestinian recognition of Israel as the state of the Jewish people. This demand, absent from the Israeli agenda in previous rounds of talks, was presented as a condition of the permanent settlement, not as a condition of renewing the talks. In order to lower expectations of concessions before the negotiations, Israel rejected the PA's demand to renew the talks at the point at which they were suspended, i.e., on the basis of proposals made by Ehud Olmert to Mahmoud Abbas.⁵

In addition, Israel clung to its position that the future of the Israeli settlements on the West Bank would be discussed at the end of the negotiations.⁶ In line with this policy, no settlements were evacuated. Continuing the policy of previous governments and despite the growing awareness in Israel of the demographic challenge inherent in continued occupation of the West Bank, Netanyahu's government avoided issuing any explicit statements about Israel's future permanent borders – and thus perforce those of the Palestinian state – except for the insistence that the Jordan Valley remain Israel's eastern security border, which would necessarily delimit future Palestinian sovereignty.

Recognition of the two-state solution was presented by Israel as a gesture intended to bring the PA back to the talks. At the same time, Netanyahu again called on the PA to come back to the negotiating table without preconditions, but his invitation, much like his recognition of the two-state solution, was not understood as an intention to address the permanent settlement issues or as determination to generate a breakthrough in the political process. Rather, it was seen for what it was: a response to American pressure for continuity of the official positions of previous governments. The demand to recognize Israel as the state of the Jewish people was rejected out of hand, as accepting it would have been tantamount to conceding any claim on Israeli territory proper.

In November 2009, as a response to massive administration pressure to complete the first stage of the Roadmap, the Israeli government announced a freeze on settlements in the West Bank.⁷ The freeze was limited to ten months and applied only to residential structures where construction had not yet begun. Construction in Jerusalem was not included, and this issue remained a source for Israeli-Palestinian friction. It has served as background to clashes between demonstrators and Israeli security forces, a source of tension on the domestic Israeli arena, and a bone of contention between Israel and the United States. New building permits in an East Jerusalem suburb were announced during Vice President Biden's visit, generating a political storm that underscored how difficult it will be to bridge the gaps on this fundamental issue between Israel on the one hand and the PA, the United States, and the Quartet on the other. The Israeli government sought to end the crisis by apologizing to the administration over the problematic timing of the construction announcement, but the administration was not appeased. Israel was asked to take a series of steps to demonstrate the seriousness of its intentions regarding the political process.

The American demands – led by the demand for a complete freeze on settlement construction and agreement to discuss all the core issues – were presented as an ultimatum, despite the awareness that their acceptance would threaten the unity of the Israeli coalition government. Furthermore, the American demands were notably similar to the demands posed by the PA as conditions for renewing the talks.⁸ In response, Netanyahu expressed willingness to ease both the siege of the Gaza Strip and restrictions on movement in the West Bank, and to release Fatah prisoners.⁹ Likewise, he also proposed “raising ideas” regarding the core issues in the indirect channel, with the caveat that binding agreements would be formulated in direct talks in the future. At the same time, Netanyahu rejected the administration's demand to commit to a timetable for the indirect talks and to a definite connection between them and future discussions of the permanent settlement. In late April 2010, in an effort to end the crisis with the administration, Netanyahu proposed discussing the establishment of a Palestinian state with temporary borders, i.e., skipping ahead to the second stage of the Roadmap. This proposal, formulated with the

full knowledge that the chances of the PA removing its traditional and unequivocal opposition to intermediate solutions were slim, did not herald a breakthrough. The refusal to commit officially to a construction freeze in East Jerusalem remained firm.

The PA: Preconditions of a Post-Agreement Nature

Inspired by America's insistence, the PA's consistent demand for a settlement freeze became a condition for returning to the talks – issued with the claim that the PA had no preconditions for renewing the talks.¹⁰ The limited freeze was understood as an attempt to deflect attention from a systematic policy of establishing facts on the ground. Continued construction has therefore become the center of the Palestinian claims that Israel is the one responsible for the political deadlock as well as the background for the incitement against the Israeli presence in East Jerusalem.¹¹ In addition to a total construction freeze, the PA demanded that negotiations be renewed on the basis of an Israeli commitment to withdraw to the 1967 borders. The Israeli government's rejection of this fundamental demand was the integrated result of conceptual, security, political-public, and coalition considerations as well as the desire to avoid a situation in which only the details of implementing an agreement would remain open for discussion. PA spokesmen demanded the renewal of talks on the basis of proposals made by Israel during the Annapolis talks as well as attention to issues Israel refused to deal with in the past – the refugees and Jerusalem, which resulted in their removal from the agenda in previous rounds of talks.

At the same time, the PA itself was also hard at work fashioning reality on the ground, if not territorially then in institutional, security, and economic terms. Under international sponsorship and Prime Minister Fayyad's leadership, the West Bank has entered a comprehensive process of construction from the ground up. Resources have been steered towards making the civil services and administrative system more efficient, instituting law and order, fighting corruption, and initiating new economic projects. The development has not been felt uniformly throughout the West Bank, rather, primarily in the security and administrative sectors of the PA. Limitations on the movement of people and goods have delayed the development of the private sector and therefore the full potential of

the economic reforms has not been realized. Still, in 2009 unemployment fell from 20 to 18 percent, and the growth rate was estimated at 8.5 percent (while the growth rate in the Gaza Strip was estimated at only 1 percent).¹² This trend was boosted considerably by a reduction in the number of roadblocks in the West Bank, made possible thanks to the increased professionalization of the PA's security services.¹³ The struggle of the Palestinian security apparatuses against militant factions (with IDF assistance and alongside IDF activity) has curbed attempts by Hamas activists to engulf the area in flames and draw Israel into a confrontation.

The economic development and the improvement in security advanced an interest shared by Israel and the PA – demonstrating the gap between the burdens of life in the Gaza Strip as against the quality of life in the West Bank, i.e., between the disadvantages of a Hamas-led government versus the advantages of the PA's leadership. From Israel's perspective, the development trend on the West Bank meshed with the idea of economic peace, whose purpose was to lower the motivation for militancy even in the absence of a political breakthrough. However, without political hopes, Palestinian opposition factions accused the PA of abetting the preservation of the status quo without getting anything in return and contrary to the Palestinians' national interests.¹⁴

Three types of response to the deadlock were discussed in the West Bank, one violent and two political. The possibility and ramifications of a violent uprising were on the agenda. Threats of escalation were also heard from within Fatah ranks, albeit alongside warnings about Israel and the Palestinians being dragged into a confrontation that would not be in their best interests. It is probable that escalation would not be the result of any intentional policy on the part of Fatah. Of greater probability is that if the arena is dragged into a confrontation, it would be the result of some local incident that is exploited by Hamas or the result of a calculated move by Hamas to incite escalation in the Gaza Strip or the West Bank. Likewise, the idea of one state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean has received renewed interest. This option has been discussed both as politically preferred and as a way to spur Israel into advancing a settlement before it loses its ability to ensure its future as a democratic Jewish state. Operationally, this means relying on the demographic process to tip the

scales. Finally, an option that complements the rehabilitation project in the West Bank – the de facto establishment of a Palestinian state and a unilateral declaration of sovereignty – has also been examined.

In August 2009 Prime Minister Fayyad embraced the vision of a pluralistic democracy that would be based on an independent economy to the extent possible, to be announced in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip at the end of a two-year preparatory process. While the territorial and economic practicality of the Fayyad plan would be limited as long as Fatah-Hamas and Israel-PA relations were not regulated, the political significance would be immense. In response to the concern expressed by officials in Europe and the United States that a unilateral declaration of sovereignty would be detrimental to the possibility of advancing a settlement based on agreement, Abbas declared that it would be coordinated with the EU and the administration.¹⁵ Fayyad too withdrew from an intended unilateral declaration of statehood, and explained that August 2011 was a target date for establishment by the PA of the state's institutional infrastructure.¹⁶ In any case, at least on the declarative level, coordination with Israel has been pushed from the top of the list of necessary conditions for a declaration of statehood. In this sense, the plan echoes the effort underway, primarily in Europe thus far, to stabilize the arena of conflict through the establishment of a viable Palestinian national entity, not necessarily on the basis of a consensual Israeli-Palestinian settlement.

Conclusion

Time and again Israel and the PA have found themselves deadlocked when the time has come to translate the commitment-in-principle to the two-state solution into concrete moves; and after years in which the components of a compromise emerged as inextricably linked to the agenda, the political process has hit an unprecedented dead end. The sides have presented one another with far reaching demands, some of which entail up-front concessions in substantial matters. No wonder, then, that these demands have met with mutual rejection.

The “proximity talks” initiated by the American administration were intended to bypass the hurdle of renewing the dialogue. To enable the launch of indirect talks, the administration presented Israel with demands

that were close in spirit to the ones stipulated by the PA as preconditions for direct talks. This, however, challenges the logic underpinning the indirect channel, as Israel's fulfillment of the American demands was tantamount to fulfillment of the PA's demands and in effect paves the road to direct talks. In any case, to ensure that the mediated talks do not turn into another instance of "distance talks," Israel and the PA will have to moderate some fundamental positions, though ideological commitments, security concerns, and militant opposition at home will make it difficult for them to do so, certainly to the extent desired by the other side. In other words, the chances for a fundamental breakthrough remain slim as long as there is no change in the balance of considerations guiding both Israel and the PA. And it is hard to imagine that the indirect channel will bear any different fruit from that borne by the indirect talks conducted between the sides that were not labeled "proximity talks."

Erosion of international support for Israel's positions, a growing interest in the establishment of a Palestinian state even without a mutually acceptable settlement, and in particular the crisis in the Israeli-American relationship are likely to moderate Israeli opposition to the demands made by the administration and the PA. Still, even if only some of the demands are met, a domestic political storm could well erupt, one that would make it difficult to conduct matter-of-fact negotiations, not to mention advancing understandings of historic proportions. In contrast to Israel, the PA is not facing international pressures to recede from its conditions. Furthermore, its positions are represented, at least partly, by the American administration. Thus rejection by Israel of the administration's demands would deepen the crisis in Israel-US relations while the PA would be relieved of accountability for the political deadlock. And while understandings between Israel and the American administration have allowed the indirect talks to begin, real progress towards a settlement – even if occurring along the lines of the PA's demands – would in fact threaten the PA's internal status. Moreover, the geographical and political split in the Palestinian arena would interfere with the PA's attempt to fulfill its part of the settlement, should it be concluded. Therefore, both Israel and the PA, each for its own reasons, prefer indirect talks to direct ones, even though – or perhaps because – this means postponing the moment of truth.

In light of the political deadlock, the American administration has debated the possibility of formulating principles for an imposed settlement. The presentation of an American peace plan, in particular if it is accompanied by a message that the United States intends to impose it on the parties, would narrow Israel's scope for maneuver vis-à-vis both the administration and the PA. The imposition of a settlement would not be a simple task by any means, if at all possible, even if the administration invests vast diplomatic and economic resources to ensure its implementation. No less complex would be making an imposed settlement the basis for a consensual one. Indeed, it is possible that the very announcement about an intention to advance an imposed settlement would motivate Israel and the PA to soften their stances and allow the renewal of the direct talks. In any case, a settlement between Israel and the PA – whether imposed or consensual – would be partial and fragile as long as the PA is not united on the basis of a political platform in the spirit of the vision of dividing the land into two states. In this context, it is likely that at least in the immediate term, progress towards a settlement would only exacerbate the rivalry between Fatah and Hamas, fan the motivational flames in the Palestinian militant opposition to escalate the conflict, and result in the suspension of talks.

Time and again Israel and the Palestinians have sat down to the negotiating table following a violent confrontation. The political process was formally begun as the result of the first uprising. The Taba talks were held in order to mitigate the second uprising, and the Roadmap was formulated in order to extricate the talks between Israel and the PA from a dead end. The Annapolis initiative was formulated after Hamas overtook Gaza in order to break through the deadlock and strengthen the Palestinian leadership committed to a compromise. Thus, the challenge now facing those involved in the political process, especially Israel and the PA, is to renew a direct, concrete dialogue. It may be that this is the way to prevent the next round of confrontation after which the sides would be more pressured, both from the outside and from within, to renew the dialogue. Similarly, it may be that this would erode the relevance of proposals on an imposed separation or unilateral moves, which would be the basis for temporary arrangements and therefore also likely background for a new outbreak of violence.

Notes

- 1 “Briefing by Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell: Trilateral Meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel and Palestinian Authority,” US Department of State: Diplomacy in Action, September 22, 2009.
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- 3 “Obama: Expectations for Middle East Peace Too High,” *Ynet*, January 21, 2010.
- 4 “Prime Minister on Proximity Talks: ‘We Want to Complete the Process,’” *Ynet*, March 4, 2010.
- 5 “The United States to Israel and the PA: ‘Understandings from Olmert’s Term not Binding on the Sides in Negotiations,’” *Haaretz*, March 9, 2010.
- 6 Binyamin Netanyahu interviewed by Wolf Blitzer, *CNN*, September 23, 2009.
- 7 “Briefing by Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell,” U.S. Department of State: Diplomacy in Action, November 26, 2009.
- 8 “Secret Israeli Report: US Cozying Up to Palestinians,” *Haaretz*, March 7, 2010; “Clinton Rebukes Israel over East Jerusalem Plans, Cites Damage to Bilateral Ties,” *Washington Post*, March 13, 2010; “U.S. Pushing Netanyahu to Accept Demands for Peace Talks,” *Washington Post*, March 16, 2010.
- 9 Israeli policy with regard to Palestinian prisoner releases was presented both as an incentive to renew the talks and as a result of the talks’ progress. See “Prime Minister Agrees to Release Hundreds of Fatah Prisoners to Jumpstart Negotiations,” *Haaretz*, January 29, 2010, and “Binyamin Netanyahu: ‘If there is political movement, we will consider releasing Palestinian prisoners,’” *Haaretz*, February 10, 2010.
- 10 “Abu Mazen: ‘I have no conditions, but stop the construction,’” *Ynet*, January 4, 2010; “Aide: Abbas has 2 conditions for talks [commitment to a real settlement freeze even for a limited period of time, and that negotiations be based on the establishment of a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders and full withdrawal to those armistice lines],” *Ma’an News Agency*, January 26, 2010; “I Will Not Back Down: Interview with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas,” *Spiegel Online*, February 7, 2010.
- 11 Criticism was also directed against the administration because of its acceptance of the limited freeze. See: “Abu Mazen: ‘I trusted Obama but he changed stride,’” *Ynet*, July 2, 2009; “Document in the PA: ‘We’ve lost hope in Barack Obama’s administration,’” *Haaretz*, October 14, 2009.
- 12 *Towards a Palestinian State: Reforms for Fiscal Strengthening: Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee*, April 13, 2010, The World Bank.

- 13 According to the IDF, sixteen manned roadblocks are left in the West Bank (compared with 27 in December 2008), whereas according to the UN's Bureau for Humanitarian Coordination, there are some 630 roadblocks and other obstructions. See Avi Issacharoff and Amos Harel, "Israel Removes Dozens of Roadblocks in West Bank," *Haaretz*, June 24, 2009; "Haaretz Reports on Roadblocks: Some Easing of Restrictions but Roadblocks in Abundance," *Haaretz*, January 25, 2010.
- 14 Abbas's lack of decisiveness about presenting the Goldstone report for discussion at the UN Human Rights Council was seen as caving in to Israeli pressure – which was indeed exerted – and generated severe personal criticism of him. In October 2009 Abbas threatened to resign and announced that he would not run in the presidential elections that were scheduled for January 2010 along with elections for the Legislative Council. Elections were not held because of the split in the PA: Egyptian efforts to mediate between Fatah and Hamas failed. Abbas and the emergency government he established after Hamas's takeover of the Gaza Strip as well as the Legislative Council controlled by Hamas continued their terms in office without legal basis. Still, Abbas's threat to resign has not been retracted, and the message is that if it is carried out there will be shocks in the Palestinian arena, leaving Israel without a partner to the political process and to the effort to stabilize the security situation in the West Bank.
- 15 "President Sarkozy and PA Chairman Abu Mazen: 'Renew Negotiations with Israel at Once,'" *Haaretz*, February 22, 2010. On Netanyahu's response to the idea of a unilateral declaration of statehood: "Netanyahu to PA: If you make unilateral moves, so will we," *Jerusalem Post*, November 16, 2009.
- 16 "Fayyad Folding? 'We will not declare a state; we will be ready,'" *Ynet*, May 2, 2010.

The Arab World and the Political Process

Shlomo Brom

In order to jumpstart the Israeli-Palestinian political process in 2009, the Obama administration sought to foster suitable conditions for negotiations. It suggested that Israel commit to a comprehensive freeze on construction in the Jewish settlements, and the moderate Arab states make some gestures towards Israel. The idea was to give Israel a taste of the Arab peace initiative, thereby demonstrating to Israel's leadership and public what the fruits of peace with the Palestinians could be like. Assuming that for Israel the key to normalization with the Arab world was Saudi Arabia, the American initiative focused on Saudi Arabia and included a request that El Al be allowed to fly through Saudi airspace. Saudi Arabia responded negatively. In his meeting with President Obama in June 2009, King Abdullah refused to adopt any steps toward normalization with Israel before significant progress was made in negotiations with the Palestinians.¹

This episode again questioned the Arab world's commitment to the Israel-Palestinian and Israeli-Syrian peace processes, and the Arab states' willingness to help promote negotiations on both tracks. At issue is far more than a theoretical conundrum, because at least on the Israeli-Palestinian track, it is hard to fathom how the Palestinian side could reach any agreement without significant Arab backing and support. Indeed, many analyses tend to view the lack of Arab involvement in and support of the 2000 Camp David negotiations as a primary reason for their failure.

The Arab World and Relations with Israel

The contemporary Arab world is marked by a fierce struggle between two currents: that which favors a secular national state model, and that of the radical Islamic movements that hope to galvanize the Islamic *ummah* and often attribute little importance to national entities. The existing regimes belong primarily to the first current. They conduct pragmatic policies designed first to ensure the regimes' survival and only then to promote state interests, as they understand them. Most of the regimes have chosen to conduct relations with the West, chiefly the United States, assuming that these relations would best serve security, economic, and state interests.

The radical Islamic stream consists mostly of non-state actors that enjoy the support of the Iranian Islamic regime as well as popular support in all Arab states. Indeed, it is commonly assumed that were there ever genuinely free elections, various Islamic movements would emerge victorious in most of the Arab states. This is in fact what occurred in Algeria in 1991 and in the PA in 2006. Likewise in the Iraqi elections, the Shiite majority was represented mainly by political parties with Islamic tendencies. Radical Islamists view the West as an enemy that represents an existential threat, particularly in cultural terms. They favor the resistance model (*muqawama*), which represents defiance in the face of current Western hegemony and the drive to undermine the Arab regimes supported by the West.² This shared outlook enables them to bridge a second divide in the Arab world, that between Shia and Sunni, and facilitates alliances and coalitions between Shiites and Sunnis even as they maintain their bitter enmity elsewhere in the Arab world. Hence the paradox of Shiite Iranian and Hizbollah assistance to the Sunni Hamas movement, while Sunnis and Shiites are killing one another in a civil war in Iraq.

This is of course a simplistic outline that fails to present with any depth the various textures and shades of gray unique to particular countries. There are, for example, Arab actors that do not fall into their so-called natural category according to this division, or actors that want to court favor with many different sides rather than surrender to the limits of this grouping. Syria – a completely secular regime of the Ba'ath Party that is controlled by the Alawi minority whose belonging to Islam is in question – has nonetheless joined the resistance axis because this move serves the

interests of both the regime and the state, including with regard to the Lebanese-Israeli front. Similarly, Qatar, a monarchy, sees its ability to interact with all elements as a central component in constructing a political status out of all proportion to its small size.

This dichotomy in the Arab world greatly affects both general attitudes towards Israel and the ability by respective actors to conduct individual policies towards Israel. The Arab-Israeli conflict, especially the Palestinian component, plays a central role in encouraging large Arab populations to embrace the *muqawama* because from their point of view it represents a blatant expression of Western insurgence into the Arab world, or more specifically, a strategic-security threat, an ideological-cultural threat, and a demonstration of the wrongs perpetrated by the Western world against Muslims.³ For many Arab regimes, the desire to counter the negative influence of the conflict on domestic public opinion helps generate support for the political process. At the same time, public opinion greatly limits those regimes' freedom of action when they attempt to adopt a positive stance towards Israel in order to encourage progress in the political process. Thus in recent years Arab regimes have viewed the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with its frequent violent outbreaks, as a severe threat; some have even viewed it as an existential threat. However, these regimes are often powerless to adopt any policy that could perhaps help them alleviate the threat, and this helplessness is another expression of the waning strength of the Arab nation states compared to the non-Arab states in the Middle East – Iran and Turkey.

The fighting in the Gaza Strip in late 2008 and in early 2009 demonstrated to the Arab states once again the extent to which negative developments on the Israeli-Palestinian track can affect the atmosphere “on the street,” weakening their own backing and encouraging support for the radical axis. Indeed, during Operation Cast Lead the demonstrations in the Arab capitals were louder and better attended than demonstrations in the West Bank. True, the Palestinian Authority took steps to keep the flames and demonstrations in check, but while state regimes were concerned that the demonstrations would spiral out of control, they were nevertheless hard pressed to limit them.

Arab Involvement in the Political Process

The Arab states view the Arab peace initiative as the primary tool to balance the need to advance the political process with the need to deal with domestic public opinion. The initiative, adopted in March 2002 at the Arab League summit in Beirut and ratified again at the 2007 Arab League summit in Riyadh, seeks to promote agreements between Israel and the Palestinians and between Israel and Syria. According to the proposal, should Israel succeed in reaching agreements on both of these negotiating tracks (the document outlines in general terms the required terms of the agreements), then the entire Arab world would commit itself to an end of the conflict and to peace and normalization with Israel, and would provide guarantees for its security.

Despite the dramatic contents of the Arab peace initiative, especially when compared with the “three no’s” of the 1967 Khartoum conference (no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel), for several reasons Arab states have found it difficult to turn it into a tool that can in fact promote negotiations with Israel. First, the initiative was initially adopted during the bloodiest month of the second intifada, and the Israeli public and political leadership lacked sufficient resources to debate the initiative and its ramifications with any seriousness. Second, there were reservations in the Israeli political system regarding how the stipulations of the agreement with the Palestinians were worded, especially vis-à-vis the solution to the refugee problem, and therefore the initiative was presented in Israel as one that Israel could not accept. Finally, instead of trying to understand that the initiative was an Arab declaration of intent that could be used as leverage in enlisting Arab states to provide practical assistance to promote agreements with the Palestinians and Syria, the initiative became an object of dispute between the sides, with the central issue being Israel’s formal willingness to accept the initiative. The Arab League appointed a committee of representatives from the Arab states already maintaining diplomatic relations with Israel. The group was supposed to launch a dialogue with Israel about the initiative, but no significant talks ever ensued. An Israeli announcement immediately after the peace initiative was adopted by the Arab League, such that Jerusalem viewed the initiative as a basis for dialogue with the Arab world and a contribution to

the peace process, might have sufficed to spark a dialogue with interested Arab states. However, since then the sides have dug themselves further into their positions, and by the time Israel started showing a more positive attitude towards the initiative it was a case of too little, too late.

The year 2009 was characterized by two opposing processes. One was the increased motivation among several Arab actors to help extricate the negotiations from their frozen state and take concrete steps to foil obstructing elements, state and non-state actors alike, trying to waylay the negotiations even more, since a settlement with Israel would harm their own interests. On the other hand, the deadlock in the negotiations and the difficulty in jumpstarting them made it hard to maintain relations with Israel and created pressures on state actors to back down from the Arab peace initiative and any willingness to be involved in advancing and implementing a settlement.

A good example of this tension was the response of the Arab regimes to Operation Cast Lead. From their conduct and statements, the pragmatic regimes demonstrated that to a large extent they held Hamas accountable for the outbreak of the crisis, and tried to end it without incriminating Israel. On the other hand, they felt compelled to make extreme anti-Israeli declarations, and Qatar and Mauritania even broke off their relations with Israel. (The reaction of these two states was not surprising, because Qatar has one foot in each of the two camps of the Arab world, while Mauritania experienced a regime change that brought it closer to the radical camp.) Moreover, the crisis in the Gaza Strip also highlighted the tension between the two Arab camps. Each held its own summit conference during the war, and there were sharply worded exchanges of mutual recriminations that continued long after the fighting ended. A prominent example was the March 2010 sharp verbal confrontation between Syrian president Bashar Asad and Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas at the Arab League conference.

The willingness of Arab actors to take constructive steps to promote the political process was expressed, for example, in Egypt's efforts to prevent Hamas from automatically blocking any progress on the Israeli-Palestinian track. Egypt attempted to achieve this in various ways. It has tried – to date unsuccessfully – to facilitate reconciliation between Hamas and

Fatah that would allow the establishment of a Palestinian national unity government. The failure of the reconciliation talks, with Hamas unwilling to accept Egypt's compromise proposals, prompted Egypt to exert new pressure on Hamas. It sought to establish that Hamas is obligated to accept a compromise proposal, or at the very least cannot undermine the efforts to renew the political process. In addition, Egypt has taken more aggressive steps against Hamas's underground smuggling industry. It increased the scope and effectiveness of efforts to curb tunnel smuggling, and more recently, it announced plans to construct an iron wall along the Gaza Strip-Sinai border. This project will not have a great deal of practical significance any time soon because construction is a long term endeavor, but it has already exerted heavy psychological pressure on Hamas. The attempt to curb the smuggling into Gaza stems in part from Egypt's understanding in the wake of Operation Cast Lead that new arms smuggling into Gaza on the scale that took place before the war is liable to generate further violent outbreaks between Gaza and Israel.

Egypt's efforts are not motivated by altruism; rather, it sees developments in the PA, the split between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and the lack of progress in negotiations as harmful to the interests of the Egyptian regime. Such damage was made manifest in January 2008 when Hamas brought down the wall on the Gaza border and thousands of Gaza residents streamed into Sinai to the dismay of Egyptian authorities. Another example that clarified for Egypt the link between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the stability of the regime was the discovery of the Hizbollah network in Egypt engaged in arms smuggling into the Gaza Strip and subversive activities against the Egyptian regime. This revelation demonstrated both Iranian involvement and the close connection between the struggle of the opposing camps in the Arab world and developments on the Israeli-Palestinian track.

The major limit to Egypt's effectiveness against Hamas was and remains Egyptian public opinion, which views such measures as Egyptian cooperation with the Israeli enemy against their Palestinians brothers. The more the Egyptian regime can persuade its citizens that these operations serve Egyptian interests and support Egyptian sovereignty, the easier it will be to cope with public opinion. In this sense, the toppling of the wall was

a Pyrrhic victory for Hamas because it made it much easier for Egypt to present its actions against Hamas as a defense of Egyptian sovereignty. In practice, the result is that Israel and Egypt have cooperated in maintaining the so-called siege of the Hamas government in Gaza, based on the understanding that this helps to contain Hamas.

Another practical expression of involvement is the assistance by Arab states toward construction of a Palestinian state, an endeavor launched by the West Bank government of Prime Minister Salaam Fayyad. Jordan continues to train new units for the Palestinian security services with the help of the United States under the direction of security coordinator General Keith Dayton and his team; so far, five new battalions of the Palestinian security services have been trained by the Jordanians and another two are in Jordan at different stages of training. The Gulf states have offered financial assistance to the Palestinian government as both donor states and as funders of specific projects. One of the ambitious economic projects begun in the PA in the last year is the construction of a new Palestinian city, Rawabi. A Qatari real estate company is a partner in the project, undertaken with the encouragement of the regime in Qatar.

Syria is a further example of Arab willingness to be more involved in advancing the political process. The pragmatic Arab states are interested in removing Syria from the radical axis, thereby weakening the influence of Iran and its allies. If in the not-too-distant past these states all but wrote off the Syrian regime, severed their ties to it, declined to attribute much importance to Syria, and therefore focused in an almost obsessive manner only on the Israeli-Palestinian track, now their approach is different: they are trying to improve relations with Syria, conduct a dialogue with it, and influence it. At the same time, the Israeli-Palestinian track remains of primary importance in the view of these states because of its substantial influence on the Arab street.

Frustration with the Political Deadlock

Alongside a growing willingness to be involved there is also a great deal of frustration with the deadlock in the negotiations tracks and with what is seen as Israel's obstinacy. Therefore, proposals to revoke support for the Arab peace initiative are sounded before every summit meeting of the Arab

League. Thus, for example, Arab League Secretary General Amr Musa noted in a January 2009 press conference that the Arab peace initiative would not remain on the negotiating table for long, thereby repeating a statement in a similar vein made by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia some weeks prior.⁴ Proposals in a similar nature were also raised before the March 2010 Arab League gathering in Libya, but it was ultimately decided to give a chance to the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians that the United States was instrumental in jumpstarting. Accordingly, the issue will be discussed anew after the four-month period allotted by the Arab League. The Arab states have not yet considered the idea of a unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood and have focused on pressures to gain deeper international involvement (especially by the United States) that would, in their assessment, generate more effective negotiations. If the deadlock continues and there is a withdrawal of the Arab peace initiative, it would have the symbolic significance of a sharp regression in the peace process, even if it has no practical impact.

Perhaps because he sees the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an existential threat, underscored by statements in this vein since his ascent to the throne, King Abdullah of Jordan has become a prominent spokesman for Arab frustration with the deadlocked negotiations, especially on the Israeli-Palestinian track. Despite Jordan's involvement in the construction of the Palestinian state, especially in the field of security, the king's statements have expressed a deep frustration with Israel's positions and serious concerns about the effect of developments in the Israeli-Palestinian process on Jordan. These sentiments have affected Israel-Jordan bilateral relations. In contrast to the dialogue between the leaders ongoing since the signing of the Israel-Jordan peace treaty, the dialogue ceased almost completely in the past year, to the point at which there were assessments that the relations between the two states hit an unprecedented low. This situation is liable to harm cooperation between the sides in crucial areas, including security.

Syria too has shown impatience with the political stagnation. It continues to send hints at willingness to change its orientation and fill a positive role in the process vis-à-vis Israel, but it also continues to play a dominant role in the radical camp. Thus, the Syrian president continues to speak of his desire to renew negotiations with Israel and engage in dialogue with the

United States to resolve the problems between them. At the same time, relations between Syria and other actors in the radical camp have continued to tighten and Syria has become much freer in supplying Hizbollah with weapon systems that threaten the current balance, including the possible supply of Scud ballistic missiles to Hizbollah. This political dichotomy reflects the internal conflict in the Syrian leadership between the drive to maintain ties with the radical axis and reap the fruits of this alliance, and the understanding that Syria cannot solve its fundamental problems, especially its failing economy, as long as it remains in the radical camp. The regime may also be deluding itself into thinking it can have a foot in both worlds and continue playing its double game. This vacillation was reflected in Syria's attitude to the Arab peace initiative: Syria supported the initiative when it was accepted in 2002, yet over the past year, Syria was among the main elements seeking to revoke it.

Prospects for Renewing Multilateral Negotiations?

There were no recent clear indications of Arab willingness to renew the multilateral negotiating groups in tandem with renewed bilateral negotiations. However, contacts with diplomats in the Arab world about the possibility of renewing the dialogue over a cooperative security arrangement in the Middle East yielded very favorable responses. This was especially prominent in Egypt, the main player to have brought about the end of the discussions in the negotiating group over arms control and regional security (ACRS). There is a sense that Egypt has, to an extent, regretted the fact that it torpedoed the talks in the mid-1990s; since then, there has not been an appropriate forum for talks of this kind. It is still not clear if these positions reflect a view broader than that of a small group of interested parties in the relevant foreign ministries.

In the meantime, the position of the other players involved in the negotiations processes is also unclear. Israel has not expressed an unequivocal stance, and the United States too has at this stage focused only on attempts to renew the negotiations on the Israeli-Palestinian track. It is still uncertain if President Obama's administration adopted a broader conceptual political plan in the framework of which the Israeli-Palestinian channel meshes with the Israeli-Syrian channel and perhaps

even with multilateral talks. Should the United States decide to push for the renewal of multilateral talks, Israel would likely view this as a positive step. From the perspective of the Arab world, this could be a way to act in the spirit of the Arab peace initiative and maintain a dialogue with Israel about those areas where Arab nations could make a contribution to the advancement of the peace process should Israel be prepared to do what the Arab nations expect of it, i.e., conduct serious, effective negotiations in bilateral channels. In any case, if the deadlock in the bilateral channels continues, the Arabs will certainly find it well nigh impossible to conduct multilateral talks with Israel.

Conclusion

Because of the widened gaps between the Arab positions and the current Israeli government, it is highly doubtful if effective negotiations can be held on the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Syrian tracks. Consequently, the Arab position and the involvement of the Arabs in the negotiations process are less relevant. However, if the Obama administration does succeed in its efforts to renew effective negotiations, the Arab states are likely to play an important part. The assumption that it is possible to conduct a significant dialogue with the pragmatic Arab states – that have a common strategic interest with Israel against the axis led by Iran – without effective negotiations at least on the Israeli-Palestinian track seems highly problematic.

Notes

- 1 Barak Ravid, "Senior Political Source: The US has still not Received Arab Agreement on Normalization with Israel," *Haaretz*, July 2, 2009.
- 2 See Michael Milstein, *Muqawama: The Challenge of Resistance to Israel's National Security Concept* (Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, Memorandum No. 102, December 2009).
- 3 Milstein, *Muqawama*, p. 16.
- 4 Nir Yahav, "The Arab Peace Initiative," *Walla! News*, January 31, 2009, <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/13/1427466>.

Turkey and Israel

Oded Eran

By the middle of 2010, Israel's relations with Turkey reached an unprecedented low. The incident on May 31, 2010, when Israeli commandos overpowered opposition on board a Turkish ship attempting to break the Israeli blockade on Gaza, was just the tip of the iceberg.

The deteriorating relations should be viewed, however, not just in the bilateral context. They may signal a more profound change in Turkey's weltanschauung. The ideological roots of the ruling AK Party and the disappointment resulting from the lack of a breakthrough in the negotiations for accession into the European Union have moved Turkey to reorient its foreign policy towards a greater emphasis on relations with the immediate neighborhood.

The shift in Turkey's orientation was given a theoretical framework in the book *Strategic Depth* by the current Turkish foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, and more recently in his article "Turkey's Zero-Problems Foreign Policy."¹ He himself and other spokesmen of the AKP deny the Ottoman element in this approach,² yet the Ottoman past, the common language and religion in large parts of Turkey's neighborhood, and Turkey's geo-strategic location are defining components of the policy. Beyond the intriguing comparison to the Ottoman past, the shift contains seeds of future friction with Israel, as well as with the European Union and the United States.

Syria and Iran

The marked change is best exemplified in Turkey's improved relations with two of its immediate neighbors – Syria and Iran. The longstanding disputes with Syria over Hatay Province, water rights, and Syria's support for the Kurdish party (PKK) have been pushed aside. The two countries have strengthened their trade relations and held joint military exercises (April 2009), and the two presidents have exchanged official visits to formalize the thaw in the relations.

This change created an opportunity as well as a problem for Israel. When after the Second Lebanon War Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert agreed to re-launch negotiations with Syria, stalled ever since the failed negotiations of 1999-2000 conducted with US mediation, Turkey was a natural go-between. For the US under George W. Bush, Syria was part of the axis of evil and the US could not resume the role of mediator, nor did it want to. Turkey stepped in and the five rounds of indirect talks that were held on Turkey's soil produced significant progress on the key issues of the conflict between Syria and Israel.

Playing host and go-between in an attempt to solve this major part of the Arab-Israeli conflict could not but boost Turkey's self-esteem. Indeed, the prospects of playing such a major role were a key reason for Turkey's minor reaction to the September 6, 2007 attack on the Syrian nuclear reactor, attributed to Israel. According to press reports, fuel tanks used by the jets attacking the reactor were found on Turkish soil.³ Turkey's belief in the importance of this diplomatic role was also underscored by Foreign Minister Davutoglu, who in the aforementioned article, referred to Turkey's mediation between Syria and Israel several times as evidence of the success of the policies he engineered.

The talks between Israel and Syria came to an abrupt end when President Asad of Syria broke them off as a result of Operation Cast Lead in Gaza, Israel's military campaign designed to stop rocket launching from Gaza on civilian centers inside Israel. The new Likud-led Israeli government, sworn in on March 31, 2009, has opted not to pursue the talks with Syria, a legitimate decision but most probably not well conveyed and properly explained to the Turkish government.

The resumption of the currently stalled Syrian-Israeli negotiations, a development that should not be discounted, could entail further strains on Israeli-Turkish relations. The US administration under President Obama has turned US policy towards Syria around, and the policy of engagement has been noticeably applied. After a five-year absence, a US ambassador will be reinstated in Damascus. Meanwhile, the Syrian capital has been frequented by US Special Envoy to the Middle East Senator George Mitchell, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Senator John Kerry, and other US officials. While Israel will prefer the US as a mediator, Syria, given its much improved relations with Turkey, may nonetheless opt for Turkey. The US cannot ignore this Syrian preference without alienating Ankara. What may emerge, if Syria and Israel decide to resume talks, is a joint behind-the-scenes Turkey-US mediation effort, which both Israel and Syria could accept.

Directly linked to the Syrian-Israeli file is the new phase in Turkey's relations with Iran. The improved dialogue between the two has been a cause for concern to the transatlantic community as well as to Israel. For years, even before the AKP took control of the government in Ankara, Turkey turned a blind eye towards the shipments of arms from Iran to Hizbollah in Lebanon, using Turkish and Syrian airspace. As long as the military relations between Israel and Turkey flourished, Israel opted not to rock the boat and publicly ignored Turkey's role in the supply of weapons to Hizbollah. This perforce would change with Israel's demand from Syria, in the context of a negotiated settlement to their conflict, to end both the military relations with Iran and the role of conduit and supplier of arms to Hizbollah. A similar request would necessarily be addressed to Turkey as well.

The Iranian military nuclear program has emerged as another cause for tension between Israel and Turkey. In an interview on March 29, 2010, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan defended Iran, and when asked about sanctions against Iran he replied, "Sanctions have been imposed against Iran several times, but what is the result?...What we need is diplomacy, diplomacy, diplomacy. Anything else will do nothing but threaten global peace. And don't those who are exerting pressure have nuclear bombs of their own? Turkey isn't a nuclear power, but there is one country in

this region that does have nuclear weapons.” He did not respond directly whether he meant Israel.⁴

More significant was Turkey’s role, together with Brazil, in reaching the May 17, 2010 joint declaration with Iran. The central operative paragraph in this declaration is Iran’s willingness to deposit 1200 kg of low enriched uranium in Turkey. The terms of the declaration fall short of the demands of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, who continued in their efforts to adopt tougher sanctions against Iran. Beyond the new technical differences, the Turkish involvement is in stark contradiction to the “model partnership” that President Obama praised in his visit to Ankara, and a signal for further confrontation with Israel on the whole nuclear issue.

This will be a major test of the relations between Israel and Turkey, especially since in 2010 the latter is a member of the UN Security Council. On June 9, Turkey voted against UN Security Council Resolution 1929, which called for tougher sanctions against Iran on a matter viewed in Israel as existential – though Turkish high ranking officials asserted that Turkey will comply with the sanctions. It will be virtually impossible for the Israeli leadership to entrust Turkey with the role of a mediator with Syria while Turkey continues to side with Iran and Syria.

The Israel Angle

Prime Minister Erdogan is the leading critical Turkish politician against Israel, although not the only one. In recent months barely a week has passed without a statement by him criticizing Israel for its actions as he perceives them. Erdogan’s ideological roots are entrenched in Islam, and in his early political activity he was a member of the Muslim Welfare Party whose leader, Necmettin Erbakan, was prime minister for a short while from 1996-97.

The fact that Erdogan’s venom against Israel became clear only after Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in late 2008-early 2009 can be explained in several ways. One is personal and has to do with the visit Prime Minister Olmert paid Erdogan 72 hours before the operation started. Olmert could not be expected to tell his host about the pending operation, but a possible inference could have been that Erdogan knew of it. In addition, Turkey was

the first to open its doors to the new Hamas leaders who won the Palestinian elections in January 2006; on February 16 of that year Erdogan met with Hamas leader Khaled Mashal. As in the case of Israel's low key response to Turkey's role in the transfer of weapons to Hizbollah, its abstention from an angry reaction to the warm reception of the Hamas leader can be explained by the wish not to upset the military relations with Turkey. Erdogan's personal involvement with the İnsani Yardım Vakfı, the Turkish organization behind the aid flotilla to Gaza, could become another bone of contention between the two states.

Thus, Erdogan's reaction to Israel's operation in Gaza cannot be seen as just anger at the sight of the sufferings of Muslim brethren in Gaza. Rather, it should be seen as a combination of his ideological roots and the new role Turkey is seeking for itself in the Middle East. If this is the case, there is very little that Israel can do to mollify the current Turkish prime minister.

Israel's dilemma concerning the bilateral military cooperation could become irrelevant if the systematic weakening of the military's status in Turkey continues. In February 2010 more than 60 high ranking army officers, active and retirees, were arrested and charged with having planned a coup d'état. Among those arrested were the commanders of the navy and the air force, the two military branches with which joint Israeli-Turkish exercises were conducted. Regardless of the accusations' veracity, this must be seen as a part of the continuous campaign by the current Turkish government to end the military's role in Turkey's politics as the guardian of Kemal Ataturk's legacy. Some observers have explained Erdogan's pressure on the European Union to start accession talks as a way to enlist EU support for eliminating the army's traditional central role in Turkish politics and subjecting the army to the full control of the civilian authorities. Certainly Turkey's policy of "zero problems" developed by Foreign Minister Davutoglu further reduces the importance of the army as it concentrates on improving relations with past problematic neighbors such as Armenia, Syria, Iran, and the Kurds.

In any event, the military establishment in Turkey was the key promoter of relations with Israel. This cooperation will no doubt be reduced under the current political climate in Turkey, and the Turkish military is unlikely to spar on relations with Israel, which is clearly an insignificant issue

between the army and the government. Asked about agreements between Israel and Turkey, presumably in the area of defense, Erdogan replied that they were signed in the past and they remain valid. "Of course, some of the steps we take should not be subject to emotions, but events that may take place may force us to adopt different positions."⁵

Though Israel's defense minister Ehud Barak was well received during his visit to Ankara in January 2010, the military cooperation and the joint ventures in defense are unlikely to continue at the pre-2008 level. Erdogan's answer on this issue may indicate a policy that will only allow the current agreements to run their course. The Israeli Air Force has been quick to draw the conclusion from the deteriorating relations between Israel and Turkey and shifted to Greece as an alternative airspace for training.⁶

In this context, it is to be anticipated that Turkey, as a NATO member, may try and curtail Israel's cooperation with the organization. In recent years, Israel and NATO cooperated on upgrading their relations through the Individual Cooperation program (Mark I and II) within NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue. Even after the rise of the AKP to power, Turkey did not object to the growing relations between NATO and Israel. This may change and as decisions in NATO are adopted by consensus, Turkey may cast a veto on any Israeli participation in NATO activities.

Israel's overall relations with Turkey will of course be influenced by Turkey's relations with both the US and the EU. Blaming Turkey's orientation towards the immediate neighborhood on the European Union's failure to allow meaningful progress in the accession negotiations with Turkey is too simplistic an explanation. For Turkey, membership in the EU could demand tough decisions on domestic issues, which it can currently avoid. On the other hand, the failure of the European Union either to make Turkey face these choices by pushing forward the negotiations, or otherwise propose to anchor Turkey more closely to the EU by offering a clearer description of what Chancellor Merkel dubs a "privileged partnership," may be described as a strategic blunder.⁷ Under the current political circumstances in Turkey and Europe, full Turkish membership in the EU would certainly add an extreme critical voice of Israel to the group of countries in the EU holding similar views, but from Israel's point of view that could prove to be a less costly option than Turkey drifting away

towards a coalition with Syria, Iran, and sub-state organizations such as Hamas and Hizbollah.

A failure of the central government in Iraq in the wake of the US pullout could ignite each of the informal coalition partners and add to the whole region's instability. With Iran becoming a nuclear power, Turkey may not necessarily opt to acquire similar capabilities, but its mere alliance with a nuclear Iran may tilt the strategic balance in the region, raising serious questions and concerns not only in Israel but in Egypt, the Gulf, and even in the former Soviet republics in Central Asia.

The possible establishment of a Palestinian state either as a result of a negotiated settlement or by a UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) may create additional potential friction between Israel and Turkey. Notwithstanding its attitude towards Hamas, Turkey is expected to be one of the first to recognize the Palestinian state and offer it political support whenever disputes would arise between this state and Israel.

Furthermore, the Turkish private sector has been active in promoting industrial parks in the West Bank, which will add several thousand jobs to the Palestinian labor market. In general, stronger economic relations with Israel, especially in the energy sector, may replace the political and military relations. Turkey is fast becoming a major artery and hub for oil and natural gas. Whether as a consumer or a supplier, mostly of natural gas, Israel will seek Turkey's cooperation. Similarly, water can become another area where Turkey's role will become significant. Though in the past Turkey refused to be involved in water issues between Israel and Syria, it is clear that releasing more water by Turkey to Syria would ease the pressures on Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian state if Syria in turn releases more water flowing down the Yarmouk.

Conclusion

There is now sufficient evidence to conclude that Israel has lost Turkey under the AKP as a strategic partner. The shift in Turkey's foreign and regional policy will exacerbate tensions between the two, as Israel is unlikely to provide Turkey with the opportunities the latter seeks as a mediator. The implications for the strategic balance in the region should become a regular issue in Israel's strategic dialogue with the transatlantic

community, as the interests of both the EU and the US may come into conflict with Turkey's ambitions in the region.

Turkey's president, its prime minister, and other high ranking politicians deny a shift in Turkey's foreign policy. The initiative taken by Turkey and Brazil and then their vote on Security Council Resolution 1929 is, however, viewed in Washington and some European and Middle Eastern capitals with concern. Turkey will go to the polls twice in 2010-11, first in September 2010, to vote in a referendum on constitutional changes that are seen by the opposition in Turkey as an attempt by the government to increase its control of the juridical system. Then in November 2011, the country will vote in general elections. These two upcoming tests may explain the growing populist manner in which the current political leadership handles various issues, including foreign affairs. Yet Ankara may be required to recalibrate its public posture and tone down its public rhetoric to allay some of the concerns that it has recently raised.

Israel need not be provoked by Turkish statements and actions or automatically reject Turkish government initiatives. Any objections can be communicated in the proper diplomatic channels, avoiding a public rebuff. The incumbent prime minister will want to use any Israeli action for his populist policies and there is no good reason to oblige him. In general, the general elections scheduled in 2011 may not prompt a change in Turkey's politics and the AKP hold, and Israeli action and reaction would likely have a very marginal effect on the results.

Given the two electoral tests for the AKP government in the next 18 months, Turkey may continue to confound its traditional allies. A victory for the ruling party, especially in the forthcoming general elections, could seal the major change in the strategic Middle East balance. Such a change will force Israel to give a strategic response, among other options, by creating a "southern axis" of states equally concerned by the northern radical axis.

Notes

1 *Foreign Policy*, May 20, 2010.

2 Interview to Sabah, December 4, 2009, and also Suat Kimiklioglu, "No, Turkey has no Ottoman Nostalgia," Project Syndicate, December 13, 2009.

- 3 *The New York Times* reported on October 10, 2007 that Israel shared with Turkey the intelligence on the reactor. *Der Spiegel* reported on February 11, 2009 that Prime Minister Olmert called the Turkish prime minister immediately after the operation had ended.
- 4 *Der Spiegel*, March 29, 2010.
- 5 *Der Spiegel*, March 29, 2010.
- 6 Hellenic Air Force website, May 25, 2010.
- 7 Turkey's chief negotiator with the EU, Minister Egemen Bagis, said that the term did not exist in the 110,000 pages of EU legislation. He added that Turkey could not assess something that did not exist. *Journal of Turkish Daily*, April 1, 2010.

Part III
Regional Trends:
Challenges and Responses

**Challenges to the United States in the
Greater Middle East**

Mark A. Heller / 121

**The American-Israeli Relationship:
Between Crisis and Common Cause**

Jeremy Issacharoff / 131

The Iranian Challenge

Ephraim Kam / 141

The European Union and the Middle East

Shimon Stein / 157

**Approaching the End of the Mubarak Era:
Egypt's Achievements and Challenges**

Yoram Meital / 175

**Lebanon: Between Democratization and
Islamization**

Benedetta Berti / 189

Sunni Islamist Militancy in the Region and Beyond

Yoram Schweitzer and Jonathan Schachter / 201

Challenges to the United States in the Greater Middle East

Mark A. Heller

America and the Muslim World: A New Beginning?

Along with the presidency of the United States, Barack Obama inherited from his predecessor the most serious economic crisis facing the country since the Great Depression of the 1930s. But while confronting that crisis was his most urgent priority, Obama, unlike Franklin Delano Roosevelt, did not initially confine himself to the economy to the exclusion of almost all else. Of course, this was not just a matter of arbitrary preference. The world has changed beyond recognition since 1932. Roosevelt assumed the leadership of a potential great power but one that was at peace and determined to remain there, largely by isolating itself from the rest of the world (at least outside the Western Hemisphere). Obama's America, by contrast, functioned in a much more globalized and interdependent economy and was, moreover, the undisputable superpower of the international system – notwithstanding the increasingly fashionable discourse of “declinism.” Even more to the point, it was actively fighting two foreign wars and prosecuting an ongoing struggle against international terrorism.

Consequently, Obama had to act simultaneously on both the domestic and international levels. On the latter front, the Greater Middle East inevitably enjoyed pride of place. That was the locale of America's two ground wars, the wellspring of terrorism, the epicenter of the global energy market, the greatest challenge to nuclear non-proliferation, and even – at least during George W. Bush's first term as president – the source of major tensions in the transatlantic partnership.

It is therefore not surprising that the Greater Middle East quickly came to dominate Obama's foreign policy agenda. Other matters, of course, could not be completely ignored. Much was made of the administration's desire to "reset" prickly relations with Russia, and ties with China, which had been the centerpiece of the Bush administration's foreign policy until 9/11, were also a focus of concern – particularly in their economic dimension. But the preeminence of the Greater Middle East and the Muslim world was symbolized by the fact that Obama's very first concrete act, within days of his inauguration, was to appoint two high profile special envoys: George Mitchell, for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and Richard Holbrooke, for AfPak (Afghanistan-Pakistan).

If there was a single underlying theme in the administration's approach to the Greater Middle East, it was that America's difficulties in dealing with specific problems in this part of the world stemmed not from structural realities (America's status as superpower), intrinsic conflicts of interest, or cultural and ideological contradictions, but rather intense public and governmental suspicion of American motives and hostility to American actions or inactions. As a result, the administration was convinced that the way to draw the poison from this relationship was proactive engagement in word and deed. The word consisted of a series of declarations stressing America's desire to seek "a new beginning" and launch a positive and constructive relationship with Muslims. In these statements, most prominently the address at Cairo University in June 2009, Obama tried to reach out both by stressing America's tolerance of cultural diversity in general and its respectful attitude toward Islam in particular, and by constructing a narrative of two centuries of felicitous Muslim presence in the United States. (In what might have been an implicit dig at France, he even noted that the United States government had gone to court to protect the right of Muslim women to wear the *hijab*.) Extending an "open hand" to the Islamic Republic of Iran and visibly embracing King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and President Husni Mubarak of Egypt, two rulers who had greeted President Bush's promotion of democratization with frosty reserve, Obama also tried to disarm criticism that America was bent on imposing its own political values on others, i.e., pursuing regime change.

Finally, Obama directly addressed what is often described as the most neuralgic issue in US-Muslim relations, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although he never explicitly articulated a twenty-first century update of what Elie Kedourie once called the “Chatham House Version” – the belief widely held in the British establishment after World War I that were it not for Britain’s ties with the Jews, the generals would have their bases, the diplomats would have their treaties, the businessmen would have their contracts, and the missionaries would have their converts – Obama did signal his determination to preempt the persistent accusations against other American administrations of insufficient attentiveness to the problem or excessive bias in favor of Israel. Moreover, various figures in the administration asserted a linkage between the close US-Israeli relationship and America’s difficulties elsewhere in the region.

Vision and Reality

These rhetorical flourishes had a near-term payoff: public opinion surveys initially showed a palpable improvement in America’s image in most Muslim countries. However, this had little tangible impact on America’s ability to advance its goals, and popularity, though never reverting to the lows at the end of the Bush administration, soon began to regress. There was no single explanation for the swing in public opinion, except perhaps the unrealistic expectations fed by Bush’s departure and Obama’s rhetoric. Indeed, one obvious problem was the gap between word and deed that emerged in very short order. Obama, for example, could easily cultivate good will by promising the closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility, the object of much resentment because it embodies a blatant contradiction between American judicial principles and the actual treatment of detainees, almost all of whom were Muslims. But it was far harder to actually do it, given the reluctance to release more terrorists – some who had previously been released had already returned to their pre-capture activities – and the unwillingness of American allies (and Americans themselves) to provide sanctuary for released detainees or even to try them in civilian courts. More than a year after the promise was given to close it within a year, Guantanamo was still in business.

Second, Obama's words and gestures were simply not enough to overwhelm the policies of regional actors that were grounded in national or regime interests as understood by their ruling elites. Tehran, for example, could happily accept Obama's acknowledgment of the need for a course correction in US-Iran relations, but the regime showed no inclination at all to backtrack on its drive for nuclear weapons, its support for terrorist organizations, its incitement against Israel and the West, or its repression of domestic opposition. Engagement with Syria also produced few positive results. Syria welcomed the revival of high level consultations and the posting of a resident American ambassador to Damascus after a five year hiatus, but it maintained (as did Turkey) its intimate ties with Iran, its meddling in Lebanese affairs (including ongoing material support for Hizbollah), and, according to some reports, its facilitation of access to Iraq by "foreign fighters." Indeed, the pilgrimages to Damascus of erstwhile Lebanese adversaries of Syria – especially Prime Minister Saad Hariri and Druze leader Walid Jumblatt (both of whose fathers were widely thought to have been assassinated at the orders of Hafez al-Asad, the father of Syrian president Bashar al-Asad) – seemed to suggest that local leaders with political antennae finely tuned to the vagaries of regional power balances had already concluded that America had become a weak reed on which to lean. And whatever they may have thought or said in private, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other Arab allies (like Russia and China) were unwilling to incur Iranian wrath or jeopardize economic interests by publicly endorsing American calls for pressure on Iran to halt its nuclear development program. The most they were prepared to do was to "contextualize" the issue by repeating longstanding calls for a comprehensive approach to a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East, to include Israel. Finally, on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Obama did gain considerable credibility in Arab and Muslim eyes by assertively staking out a position at variance with that of the Israeli government, but then lost much of it by failing to "deliver" Israel in the way that many Arabs had hoped.

Third, much as it appeared to be grounded in a philosophically consistent world view, Obama's new policy with respect to the Greater Middle East could not avoid certain internal contradictions. One was the seeming dilemma of maintaining the US-Israel strategic alliance while

promoting the United States as a more assertive and (in Arab eyes) more credible mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This dilemma might theoretically be diluted by the administration's insistence that what it sought was also in Israel's best interest, but in practice was almost certain to persist.

Another, perhaps even more blatant contradiction was the desire to be seen to have abandoned any pretense of political/cultural hegemony while simultaneously reiterating the traditional American commitment to democracy. This involved such difficult intellectual contortions that it soon proved totally unmanageable, and democratization was effectively dropped as a central motif of American policy under Obama. That no doubt reassured and mitigated the hostility of regimes and their apologists, whose goodwill the US wanted or needed to cultivate, as well, perhaps paradoxically, as Islamist opposition movements that also viewed democracy (and pluralism and women's rights) as an alien ideological construct imposed by arrogant Western crusaders. But it could only have the opposite effect on liberal forces that had drawn inspiration from the previous administration's admission that America had too often been willing to sacrifice freedom for the sake of stability. Perhaps the most poignant example came in the wake of Obama's lukewarm response to the post-election crackdown in Iran (almost surely prompted by the desperate desire to avoid the accusation of interference in another country's internal affairs), when some demonstrators, consciously recalling Bush's much ridiculed rhetoric in connection with the war on terrorism, carried signs with the sarcastic inscription "Obama, you're either with us or against us."

Finally, there were some cases in which the effects of engagement rhetoric were simply swept away by an emotional tsunami caused by American actions beyond Obama's control. The most prominent example concerned Turkey, where "Obamania" had already been restrained and where whatever more favorable attitudes he had been able to cultivate couldn't survive a vote by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives to label the mass murder of Armenians during World War I as "genocide."

An Interim Balance Sheet

Transatlantic Relations

Taken together, these factors resulted in a far less dramatic transformation of American standing in the Greater Middle East than many in and out of the administration had hoped for. In fact, the greatest effect of the Obama rhetorical approach to the Greater Middle East may actually have been on US-European relations. In Europe, Obama was welcomed as something of a messiah. His emphasis on consultation, multilateralism, and the importance of international law and institutions in his declaratory worldview had even greater resonance in Europe than in America, and after his election, the vitriol in transatlantic discourse, which had already seriously abated during Bush's second term, practically disappeared. Indeed, some Europeans began to wonder if America under Obama was becoming too conciliatory, especially with respect to Iran. As a result, even when Obama authorized actions that were just as muscular as Bush's, such as targeted assassinations of suspected terrorists in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and elsewhere that sometimes caused considerable collateral damage, he drew virtually no criticism from European allies. Not all of this translated into much more active European support for American policies, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan (the Netherlands, for example, announced what seemed to many Americans as a premature withdrawal of the Dutch contingent in the NATO force in Afghanistan), but at least the aim of rhetorical reconciliation was accomplished.

Iraq

In the Greater Middle East, however, the impact of the new American approach was rather more ambiguous. Obama, for all the talk of change, essentially pursued a course in Iraq laid out by his predecessor: an exit strategy based on a military surge and cooption of Sunni tribes intended to produce enough stabilization, entrenchment of political institutions, and "Iraqi-ization" of the security effort to permit the withdrawal of American forces from active combat operations, the drawdown to what is termed a "transitional force" of 50,000 by August 2010 and the departure of those forces by mid-2011. These processes resulted in a continuing drop in American and Iraqi casualties and remained sufficiently on track during

2009 for parliamentary elections to be held in early 2010. The elections themselves were free and fair enough to prompt at least one observer to suggest that they were the only elections in the Arab world where the results were not known in advance. Moreover, the appearance and relative success of at least one avowedly Iraqi national, i.e., non-sectarian party raised the hope that the country might actually be moving to transcend the sectarianism that had produced such a paroxysm of violence after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Still, this remained at best a distant prospect. The elections were preceded by a wave of bombings and accompanied by charges of fraud. They produced inconclusive results that ushered in a prolonged period of political maneuvering that might well end in deadlock and renewed ethno-national and confessional conflict. That had not really been eliminated anyway, as attested to by the election results (the secular Iraqiyya Party did well only in Sunni-dominated areas), the continuing Arab-Kurdish-Turkmen tensions in Mosul (along with the virtual expulsion of Christians from there), and the inability to reach an agreed formula on the division of oil revenues. Thus, there was little to guarantee that the reconstruction of Iraq would not eventually degenerate into renewed large scale violence, renewed dictatorship, or Iranian domination. Although Iraq was essentially Bush's war and Obama had consistently opposed it, he nevertheless inherited responsibility for its outcome. And despite the revolution he ostensibly introduced into America's overall approach to this part of the world, a positive outcome on his watch, i.e., the emergence of an Iraqi government stable and authoritative enough to be safely left to its own devices, remained far from assured.

Afghanistan-Pakistan

Events in AfPak were, if anything, a source of even greater concern. Unlike the war in Iraq, the campaign in Afghanistan was endorsed by Obama as a "war of necessity." Indeed, his criticism of the commitment to Iraq was that it diverted resources and attention from Afghanistan, the real source of the terrorist threat, making it harder to achieve decisive results there. Accordingly, Obama quickly began to redirect resources to that theater of operations. Immediately after taking office he sent 20,000 more troops to

the area, even as he ordered a major review of American strategy in the face of renewed Taliban challenges to central authority. After protracted consultations – so drawn out, in fact, that critics began to accuse of him of being an indecisive “ditherer” – he finally settled on the same solution he had denigrated in Iraq: a major surge involving an additional 30,000 troops (fewer than area commanders had recommended but still a substantial buildup, particularly if they were joined by the 10,000 others requested from NATO allies). The NATO force buildup proceeded in parallel with a continuing buildup of the Afghan National Army and National Police Force, all of which eventually paved the way for the first major Afghan-led military offensive (Operation Mushtarak) in early 2010. That operation enabled the coalition to take and hold Marja, a major Taliban stronghold in Helmand Province.

The significance of any tactical successes, however, was undermined by growing doubts about the integrity of the Afghan security forces and bureaucracy and the legitimacy of the government of President Hamid Karzai. The first round of the presidential election, in August 2009, was marred by low voter turnout and accusations of widespread ballot stuffing, intimidation, and other electoral fraud. The runoff, scheduled for November, was canceled at the last minute when Karzai’s main opponent, Abdullah Abdullah, withdrew because he believed that the chances of a fair contest were practically nonexistent. Similar concerns caused parliamentary elections, originally scheduled for May 2010, to be postponed until September. Given the lack of clear progress in the formation of credible national political institutions, there was considerable skepticism about whether American forces, slated to begin their withdrawal in July 2011, would leave behind a government any more willing or able to govern Afghanistan in a manner compatible with American interests than the one the US had ousted when it invaded the country in 2001.

A central feature of what was billed as Obama’s comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan was ongoing counterterrorism actions across the Pakistani border, aimed at denying Taliban fighters sanctuary there. These were accompanied by exhortations to the Pakistani government to undertake more aggressive military operations against Pakistan’s own Taliban movement in tribal areas traditionally beyond the

control of central authorities. US strikes by unmanned aircraft did eliminate many Afghan Taliban commanders, although the collateral damage – civilian casualties – did little to enhance America’s popularity in that part of the world. In late 2009, the Pakistani army was eventually moved to launch a large scale operation in South Waziristan, though perhaps more in response to a wave of bombings by Islamist groups throughout the country than to American urgings to support the campaign in Afghanistan, which actually heightened political tensions between the two countries.

Pakistani ambivalence was explained by sensitivity to domestic criticism that such operations only turned the army into a mercenary force in the service of the Americans; the longstanding use of Islamist movements for its own purposes by the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence Agency); and the army’s conviction that resources and manpower should always be reserved for use against Pakistan’s “real” enemy – India. The same elusive formula for the right political-military mix that seemed tantalizingly out of reach in Afghanistan also eluded the United States in Pakistan. Moreover, while the United States did not have a large direct presence in the latter country, the existence of a significant nuclear arsenal there made the potential risks of failure far greater.

Obama and Sisyphus

The most striking aspect to American operations in the Greater Middle East (as in Bosnia and Kosovo a decade before) is that they have proceeded for years with varying degrees of participation by Western allies, but apart from the provision of some (NATO-designated) logistical facilities by Turkey, with virtually no overt material support from other Muslim countries. Even after the ostensible “reset” of relations under Obama, and despite all the public diplomacy efforts to change the prevailing perception, most of the Muslim world continues to act as though these are efforts made by America in or to the Muslim world but not for the Muslim world. This suggests that while Obama may have made some progress in alleviating the suspicion and hostility that have long overshadowed the relationship, the aim of real partnership, which is at the center of his policy of engagement, remains beyond his grasp. But perhaps that would be true of any American president.

The American-Israeli Relationship: Between Crisis and Common Cause

Jeremy Issacharoff

The Agenda of Change

With elections in America and Israel and new governments emerging in both countries in 2009, changes in tone and substance in the bilateral relationship over the last year could have been expected. President Obama's agenda of change, a critical factor in his election campaign, struck a resonant chord within America but touched foreign policy issues in different ways. There were strong elements of continuity to be found regarding Iraq and the surge policy finally adopted in Afghanistan, as well as other issues on the foreign policy agenda.

Conversely, regarding the Israeli-Palestinian track there was a dominant feeling in the new administration that change was vital and that the process abandoned for seven years by President Bush finally needed to be resolved. Like previous administrations seeking to emphasize departure from previous policies, the Obama approach tended to downplay that there had in fact been significant progress on the ground since the meeting in Annapolis in the fall of 2007, though the conflict as a whole had remained unresolved.

In the wake of Annapolis there was an ongoing channel of direct negotiations between senior Israelis and Palestinians that discreetly found a balance between interim and final status issues to be broached, without creating a sense of crisis or drama. In addition, the Palestinian Security Forces trained by General Dayton developed a greater capacity to maintain law and order in their areas of deployment, and there was greater working coordination between the respective security forces, more confiscation

of illegal arms, more stability within Palestinian cities in the West Bank, high economic growth, enhanced investment, and greater movement and access in the West Bank. While progress was made, significant problems remained and it was evident that the parties still needed time before a deal could be put together.

In Israel, the sentiments that guided the elections were change of a different kind. People in Israel had emerged from another two wars, in Lebanon and Gaza, not overly inspired by prospects of peace, with an array of problematic internal issues and the evolving threat of a nuclear Iran. The Annapolis process was overshadowed by the events in Gaza, though the situation of relative calm in the West Bank during Operation Cast Lead showed that the progress on the ground was real. The outcome of the elections in Israel produced a new coalition government that would approach the negotiations with the Palestinians differently. Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech at Bar Ilan University in June 2009 detailed his overall approach to a two-state solution with the Palestinians that essentially would recognize Israel as a Jewish state and guarantee the demilitarization of the Palestinian state.

All of these elements of change fashioned the somewhat ironic and problematic outcome. The differences between Israel and the United States regarding the Palestinian issue emerged at a time when the situation on the ground had clearly improved and was the best since the outbreak of the second intifada in 2000. The circumstances that unfolded during 2009 seemed to transform the conflict into an Israeli-American dispute and propelled the issue of Jerusalem to center stage in a way that would almost guarantee a stalemate. The "crisis" in US-Israel relations to a large extent occurred regardless of the question whether there was an actual deal on the table ready to be made between Israel and the Palestinians. Furthermore, at this stage the "crisis" has not appeared to serve any wider strategic interest or the peace process it was designed to stimulate.

In parallel, the region itself has continued to undergo major changes that have impacted heavily on the respective national security interests of both America and Israel. The strategic challenges for both have assumed greater and more significant proportions, and the need for frequent and intense consultation and coordination has rarely been higher.

The bilateral relationship between America and Israel constitutes a mutual strategic interest of the first order, and given the scope and severity of threats in the region, the timing of the present difficulties was particularly severe. It appears that major facets of the relationship, particularly the strategic ones, have continued to operate on the working professional level, despite intermittent tensions at the more senior political level. Though the bilateral relationship is experiencing difficulties these problems are reversible, and in the past both countries have shown the ability to overcome more complex differences.

Distinct and Overlapping Strategic Agendas

Over the last decade the range of American interests in the Near East and Western Asia has undergone profound transformation. They include active involvement in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan; contending with the Iranian nuclear and missile threat, the situation in Lebanon, Hizbollah, Syria, Yemen, the threat of al-Qaeda, the Palestinian territories (the West Bank and Gaza), and the moderate Arab world feeling threatened by Iran; and maintaining oil prices at a reasonable level. All of these problems have become more intractable, and the demands on America's resources and assets have grown considerably without any quick and easy solutions at hand.

Because the United States is perceived as the leading superpower in the world, there is still a tendency to underestimate the impact and weight of the present strategic challenges it faces in the Middle East and South Asia, as well as with regard to North Korea. These are times that even the United States will look to its friends and expect its allies to help in sharing this burden, just as those allies expect American support and assistance in their times of need.

For Israel, the Iranian nuclear threat is proceeding at a considerable pace, particularly with the announcement by Iran that it would enrich uranium to the level of 20 percent. This constitutes another snub to the repeated mandatory calls to Iran by the UN Security Council and the IAEA to suspend its enrichment and reprocessing activities. Iran will likely continue to stall and play for time and evade international demands to curtail its nuclear activities. Tough, concerted, sustained, and unified

action led by the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and China could still have an impact on and modify Iran's nuclear ambitions. These are critical moments for Israel that will indeed determine whether Iran's attainment of a nuclear weapons capability is inevitable or not.

While these strategic agendas are not identical, they overlap to a great extent and are influenced by a rapidly changing region that feeds on the same actors, trends, and drivers.

A regional characteristic that has become more apparent is that the events and challenges in the Middle East have become more interconnected, beyond the question of political linkages between issues. In any analysis, for example, it is almost impossible to ignore distinct Iranian military and political involvement in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gulf area, the Palestinian territories (particularly Gaza), and the Sinai Desert. This Iranian involvement (also through proxies) has affected the course of events in Iraq and Afghanistan from the US point of view; the Second Lebanon War in 2006 and the Operation Cast Lead of 2008-9 in Gaza are examples from Israel's point of view. Understanding this connectivity is important from an analytical perspective and also vital in formulating political and diplomatic responses, devising counter strategies, and projecting deterrence.

For Israel, while there have been military clashes before in Lebanon and Gaza, the latest rounds of hostilities in both are clearly a result of greater Iranian involvement, whether in the supply of weaponry, missiles, rockets, military systems, training, doctrine, or major financial backing to Hizbollah in Lebanon or Hamas in Gaza. The elements of coordination between Iran and its proxies and partners, like Syria, are considerable and far more substantial than it appears to the public eye. While these clashes are confined largely to a specific geographical theater, they have much broader implications for Israel, the moderate Arab world, and the United States.

These asymmetrical and proxy conflicts, with Iran's quest for nuclear weapons in the immediate background, will be one of the fundamental challenges to the United States and Israel in the coming years. It will also challenge the strategic cooperation between them and demand new and creative responses. The development of responses offers vital learning curves that Israel and the United States can share. Such responses can

be effective, though they may take time to develop, as was the case with the prevention by Israel of suicide bombers during the second Palestinian intifada from 2002 onwards. Another example of this was the surge in Iraq initiated by President George Bush in his speech of January 10, 2007, which appeared to transform the situation in Iraq and the negative role of outside interests operating there. One key element of that latter turnaround was the determination by the United States to project an intense resolve to take the necessary steps to achieve the goals of the surge by addressing and deterring Iran and Syria.

The maintenance of deterrence with regard to Iran, Syria, and their proxies will remain a critical strategic factor for both the United States and Israel. Deterrence and disruption can still play a critical role with regard to curtailing WMD programs and lend vital credibility to ongoing parallel diplomatic efforts to curb these programs. While it was thought that a state has less classical deterrent power with regard to terrorist groups, this equation changes as terrorist groups begin to assume more powers and responsibilities generally associated with states, as in the cases of Hamas in Gaza and Hizbollah in Lebanon.

Both American and Israeli strategic agendas are considerable. No one can foresee the course of events over the next year and the extent to which both countries will be tested, whether in Iraq, Afghanistan, Gaza, Lebanon, or even Iran, bearing in mind the increasing connectivity between these issues. Another round of hostilities in Gaza or another provocation by Hizbollah in Lebanon cannot be excluded. Similarly no one can guarantee that a wider clash between Iran and Israel will not occur, or worse still, that all three situations will not erupt at once. This is one of the central reasons that senior Israeli and American officials talk of the need to “avoid any daylight” at this time between Israel and the United States.

Managing the Relationship

There is no real substitute to the depth of Israeli-US strategic cooperation on a number of different levels. Over the years there have been considerable exchanges, whether in the field of intelligence, different operational challenges in the conventional battlefield context, the realms of counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, counter proliferation, and other areas

that have a critical impact on overall national security like ballistic missile defense. For these reasons, the Israeli-American strategic relationship is mutually important, and a concerted effort is warranted to prevent the respective strategic agendas from drifting apart.

Elements that will ensure and augur well for the strategic relationship include the continued implementation of the Memorandum of Agreement signed in 2008 for Israel's security assistance for the next decade and continued harmonization between both countries' export control systems regarding the sale of defense equipment to third countries. Other issues of central importance will be the maintenance of America's commitment to Israel's qualitative military edge and the continued coordination between the two countries on arms control and disarmament initiatives. These will remain vital components in preventing any erosion in Israel's ability to defend itself or deter its adversaries.

In the minds of many Israelis, the Obama administration's attempts to reach out to the Arab and Muslim world have yet to be balanced by similar overtures to Israel. The Israeli public's perception of the administration has deteriorated and over time this could reflect on the overall American role and capability in helping Israel pursue peace opportunities with its neighbors. The March 2010 visit of Vice President Biden was designed primarily to reach out to the Israeli people, but the announcement regarding the extension of construction in the Ramat Shlomo neighborhood in Jerusalem undermined this and injected a new level of bilateral tension. That incident should not prevent additional efforts to improve the general atmosphere between the present administration and the Israeli public.

Similarly the Israeli public should not lose sight of the fact that the fundamentals of the bilateral security relationship that Joe Biden emphasized in Israel have remained strong, and that the "unshakable" US commitment to Israel's security has also been reaffirmed by successive American presidents, including President Obama. This is a cardinal factor in the preservation of Israel's strategic standing in the region and the world, particularly as the threshold of Iran acquiring a nuclear weapons capability approaches.

It can be assumed that the US desire and commitment to move the Israeli-Palestinian track forward will not grow weaker or less determined, and will remain a key national security interest of the United States. By

the same token, it should be recalled that the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict also touches sensitive national security interests for Israel. Though prospects of major breakthroughs are not strong at this point, a more synchronized Israeli-American approach to talks with the Palestinians could emerge, despite the tensions in recent months and given the onset of proximity talks conducted through Senator Mitchell.

Some elements of convergence may be found in Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech at Bar Ilan University last year, the Israeli decision to adopt a moratorium on construction in the settlements in the West Bank, and Secretary of State Clinton's response to the moratorium on November 25, 2009 which has now become part of the administration's lexicon regarding the resolution of the conflict. The Secretary stated:

[The] announcement by the Government of Israel helps move forward toward resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We believe that through good-faith negotiations the parties can mutually agree on an outcome which ends the conflict and reconciles the Palestinian goal of an independent and viable state based on the 1967 lines, with agreed swaps, and the Israeli goal of a Jewish state with secure and recognized borders that reflect subsequent developments and meet Israeli security requirements. Let me say to all the people of the region and world: our commitment to achieving a solution with two states living side by side in peace and security is unwavering.¹

A positive and dynamic peace process between Israel and its neighbors has generally tended to strengthen the tone and atmosphere of American-Israeli relations and also reinforce the sense of common purpose. Without positive momentum towards the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, valuable time could be lost, the bilateral relationship could become less intimate, and America will have no lack of other pressing issues in the region to address, including Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, as well as Iran. In that context it should be emphasized that while the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would clearly be a positive regional development, it would have little immediate impact in neutralizing or modifying the actual threats that America and Israel face, respectively and jointly, in the foreseeable future.

In the final analysis however, this is not a negotiation between Israel and the United States, and the Palestinian side, with the support of the Arab world, must also enter the equation for a political process to move forward and succeed. Other factors beyond Israeli or American control will also impact on the Palestinian ability to move forward. The present situation in Gaza, while relatively calm, is not stable and could at any time deteriorate to a renewed escalation of hostilities. At this stage no one can assess the likely course of this potentially volatile situation, but Hamas in Gaza continues to challenge the legitimate Palestinian Authority in the West Bank no less than it challenges Israel. Should there be a renewed possibility of moving talks forward between Israel and the PA, this could also be a factor in Hamas once again destabilizing Gaza.

Similarly, while the situation in Lebanon is also relatively quiet, that calm conceals massive Hizbollah rearmament that has tripled the rocket and missile arsenal existing before the outbreak of the Second Lebanon War – to around forty thousand. Recent press reports of Syria supplying Scud missiles to Hizbollah, as well as the transfer of other significantly advanced weapons systems, could well change the scope and severity of another clash with Lebanon. Clearly, such developments would also impact on American interests.

Adjusting Expectations

Another aspect of peacemaking in the Middle East relates to the expectations of the American role. There is generally a twin assumption that the process will move forward when the United States wants it to and that pressure on Israel is necessary to achieve that momentum. This twin assumption was nurtured and strengthened in recent years. A closer historical analysis and a study of the last year might reveal a different conclusion, which President Obama himself recently conceded.

With all its power, the US cannot be a substitute for both sides wanting a peace initiative to succeed. When Israel and the Arab parties to the conflict have genuinely wanted direct contact for whatever reason, they have generally found the path to each other without American help. In addition, from an empirical point of view, direct contact with Israel has

generally yielded better results diplomatically from the Arab point of view than American pressure on Israel.

Historically and more recently there have been a number of instances where the initial contact and opportunity were fashioned without a substantial American role. They include the periodic contacts between Israel and Jordan going back many years, the initial contacts between Israel and Egypt leading to President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977, the Oslo process in the early nineties, the final stage of negotiations of the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan in 1994, and more recently, the trilateral contacts between Israel and Syria through Turkey, the contacts with Egypt leading to the "calming down period" with Gaza in 2008, and other instances involving prisoner exchange deals. One could also point out that important Israeli moves involving withdrawal from territory such as the unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 and the disengagement from Gaza in 2005 were both moves conceived in Jerusalem and not elsewhere.

Yet while it is important to remember the crucial role of the sides themselves in creating and fashioning opportunities for direct contact and negotiation, the role of the United States is no less crucial in formalizing and sustaining the results of these contacts and negotiations. The massive role of the United States in Middle East peace efforts since the late seventies has been critical and helped the sides in pursuing efforts of genuine reconciliation.

In the final analysis, the American ability to create an opportunity for peace in the absence of a genuine desire by the parties themselves is limited. Overestimating the American ability in that sense tends to reduce the responsibility of the sides to face up to the tough decisions that need to be taken by them and not in Washington. A more realistic appraisal in this regard could also prevent a situation in which America and Israel argue over issues central to the peace process before they are ripe for negotiation and agreement between Israel and the Palestinians with a supportive Arab role.

Even though the prospect of reaching an agreement may not be within reach, this need not be a recipe for inaction. An ongoing process of dialogue and negotiation between Israel and the Palestinians can have an intrinsic value in itself. It can also serve wider American and Israeli interests in the region and provide diplomatic cover for encouraging wider cooperation

between Israel and other moderate Arab countries. Ultimately a functioning process would be the most promising foundation for incremental confidence building measures and a breakthrough at the appropriate time.

The Essential Challenge

The major strategic challenge for Israel and the moderate Arab world is Iran. The threat of a nuclear Iran projecting its subversive power through its proxies and terrorist groups will have massive ramifications on further nuclear proliferation in the region and on the global non-proliferation regime, as well as the physical security and stability of countries in the Middle East. Even an eventual resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict could become a marginal regional factor if Iran crosses the nuclear threshold. While in the coming months the United States will face significant strategic challenges in Iraq and Afghanistan, Iran will dominate the minds of America's allies (Israeli and Arab) in the region for the foreseeable future. Iran will be a central and defining factor in the conduct of the strategic cooperation between Israel and the United States, as well as regarding the relations between America and its moderate Arab allies in the region.

US-Israel relations could be at the threshold of a defining moment in the context of a region that appears to be approaching "immense wars of the spirit," to borrow a phrase from Fukuyama. Will the Iranian threat and process with the Palestinians strain that bilateral alliance, or be the "common cause" that will strengthen and fortify the alliance, like the Madrid Peace Conference and first Gulf War in the early nineties?

It is vital that the respective strategic agendas of both countries remain in clear line of sight of each other. The fundamental challenge the relationship faces at present is how to formulate an overall strategy that rolls back the Iranian threat, provides progress with the Palestinians, and strengthens and fortifies the American-Israeli strategic partnership. There is a depth that has developed in this strategic relationship over the last thirty years that clearly indicates that this is more than possible. There is a strategic reality that indicates this is more than crucial.

Note

- 1 Embassy of the United States, <http://usembassy-israel.org.il/xarchives/1126b2009.aspx>.

The Iranian Challenge

Ephraim Kam

The Iranian nuclear project is fast approaching a critical watershed. Iran has continued to develop a range of nuclear capabilities that under optimal technical circumstances will allow it to build its first nuclear device as early as the beginning of 2011. In the coming months, Iran will have to decide whether, for now, to stop at the nuclear weapons capability threshold or to break out and build these weapons. The United States and Western governments have labored to stop Iran before it achieves nuclear weapons by enticing it with incentives, applying pressure on it, and imposing sanctions against it. To date these efforts have failed to yield satisfactory results and the American administration may have to choose between difficult options: to pursue a military option against Iran or give Israel a green light to operate militarily, or alternately, to accept uranium enrichment in Iran and subsequently a nuclear Iran and prepare for the associated risks. Given that Iran has not been stopped, Israel too will have to decide in the immediate future whether conditions are suitable for a military move against Iran's nuclear sites. Against this background, the most severe internal crisis in the history of the Islamic regime has assumed center stage, with implications primarily for the nature of the regime and its future but also for the nuclear question.

The Program's Progress

The most important aspect of the Iranian nuclear issue is Iran's significant steady progress towards the capability to produce nuclear weapons, despite the technical difficulties it has encountered along the way. In 2008 Iran

fully mastered uranium enrichment technology. By the end of 2009, Iran had enriched uranium to a low grade of 3.5 percent in quantities sufficient – after being enriched to a high grade, i.e., after evolving to a fissile status – to create one core of a nuclear explosive device. Low enriched uranium (LEU) is manufactured at the large enrichment facility in Natanz; the plans are for the facility ultimately to contain 54,000 gas centrifuges. By late 2009, 9,000 centrifuges had already been installed, but for reasons that remain unclear only 4,000 were put into operation. The installed centrifuges are of the outdated Pakistani P-1 model with low enrichment capacity, but the Iranians are developing centrifuges of a more advanced model that, if and when installed and made operational, will increase the rate of enrichment.

Other crucial steps have been taken by Iran in the last eighteen months as part of the nuclear program. In February 2010, Iran announced that it was starting to enrich uranium to a 20 percent level; this level is still not defined as high enrichment. By now Iran is enriching uranium to this grade within a limited scope, and this step will significantly shorten the timetable for producing high enriched uranium (HEU) in large quantities. Two months later, in April 2010, Iran announced that it had successfully tested new centrifuges, soon to become operational. According to Iran, these are third generation centrifuges, capable of enriching uranium six times faster than the centrifuges in current use.

In September 2009, Iran informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that it was building a second installation for uranium enrichment for peaceful purposes near the city of Qom as a backup for the Natanz facility, should the latter be attacked. Iran was apparently forced to announce the construction of the installation after it was uncovered by Western intelligence services. The facility discovered is much smaller than the one in Natanz, and is designed to contain some 3,000 centrifuges. According to most Western estimates, the facility is intended for HEU production, whether from natural uranium or from LEU manufactured in Natanz. In any case, it is clear that the facility in Qom is not intended for peaceful purposes. As a result of the disclosure of the Qom facility, suspicions have grown that Iran has built other secret nuclear facilities.

This suspicion was even raised by the IAEA, which usually tends to statements marked by caution and restraint.

Iran has taken a number of steps related to building a nuclear explosive device. It has apparently studied the uranium processing technique for the core of the explosive device. It likely received complete plans for an explosive device from the Pakistani network; likewise, there is evidence that Iran has experimented with fitting the explosive device with a warhead. Moreover, American intelligence assessments reported in December 2007 that Iran had a military program for development of nuclear weapons, albeit frozen since 2003. This assessment has yet to change, despite the fact that some of the data discovered in the intervening years does not match this estimate. According to media reports from early 2010, the American intelligence community today believes that the military program was in fact not on hold or that it was renewed in a more modest scope.

In response to pressure, Iran announced in late 2009 and early 2010 that it intends to build additional uranium enrichment facilities. At first Iran spoke of ten installations – an intentionally exaggerated number – but in April 2010 it announced that it would start constructing two new facilities in the coming months.

Iran's missile program – which, unlike the nuclear program, the Iranians take no pains to conceal – is making rapid progress: the quality, range, and accuracy of the missiles are gradually improving. Today Iran has ballistic missiles capable of carrying a nuclear warhead; and for about a decade it has had missiles with ranges covering all of the State of Israel.

Where is the Iranian nuclear program headed? From a technical perspective and under optimal circumstances with no significant mishaps, Iran will be able to produce a nuclear explosive device by early 2011; under less optimal conditions, the date will be pushed back to the second half of 2012. This is the assessment of the intelligence community in Israel and the United States. However, most of the indications are that Iran is not proceeding at full speed, but is rather constructing a widespread infrastructure of nuclear capabilities that will allow it to break out to nuclear weapons when it so chooses. While there is no doubt that Iran is building the capability to develop nuclear weapons, for now there is no hard evidence that Iran has already decided concretely to produce them,

and it may well be that for now it prefers to wait on the threshold until it feels that the time is right.

The primary consideration likely to affect the Iranian decision relates to Iran's fundamental future nuclear policy: will it prefer to produce nuclear weapons or will it prefer to remain on the threshold and, from that position, generate some of the advantages while avoiding the high risks? The basis of Iran's calculations will also be affected by some practical questions: will Iran conclude that it needs immediate, available nuclear deterrence vis-à-vis its enemies and will therefore break out towards nuclear weapons? Will Iran be ready to pay the price for making the transition to a stage that will leave no room for doubt that it has in fact decided to produce nuclear weapons? How will it assess the value of remaining on the threshold versus the value of having nuclear weapons in hand? Should it decide to cross the threshold, will it prefer to let it be known – through an announcement or even a nuclear test – or will it avoid publicity and adopt a policy of ambiguity?

The Political Efforts to Curb Iran

The Obama administration heralded an important change in the political efforts designed to curb Iran's attainment of nuclear weapons. The Bush administration did not reject direct dialogue with Iran about the nuclear question out of hand and in practice, on several occasions, held talks at working levels on some regional issues such as Iraq and Afghanistan. However, supported by European governments, it set a firm condition for dialogue on the nuclear question: Iran would have to suspend its uranium enrichment activities before talks started. In practice, this condition prevented any direct negotiations between the American administration and Iran on the nuclear issue, and they have been conducted primarily via various European governments with the United States coordinating its positions with them.

Even before entering the White House, President Obama announced a different approach and said he would strive for direct dialogue with Iran on the nuclear issue. From the outset the administration did not seem overly optimistic about the prospects for direct talks, but it felt they were important for two reasons: the previous approach of avoiding direct talks

had not produced results, and the idea of direct talks had widespread support in the United States and Europe. Therefore, the administration sought to promote Obama's initiative in order to fully explore this route, however inauspicious, and in order to gain solid ground for international support to apply pressure on Iran should talks fail.

However, with an eye to the talks the Obama administration made several important concessions that played directly into Iranian hands. In addition to conceding the suspension of uranium enrichment as a precondition for talks, the administration also conceded time limits. From the outset it did not set a timetable for negotiations, and when it set dates for concluding the talks it failed to keep them. The administration accepted the Iranian position that talks should start only after the Iranian presidential elections in June 2009, thereby granting Iran more than half a year in which no negotiations were held and no pressure was exerted. Still, the most severe mistake on the administration's part in this context was freezing military action against Iran. Even during the last months of the Bush administration, senior American security officials made it clear that under present conditions they were opposed to a military move – American or Israeli – against Iranian nuclear sites, although they professed that all options against Iran remained on the table. This approach continued and even intensified under Obama, and by mid-2010 it became clear that the American administration is not considering the military option, at least at this stage.

Yet despite the efforts and concessions by the Obama administration, the attempt to conduct direct talks with Iran has come to naught. The American administration failed to develop a significant dialogue with Iran, partly because of the strong mutual distrust that for years has cast a pall on relations between the two countries. Thus the talks with the Iranians, which took place in the fall of 2009, were conducted primarily by European governments and the IAEA, and focused on a circular deal: Iran would transfer to Russia about 80 percent of the LEU it had amassed to date (based on the IAEA's report of November 2009, Iran at that point had some 1,800 kg of LEU) in a process that would last about a year; Russia would enrich the uranium to a 20 percent level and move it to a third country such as France, which would process it into nuclear fuel rods, which would then

be returned to Iran for use at the small research reactor in Tehran, serving mostly civilians needs.

The deal was apparently limited in nature and contained significant advantages for Iran. It did not deal with the Iranian nuclear program as a whole and was not designed to halt it. It touched on a portion of Iran's enriched uranium in an attempt to neutralize it temporarily. It did not in any way ban further uranium enrichment in Iran and seemed to grant legitimacy to – and acceptance of – such enrichment. Within less than a year Iran would again be able to enrich uranium in quantities similar to those it would transfer to Russia. The deal did not address the nuclear installations in Arak, nor did it touch either on the plutonium track Iran is developing in tandem with its uranium track or on the enrichment facility discovered in Qom. The plan did not threaten Iran with sanctions should Iran fail to cooperate with Western governments.

On the other hand, the American administration and the European governments saw the deal as having a twofold advantage, given the lack of any better option for halting the Iranian nuclear program. Were Iran to accept the deal, it would effect the immediate removal of most of the enriched uranium Iran had amassed from Iran's borders for about a year, during which time it would be possible to conduct negotiations over the future of the nuclear program under a more extended timetable. The deal would also build trust with Iran and enable a better setting for dialogue. If Iran rejected the limited deal, it would make it easier for the administration to enlist the support of the Russian and Chinese governments to impose harsh sanctions against Iran, as the failure would prove that dialogue with Iran was an exercise in futility.

Iran ultimately rejected the deal, notwithstanding its inherent advantages, primarily because Iran did not trust the United States and the Western governments to return the nuclear fuel after it transferred the enriched uranium from its territory and was then more vulnerable to pressure. Therefore Iran made the deal conditional on its taking place on Iranian soil, on exchanging the enriched uranium for the fuel rods at the same time rather than a year later, and on transferring only a small portion of the enriched uranium it had amassed rather than most of it. The rejection of the deal was also affected by the internal crisis in Iran, which led to a hardening

of positions on the nuclear question and strengthened the opposition of the regime's radical wing, headed by Supreme Leader Khamenei, to dialogue with the American administration.

Iran's rejection of the uranium deal did not leave any room for continued attempts at dialogue with the administration, and in practice, since late November 2009 there have been no significant talks between Western governments and Iran. Given this dead end, the Obama administration has sought to move to the next phase of its plan – to take advantage of Iran's uncompromising position to enlist the cooperation of Russia and China and intensify the sanctions already in place via a Security Council resolution. However, it became clear once again that attaining unanimity with regard to imposing painful sanctions against Iran was quite problematic. From the outset, the Russian government was prepared to impose only minor sanctions against Iran and the Chinese government was opposed even to that; only after extended talks did it agree to join in imposing limited sanctions against Iran.

The rejected deal largely resembled an agreement that was reached between Iran, Turkey, and Brazil in May 2010 about the uranium issue. Iran would move 1,200 kg LEU to Turkey and would, a year later, receive nuclear fuel rods. However, in the meantime circumstances had changed, as did some components of the deal. The Western governments, including the American administration, had no part in the negotiations or the agreement: those involved were only the leaders of Turkey and Brazil, who for their own reasons sought to assist Iran and prevent the imposition of sanctions against it. Therefore, it was not clear how and by whom the fuel rods would be returned to Iran. The agreement also determined that the enriched uranium deposited in Turkey would remain Iran's property, and Iran would be able to decide if the deal was to its liking. Were it to decide that it was not, Turkey would return the uranium to Iran. Equally important, Iran in the intervening months had enriched more uranium and after the transfer to Turkey would need less time to make up the difference in its total amount of uranium. Although in the meantime Iran also started enriching uranium to the 20 percent level, the agreement made no reference to this, nor to the announcement on the advanced centrifuges and the intention to build additional enrichment facilities. These developments to a large degree

offset the advantages that the governments of the West saw in the uranium deal in late 2009.

No wonder, then, that the governments of the West rejected the agreement: it was seen as an attempt to drive a wedge between them on the one hand and Russia and China on the other, and to disrupt the attempt to impose additional sanctions against Iran. The American administration even announced that it was not prepared to conduct a dialogue with Iran unless Iran agreed to a complete halt on uranium enrichment, adding that the goal of the uranium deal of late 2009 was the suspension of Iran's uranium enrichment program. Moreover, the same week that Iran announced its agreement with Turkey and Brazil, the governments of the West – with Russian and Chinese approval – submitted a draft agreement to the Security Council calling for more sanctions against Iran.

In the course of the negotiations with Russia and China, the sanctions originally proposed were diluted, and those that were approved are not as harsh as what the West had hoped for. Nonetheless, these sanctions are the most severe that have been imposed on Iran thus far. They are clearly designed to raise the toll exacted of Iran in face of its defiance of the international community on the nuclear issue.

The resolution includes a number of components: increased difficulty for Iran to obtain nuclear technology and continue activities in its missile program; and a ban on Iran's building new nuclear facilities and continuing to build existing facilities for the purpose of enrichment or production of heavy water. The sanctions call for a ban on weapons sales to Iran, including tanks, artillery, fighter planes, attack helicopters, combat vessels, and missiles, and a ban on technical assistance or spare parts for these platforms. This ban has already prompted Russia to announce suspension of the sale of the S-300 air defense systems, signed with Iran in 2007 but not yet concluded. There is to be more rigorous inspections of suspicious cargo bound for Iran via naval vessels and aircraft and the confiscation of suspicious cargo. The sanctions also call for the denial of financial services and a freeze of assets that could contribute to Iran's forbidden nuclear activity; damage to Iran's banking and financial activity by banning new banking ties with Iran, which includes preventing the opening of new branches of Iranian banks outside of Iran if there is any suspicion that they

are linked to nuclear proliferation; limits on business deals connected to the Revolutionary Guards; and stronger limitations on both movement of individuals and actions by companies involved with the nuclear program. Finally, there will be a committee that will monitor implementation of the sanctions.

Because of the weaker sanctions stipulated by the Security Council resolution, the Western governments hope to translate the agreement in principle on sanctions to additional, harsher sanctions. The US administration, backed by Congress, aims to limit the activity of additional Iranian companies that contribute to the nuclear and missile programs, including companies tied to the Revolutionary Guards, Iranian banking and financial institutions, and the oil and shipping industries. Similarly, France, Great Britain, and Germany are trying to spearhead sanctions by the European Union, including a ban on new investments; equipment and technology sales to Iranian oil, gas, and refinery companies; Iran's banks and insurance companies; and its air and naval transportation, including a ban on Iranian ships docking at European ports. These sanctions include a freeze of assets and bank accounts in the EU belonging to Iranian officials and entities linked to the Revolutionary Guards.

On paper, these sanctions are potentially able to significantly increase the pressure on Iran. However, their success depends on two main questions. The first is to what extent these governments and companies will cooperate in the implementation. Clearly there are governments that object to the sanctions and there are companies prepared to violate them. Past experience suggests that it will be difficult to enforce a large portion of the sanctions, especially as Iran has established a whole network to bypass the sanctions. The second issue is whether Iran, even if hurt by the sanctions, will be willing to reconsider its nuclear ambition. Thus far Iran has presented a tough stance and announced that sanctions will not halt its nuclear program – on the contrary, they would even accelerate it. Thus the most likely possibility is that Iran will be willing to pay the price to continue towards its nuclear goal, particularly if some of the sanctions are not implemented. However, if Western governments succeed in enforcing the sanctions for an extended period of time, perhaps Iran will be forced to show some flexibility and will agree to negotiate the issue.

Options for the American Administration

The American administration is still committed to prevent Iran from attaining nuclear weapons, recognizing the risks associated of a nuclear Iran to the stability of the Middle East, to American interests in the region, and to Israel and other US allies. In the summer of 2010, the American administration faces three uncomfortable, unpromising alternatives in face of these risks. The preferred path is to continue to attempt to persuade Iran that attaining nuclear weapons will not advance its security and will come at a heavy price. However, the chances that the administration will manage to enlist international support for sufficiently painful sanctions against Iran – whether through the Security Council or not – are still not very high. The sanctions resolution approved by the Security Council in June 2010 is a step forward but it is still unclear to what extent it will be implemented – or successfully circumvented. In the meantime, Iran seems determined to stay the course and has enlisted the opposition of states such as Turkey, Venezuela, and Brazil to sanctions. At the same time, Iran is taking steps to minimize the damage of the new sanctions, including the preparation of alternative sources for importing refined oil.

The second alternative is to put the military option back on the agenda. The administration has never ruled it out completely and from time to time stresses that this option too is on the table. However, since mid-2008 senior American security establishment officials have expressed clear reservations about this alternative, primarily because of the risks and uncertainty involved, and the assessment that a military move would not eliminate the Iranian nuclear program but would at most delay it for a few years. Because the risks are not expected to disappear with time, it is doubtful whether the American defense establishment would change its mind and support a military move, whether American or Israeli, unless it determines that something has changed in the risk-opportunity ratio relating to such a move, or Iran takes a particularly provocative step with respect to the nuclear issue.

A military move against Iran is the option least preferred by both Israel and the United States. It is complex and problematic, entails many operational risks, and has earned the objections of all states. It is highly doubtful whether an Israeli action would halt the Iranian nuclear program

for an extended period; an American move could perhaps do so, but only on condition that the United States undertakes a series of repeated attacks that would bring Iran to the conclusion that it would be better off giving up its nuclear program. Iran would likely respond to a military move with missile fire at Israel and terrorism, including through Hizbollah, though the Iranian response capabilities are not very extensive. In the case of an American attack, Iran is liable to attack American targets, including the American forces stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and targets of America's allies. Iran has also threatened that in response to a military attack it would close the Straits of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf. It is doubtful that it would actually do so because it would be the first to feel the damaging effects, but such a move is liable to increase oil prices. For its part, an Israeli military move would apparently require a green – or at least a yellow – light from the American administration, and this has yet to be given. It is doubtful that with America negating a military move, Israel would be free to act. Finally, it would be necessary to weigh which is the greater risk: making a military move or living in the shadow of an Iranian nuclear bomb.

The third alternative is to consent to Iran enriching uranium at home and recognize the incapability of stopping Iran, accept the scenario of a nuclear Iran, and prepare accordingly. It seems that the American administration has yet to reach this point and still thinks that it is possible to prevent Iran from becoming nuclear. Even if it is forced to accept continued uranium enrichment in Iran, it is still hoping that it is possible to tighten international supervision of Iran's nuclear activity and prevent it from attaining nuclear weapons. However, within the professional community, and possibly also in political circles in Europe and the United States, some are already convinced that the possibilities of stopping Iran are tenuous at best and that Iran is destined to achieve its goal. Should the administration adopt this assessment, its objective then may be to pressure Iran into stopping at the threshold and not building a nuclear device.

If the American administration does come to the conclusion that it cannot stop Iran on its march to nuclear weapons, it will have to create contingencies for that situation, at first maintaining a low profile so as not to signal to Iran that it has given up. The administration's main courses of action may be: persuading Israel not to make an independent military

move; applying pressure on Iran not to cross the nuclear threshold; attempting dialogue with Iran in order to create rules for playing in a nuclear environment should it cross the nuclear threshold; attempting to delay Iran so that it will not amass an operational stockpile; working to prevent transfer of nuclear technology to other elements, including terrorist organizations; strengthening Israel's deterrence vis-à-vis a nuclear Iran; applying pressure on other Middle Eastern states not to join in a nuclear arms race; and perhaps working to realize the notion of a nuclear-free Middle East, which has implications not only for Iran but also for Israel.

The choice among these three alternatives may have to be made in the next year or two. The primary considerations likely to affect the American administration's decision are a clearer picture emerging regarding the possibility and effectiveness of painful sanctions on Iran; a clearer picture of Iran's intentions and the actual progress made in its nuclear program; the position of the American defense establishment regarding the military option; Israel's position on the handling of the Iranian nuclear issue; security conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan and the exit of the American forces still stationed there; and possibly even the upcoming American presidential election campaign.

The Internal Crisis in Iran

This past year the Iranian nuclear issue shared the stage with the internal crisis. The roots of the crisis are deep, stemming from a feeling of frustration and dissatisfaction of a significant part of the Iranian people with the regime and from disappointment that the promises of the Islamic Revolution were never realized. The unrest permeating Iran for many years reflects the desire, especially among the younger generation and women, to reduce the regime's interference in the private lives of its citizens, to expand political freedom, and to improve the economic situation. The unrest erupted in June 2009 following President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's victory in the elections, extending his term for another four years. The election results were viewed by many as rigged and brought hundreds of thousands into the streets calling for nullification of the elections. Quickly the call was simplified to "Death to the dictator," directed at Khamenei and Ahmadinejad.

The reformist camp is not completely uniform, as it is composed of a few different groups: students and young people, intellectuals and liberal activists, public and religious figures concerned by the growing power of the Revolutionary Guards in the Iranian establishment, and people in the financial and business sector worried about the country's economic situation. These groups have different demands, from holding new presidential elections to ousting the current regime leaders and introducing radical regime changes. Since the violence in June 2009 the scope of demonstrations and riots has decreased but not disappeared, flaring up especially on memorial days and significant dates in the calendar, as the reformist camp seeks to stress that the protest movement is alive and well. Between demonstrations, the reformists are busy organizing and conducting limited local protests, using websites and social networks for communications.

The decrease in the scope of demonstrations reflects the regime's success to date in curbing the protests' momentum. The regime did not lose control at any stage, give in to the reformists' demands, or compromise its positions. Rather, it chose to wield a heavy hand against the reformist camp, including through the use of extensive physical force, especially by the police and the Basij volunteer militia, arresting thousands of reformists and trying some of them in show trials, torturing and executing activists, disrupting organization and communication activities, slandering the leaders of the protest movement, closing newspapers and arresting journalists covering the protests, interfering in university curricula, and increasing the Islamic content of the educational system.

In the face of this massive use of force, the reformists have been forced to lower their profile. However, the protest movement has not been entirely quashed, even if its external manifestations have become more muted, and it enjoys strong support in an important segment of the public. The crisis in which the regime finds itself is deep, revealing a three-fold crack in the regime's foundation: one, a rift between the regime and a significant portion of the people wanting a change in the nature of the Islamic republic; two, a rift in the regime leadership between the radical faction supported mainly by the Revolutionary Guards and the reformists – joined by some of the radicals – who have been pushed out of national leadership positions and

seek liberalization within the framework of the Islamic republic; and three, a crack in the religious elite, in which an important group has reservations about the conduct of the regime's leaders and the power accrued by the Revolutionary Guards, which has become politically, militarily, and economically dominant at the expense of the religious leadership. These cracks also reflect the loss of legitimacy suffered by regime leaders, especially the loss of Khamenei's religious and political authority among some of the Iranian public.

Therefore, although the attempt to generate change has so far failed, the unrest in Iran will likely continue and find violent and non-violent outlets, with organized or spontaneous outbursts from time to time. In the meantime, it is not endangering the regime's survival because the use of force has succeeded in deterring the reformist camp from acting against the regime in the open. Change is likely to come when three factors converge: good organization that includes the entire nation, not just the outburst of spontaneous and/or local protest; charismatic leadership that presents clear goals for the protest movement; and determination to continue to work against the regime despite the sacrifices and cost. This combination is not likely to occur in the near future. However, there is a high probability that change will finally come, because lacking sufficient legitimacy and given true widespread desire for change, it is doubtful that the regime will be able to guarantee its survival even with the use of force alone.

The internal crisis in Iran has a number of implications for the nuclear issue. The crisis is connected to the sanctions because the regime in Tehran has become more vulnerable to pressure due to the internal protest, some of which was directed at the country's economic distress. On the other hand, the concern increased that escalating the sanctions in an atmosphere of internal unrest would trigger a reverse response and result in the United States being blamed for the economic state; this could prompt the population to rally around the regime. The solution adopted by the American administration was to choose economic sanctions that would not directly affect the public at large, rather institutions and organizations connected to the regime, first and foremost powerful economic institutions linked to the Revolutionary Guards.

Beyond this, in the short term the internal weakness is liable to strengthen the regime's unflinching determination to continue to strive for nuclear weapons, in order to strengthen its internal status and show steadfastness in the face of international pressures. Iran's rejection of the uranium deal stemmed in part from its desire to demonstrate resolve in light of the internal crisis. In the long term, should there indeed be a change in Iran and the nature of the regime be altered, this does not ensure that a more liberal Iranian leadership would agree to abandon the nuclear quest, because most of the Iranian public, including the leaders of the reformist camp, support Iran's right to develop its own nuclear program – although it is unclear what their stance is on the development of nuclear weapons. However, the more liberal moderate leadership in Iran is likely to be interested in a comprehensive constructive dialogue with the American administration and other Western governments, meaning that the Iranian threat would change even with Iran having nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, 2009-10 revealed some weaknesses in the Iranian regime: the internal crisis, the unrest, and the reformists' challenge to the regime; economic distress, which has accompanied the regime through most of its existence and is one of the reasons for the internal crisis; the widespread international effort to isolate Iran and present it as a threat to Middle Eastern stability; the public disagreement with Russia, both over the sanctions and the supply of the S-300 system; and the intensification of sanctions in the near future. However, the regime can present some important successes of its own: the protest was suppressed by force, and even if it continues to exist, since July 2009 its open outbursts have been limited; the nuclear program is viewed in Iran as a national project without any real opposition; Iran's impact on the region has become more profound, especially in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and the Gaza Strip; and Iran has earned help from important nations, such as Turkey and Brazil, working to steer it clear of the danger of sanctions. The bottom line with regard to the balance of achievements and constraints is this: the Iranian regime, at least for now, still has enough tools to continue its present policies, especially with regard to the nuclear issue.

The European Union and the Middle East

Shimon Stein

Early 2009 saw the EU's involvement in the efforts of the international community to bring about a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, while the end of the year marked the Treaty of Lisbon's entry into force. The two events are seemingly unconnected, but in practice they are linked. Should the Treaty be implemented as it is formulated, it will allow the EU – or so its proponents hope – to manage foreign relations in general and crises like the Israel-Hamas war in late 2008-early 2009 in particular more efficiently and effectively.¹

The Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force on December 1, 2009, is a milestone in the history of the EU. It was designed to help institutions and decision making processes adapt to the circumstances created by the latest expansion, which saw the EU grow from fifteen to twenty-seven member states. In addition to increasing the efficiency of decision making processes by changing the manner of voting in the Council of Ministers, the Treaty expands the democratization process by increasing the authority of the European Parliament and the national parliaments of EU member states.

Institutionally, it was decided to create two new positions, one, president of the European Council, elected to a 30-month term (to replace the rotating presidents elected to 6-month terms), and two, the high representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The high representative, elected to a 5-year term, serves as the representative of the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and as vice president of

the European Commission. In order to assist the high representative, the Treaty also stipulates the formation of a European External Action Service. In addition to their representative functions, the expectation is that the people filling these posts will work to maximize the resources at the EU's disposal in its foreign affairs and security policy efforts. The appointment of Herman van Rompuy of Belgium as president and Catherine Ashton of Great Britain as high representative – both lacking charisma and media presence – obviously expresses the preference for influential member states in the EU over appointments that would be less convenient.² When the reforms go into effect, including the establishment of the European External Action Service, it will be necessary to wait and see if in fact the structural changes improve the functioning and international status of the EU. In other words, it will be possible to see if the frustrated question posed way back by Henry Kissinger – “If I want to talk to Europe, whom do I call?” – will finally be answered.³ In one of her first public appearances after the appointment, Ashton referred to the importance of the Treaty of Lisbon and called it an opportunity to change the foreign policy of the EU.⁴ On another occasion,⁵ she blamed the difficulty the EU faced in formulating strategies on the lack of sound frameworks for their implementation. Yet aside from general statements about the complex international environment and the regions of crisis in which the EU operates, her address lacked new content.

The Arab-Israeli Conflict – and the Focus on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The positions of High Representative Ashton on the Middle East were voiced during her first visit to the region, on March 15-19, 2010. In a speech given to the institutions of the Arab League, she referred to the Iranian crisis early in her remarks. Ashton expressed her concern resulting from Iran's refusal to enter into serious negotiations on the nuclear issue. She reiterated the EU's support for the “double approach,” i.e., continuing the negotiations alongside willingness to take “additional steps” in the absence of negotiations. The term “sanctions” was not used. Ashton also expressed her concern in light of the possibility that a nuclear Iran would lead to nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.⁶ Most of her remarks,

however, were devoted to a detailed survey of the EU's stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.⁷

Other than some updates based on developments on the ground, Ashton reiterated the traditional positions of the EU. She enumerated the obstacles to progress in the political process, most of which were laid at Israel's doorstep; she described the character of a future settlement – two states for two peoples; she referred to the EU's willingness to render active assistance to promote a settlement, a critical European interest; she called for active, concrete involvement of the EU in the political process; and she promised the backing of the Quartet and the Arab League for American mediation in the talks between the sides.

Israel enjoyed EU understanding at the beginning of Operation Cast Lead because of the reasons it had to embark on a military action against Hamas.⁸ However, following the entry of Israeli ground forces in the Gaza Strip and the use – according to the EU – of disproportionate force that caused both death and destruction, criticism mounted and was accompanied by calls for an immediate ceasefire that would allow humanitarian aid to enter the Gaza Strip. The Europeans' frustration with Israel's refusal to stop the fighting was expressed in public criticism, which led to the call to investigate Israel's action in light of accusations of violations of international and humanitarian law during the fighting.⁹ Some EU leaders were not satisfied with declarations alone, and visited the region in the hope that their presence would affect Israeli policy.¹⁰ “It is up to the EU to decide whether to take any initiative,” said the prime minister of the Czech Republic about the crisis in the Gaza Strip when he assumed the rotating presidency of the EU Council in early 2009.¹¹

His remarks, coming before President Obama was sworn into office at a time when America was not actively involved in halting the fighting, expressed the EU's desire to take advantage of the American transition period – which in effect entails a lame duck administration – to play an active role in the effort to solve the conflict in the Middle East. However, the EU failed yet again to do so, and beyond its wishful thinking, the EU is well aware of its inability to replace the United States in the Middle East, even when the latter's status is suffering as was the case during the presidency of George W. Bush. Ashton's remarks also indicated that the

EU has made peace with America's status as leader. Appearing before the European Parliament upon taking office (December 15, 2009), she called for close coordination of positions and strategies with the United States. President Obama's strategic decision, made immediately upon taking office, to choose the path of engagement even with states that have been a source of friction for the United States, as well as his willingness to push for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, his support for the two-state solution, his position that the Jewish settlements in the territories are illegitimate, the need for a suspension of construction in the settlements, and his Cairo speech – all of these gave EU member states the hope that with united efforts, they would succeed in ending the conflict. Today, more than in the previous eight years, one can point to greater proximity between the positions of the EU and the United States regarding the situation in the Middle East, how to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, and above all, the urgency attributed to its resolution.

As similar as the EU's positions on the Middle East are to those of the American administration,¹² the other members of the Quartet, and the PA, so is the distance Israel experienced from the EU in the past year. This was a year replete with presidential announcements and spokespeople's announcements, most of them critical of Israeli policy.¹³ Criticism focused on continued construction in the settlements (described as an obstacle to peace, undermining the effort towards a two-state solution, and in defiance of international conduct) and Israeli activity in East Jerusalem (including the evacuation of Arab citizens, demolition of houses, and construction for Jewish residents). There were repeated calls for lifting the blockade of the Gaza Strip and opening border crossings to extend humanitarian aid to reconstruct the Strip, and a call to investigate the lack of proportionality in Israel's use of force in Operation Cast Lead.¹⁴

The political platform of the Netanyahu government intensified the suspiciousness and distrust between Israel and the EU. The detailed announcement – or to use the official terminology, the “Conclusions” – published by the EU council of foreign ministers on December 8, 2009, specified their positions on issues connected to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In effect, this document summarizes the differences of opinion between Israel and the EU.¹⁵ In contrast with the preoccupation with the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict, however, the EU's political attention to Syria and Lebanon is much more restrained. A December 2009 announcement mentions the two states in the context of achieving a comprehensive peace agreement in the Middle East that would include arrangements between them and Israel.¹⁶

The many casualties in the Gaza Strip population and the extensive damage caused by what was viewed as Israel's disproportionate military response during Operation Cast Lead caused the EU to level sharp criticism at Israel. True to form, i.e., punishing Israel for failing to act in accordance with EU policy, it was decided to suspend negotiations between Israel and the EU on upgrading relations, which was stipulated by an agreement achieved in 2008 as part of an action program signed with Israel in conjunction with the European Neighborhood Policy.¹⁷ Thus in 2009 there was no progress in achieving the EU's goals for the European Neighborhood Policy.

The Iranian Issue

In addition to its longstanding investment in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the EU is involved in the international effort to curb the Iranian nuclear program, largely on the assumption that resolving that crisis would help stabilize the Middle East and resolve other crises in the greater region. This issue was the focus of meetings Solana held in January 2009 with the Iranian foreign minister and in October with an Iranian delegation in Geneva.¹⁸ During the Geneva meeting, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) proposed that in exchange for Iran's agreement that a certain amount of uranium be removed from Iranian territory for a period of one year, it would receive uranium for medical purposes and for serving the research reactor in Tehran.

President Obama's April 2009 decision on engagement in negotiations with Iran marked the end of a five-plus year period, starting in late 2003, when the foreign ministers of Germany, France, and Great Britain resolved to launch a diplomatic maneuver to suspend Iran's uranium enrichment project in return for incentives that would compensate Iran for this demand. The ongoing efforts of the three countries, joined by Solana as the EU representative and the UN Security Council emissary, to find a formula

that would satisfy Iran on the one hand and the demands of the EU and the international community on the other did not bear fruit. Nonetheless, in light of the passivity that characterized the Bush administration's conduct during its first term and the first half of its second term in office, the initiative of the three should be viewed in a positive light.¹⁹ At the same time, the decision by the Obama administration to adopt the engagement approach vis-à-vis Iran and enter into direct negotiations with it, while retaining the sanctions option as leverage should Iran reject the invitation to negotiate, made it easier for EU member states to reach a consensus on the question of a nuclear Iran.²⁰ Although the Europeans support sanctions against Iran and even making them harsher if necessary, several EU member states, concerned that sanctions more sweeping than those imposed to date would harm their economic interests, contend that sanctions are not the tool that will ultimately bring Iran to the negotiations table.²¹

The results of the Iranian elections and the response of the authorities to demonstrations against the regime were the background to disagreements between the EU and the American administration.²² Unlike the EU, which did not hesitate to express criticism of the Iranian regime's civil rights violations, the Obama administration claimed that it was up to the Iranian people to decide on further developments (Obama subsequently changed his position). EU states, which were reluctant to level sanctions, did not hesitate to criticize the Iranian regime for acting against principles they hold dear, civil liberties in particular. The United States, which had adopted stricter policies with regard to Iran, even if it was willing to enter into negotiations, hesitated and refrained from criticizing the regime, out of concern that such criticism would lessen the possibility – slight to begin with – of conducting talks with Iran on the nuclear issue.

Iraq

EU activity in general and that of some member states in particular are part of the current international effort, spearheaded by the United States, to create an institutional infrastructure for local leadership in Iraq. Since 2003, the EU has contributed more than €1 billion to the cause, especially in the field of civilian services, including the health care system and the reconstruction of water systems, proper administration both at the national

and the local levels, rehabilitation for refugees, and law and public order. Another issue whose importance for EU member states is likely to grow in coming years is that of energy. As part of the efforts of the EU to lessen its dependence on Russian gas supplies, Iraq could fill a prominent role by integrating into the Nabucco gas pipeline project, designed to bypass Russia and stream gas from Central Asia and the Caucasus (Azerbaijan) to Europe, thereby significantly contributing to decreased dependence on Russia. In the absence of sufficient gas to stream through the pipeline, Iraq could fill the missing piece.²³

The Positions of the Big Three: Germany, France, and Great Britain

Alongside their contribution to the formulation and implementation of EU Middle East policy, the big three are also working to further their own national interests in foreign relations and security policy.

Unlike France and Great Britain, whose colonial past in the Middle East still exerts great influence on the nature and scope of their political ties with states in the region, Germany operates primarily in the economic sphere. Chancellor Merkel refrains from active involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict and makes few remarks on the topic. When she is called on to address it, she clearly expresses Germany's commitment to Israel's security and right to exist, in a way that sometimes generates internal German and European criticism for what is seen as her one-sidedness. If she has criticism of Israel, she expresses it in measured tones.²⁴ After the Second Lebanon War, the longstanding taboo regarding involvement was broken, and the chancellor responded to the prime minister's request to send a naval force as part of the UNIFIL forces implementing Security Council Resolution 1701. The Liberal Party (then in the opposition) opposed the decision, couching its reasons in terms of the memory of the Holocaust. In other words, Germany was reluctant to send military forces that might somehow find themselves in a military action with IDF soldiers. When the party joined Merkel's coalition in November 2008, it asked that Germany stop its participation in the force, and the fundamental position was accepted. Thus, one may expect that German involvement in this context will gradually lessen.

In contrast to her relative reticence on issues relating to the conflict, the chancellor gives unequivocal expression to the Iranian nuclear issue. The damage to Israel's security and existence liable to grow out of Iran's drive for nuclear weapons lies at the heart of this resolute policy. In an attempt to close the gap between rhetoric and reality, the chancellor made an effort this past year (though without a great deal of media exposure) to persuade the German financial and economic circles to decrease the scope of trade with and investments in Iran. Her efforts, together with American pressure in the same direction, did not result in a significant drop in the scope of trade. By contrast, there was a dramatic reduction in the scope of investments and guarantees given by the government.²⁵ Nonetheless, despite Chancellor Merkel's own firm position in favor of sanctions against Iran, she does not share the position of Israel and the United States whereby all options to curb the Iranian nuclear program must remain on the table. Although it was Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer who was the primary force behind the October 2003 EU decision to engage Iran in a diplomatic move, the position represented by the German bureaucracy with regard to anti-Iranian activity is not as unequivocal as those of France and Great Britain.

France's Middle East policy in the past year was no different from the policy it pursued in the past. President Sarkozy and Foreign Minister Kouchner continued to demonstrate involvement that went beyond EU policy, both at the declarative and the diplomatic levels. This involvement was seen in the Persian Gulf, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Levant, and the Mediterranean arena.

Operation Cast Lead provided Sarkozy with the opportunity for personal involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian arena and accelerated his efforts to formulate a resolution to the conflict. A French proposal to convene an international conference was not implemented, nor was it removed entirely from the agenda. In an attempt to eliminate obstacles to Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, France tried to settle the inter-Palestinian dispute. Meetings between French representatives and Hamas members – violating the official position of the EU regarding conditions for negotiating with the organization – did not bear any fruit. French frustration with the ongoing foot dragging in the efforts to renew Israeli-Palestinian negotiations toward

a two-state solution was heard in the call by the French and Spanish foreign ministers (February 2010) to establish a Palestinian state within one year.

As the leader of the Mediterranean EU member states and the patron of the Maghreb states, Sarkozy enabled the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean in July 2008.²⁶ This organization replaced the framework established by the Barcelona Process in November 1995 as a tool for the EU to generate a series of reforms in Mediterranean states, with emphasis on the Maghreb. It was meant to be a professional organization, without a political agenda. Among the objectives presented was the 2010 establishment of a free trade zone. Yet as was the case with the Barcelona Process, which since its inception had failed to realize its goals, it seems that the new organization has also become a victim of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One of the byproducts of Operation Cast Lead was the suspension of meetings at the ministerial level, which were to have taken place during 2009. This development underscores yet once more the priorities of the Arab states that are members of forums where Israel is also a participant. Instead of focusing on the implementation of reforms that could conceivably lead to enhanced welfare for the region in general and the member states in particular, they relate to the setting as an arena for attacking Israel and thereby paralyze all activity.²⁷

Israel's criticism of French policy on the negative role played by Syria – the continued arms smuggling and other assistance extended to Hizbollah and Hamas – fell on deaf ears. France attributes much importance to its relationship with Syria because of Syria's status and influence in Lebanon, as well as its role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Syria's willingness to establish diplomatic relations with Lebanon and maintain an embassy in Beirut helped improve relations between France and the Asad regime. Regarding the Iranian crisis, Sarkozy and other French officials demonstrated a rather assertive approach, evidenced by emphatic declarations in favor of imposing harsh sanctions on Iran through the Security Council and perhaps, if necessary, even independently of the UN.

The focus of Great Britain's involvement in recent years in the Middle East has been Iraq. The war and the ongoing international involvement there have demanded attention and significant resources (troops and reconstruction assistance). The British presence in the Gulf region has both

economic and political dimensions, complementing the American policy in the region.

Unlike his predecessor, Tony Blair, who like Sarkozy took an avid interest in the Israeli-Palestinian issue, the involvement of Prime Minister Gordon Brown in this context was limited. By contrast, Foreign Minister David Miliband filled an instrumental role in formulating the Security Council resolution that called for a ceasefire during the war in Gaza. Because of Israel's military campaign, Miliband's approach to Israel grew more critical than it had been in the past.²⁸

Together with France, Great Britain leads a rigid, uncompromising line on the Iranian nuclear issue. As a member of the Security Council, Great Britain was a partner to four sanctions resolutions. In public statements, British leaders leave no doubt that should Iran fail to fulfill these resolutions, it will be necessary to take even harsher steps against it. Nevertheless, Great Britain has avoided adopting the American position, namely, that should Iran not change its position all options are on the table.

Public Opinion

Operation Cast Lead, particularly reports in the electronic media on casualties in the civilian population and extensive damage due to disproportionate Israeli military action, joined the criticism leveled by the political echelon at Israel's unwillingness to stop the attack on Hamas. This was followed by the publication of the Goldstone report accusing Israel of war crimes. These factors and the continued blockade of the Gaza Strip have worsened the trend of recent years: ongoing erosion in public opinion with regard to Israel. There is also steady criticism by the political echelons in many European countries of Israel's policies in the territories and what is seen as its positioning of further obstacles to the realization of the two-state vision. In general, in the European mind Israel is increasingly assigned responsibility for the deadlock on the political front.

These trends serve anti-Israel elements as a background for questioning the legitimacy of the State of Israel as a Jewish state. Even if at this stage the discussion is confined to academic ivory towers and some of the media, it is enough to arouse concern given the long term ramifications of Israel's status in both the European public and internationally. Moreover, the

criticism coming from the civil society is liable to affect the policymakers attempting to formulate their position regarding Israel.

Conclusion

The proximity of the Middle East to Europe, Europe's colonial past, economic interests, Europe's energy needs, and the basic assumption that Europe's stability depends on stability in the Middle East are the constant factors underlying the EU's involvement in the Middle East.

The view of the Arab-Israeli conflict in general and the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation in particular as a destabilization threat par excellence, with ramifications going well beyond the conflict arena, is the thrust of most of the attention from individual EU member states and the EU as a collective. In the absence of superpower features, such as possessed by the United States, the EU demonstrates its positions through declarations. This fact was in abundant evidence in 2009 as well, and lacking other means, this megaphone diplomacy will presumably continue into the foreseeable future.

The December 2009 EU declaration clarified the areas of disagreement between the EU and Israel concerning the Israeli-Palestinian political process. Moreover, the language of the announcement placed greater onus on Israel than it did on the Palestinians and the Arab states for the lack of progress in resolving the conflict. The ongoing deadlock and the postponement of discussions of the core issues, in tandem with Israel's continuing policy on the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, will likely lead to multiple EU condemnations of Israel. The EU's support for the PA program announced in August 2009 by Prime Minister Salaam Fayyad for establishing a Palestinian state, alongside the conviction – evidenced in the position of the Quartet that it is possible to reach an Israeli-Palestinian settlement within 24 months – may also increase friction with the Israeli government, which does not deem that schedule realistic. EU frustration and displeasure with Israel's moves have found another outlet, i.e., in the EU decision to suspend talks about upgrading Israel's status vis-à-vis the EU. The pattern of providing compensation when Israeli policy aligns itself with EU policies and ambitions on the one hand, and punishing Israel when it maintains policies not consistent with

the EU's on the other, will presumably continue to characterize relations in the foreseeable future.

Beyond the traditional means designed to enhance EU influence over the Middle East (such as the Association Agreements and working plans as part of the European Neighborhood Policy), Sarkozy's Union for the Mediterranean initiative is yet another attempt to forge closer ties between the EU and its Mediterranean neighbors. This setting, like the Barcelona Process before it, will likely fall victim to the Arab-Israeli conflict, disappointing those Mediterranean nations that are not members of this initiative and who harbor expectations that the EU would be hard pressed to realize.

If it indeed strives to affect processes in the Middle East, the EU, in recognition of its limitations, must recognize the centrality of the United States and its leading role in the region. The end of President Bush's term in office and President Obama's entering the White House created an opportunity for closer political coordination across the Atlantic, with regard both to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to the Iranian issue, despite the criticism from some in the EU of Obama's hesitancy, particularly regarding Iran. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Iranian nuclear issue, in addition to the crisis in Afghanistan, will continue to command attention in 2010. When she assumed responsibility for EU's foreign policy, Catherine Ashton blamed the EU's difficulty in strategic conduct on the lack of appropriate frameworks and methods for implementation; the Treaty of Lisbon is supposed to fill this gap. Yet it is doubtful if indeed the implementation of the Treaty alone will change the fundamental causes keeping the EU from playing in the superpower league.

Notes

- 1 This essay focuses on the position of the EU rather than the positions of the individual member states, though it also surveys the positions of the "big three" – France, Germany, and Great Britain. Foreign affairs and security policy continue to be the prerogative of member states, even if their national positions are not necessarily in line with official EU positions. Nevertheless, from an historical perspective, the issue of the Middle East is one area in which there is close coordination between member states.

- 2 In an early stage of the campaign for the position of high representative, former prime minister Tony Blair's name was raised. His chances to win the position were slim, in part because of his support for President Bush's decision to go to war against Saddam Hussein, which was anathema to some of the member states. There was also some concern that his status, media recognition, and desire to lead would damage the status of the EU's leading members.
- 3 The doubt felt in many quarters was expressed by Henning Riecke, a scholar of Europe in the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP). In his assessment, the EU is not yet a global player, and many of the EU member states are in fact not interested in this status. Moreover, even if the EU does strive for the status of a global power, it is doubtful if it can compete with the United States and China.
- 4 See Ashton's appearance at the Munich Security Conference (February 6, 2010), Europa Press Releases.
- 5 Ashton's appearance before the European Parliament (March 10, 2010), European Union Press.
- 6 The beginning of the trend discussed by Ashton is evident in that Jordan, Egypt, and Abu Dhabi have expressed the intention and/or decision to pursue the construction of nuclear power stations. These decisions are ostensibly a response to the states' energy needs. However, as in the Iranian case (e.g., the nuclear energy station in Bushehr), the construction of civilian nuclear infrastructures allows states to acquire knowledge and technology that helps them become familiar with the fuel cycle. This activity is a prerequisite if at any point a state decides to jump from the civilian nuclear track to the military capabilities track. It is possible to shorten the process by acquiring a turnkey bomb. Saudi Arabia, worried about a nuclear Iran, is liable to attempt to buy nuclear bombs from Pakistan, the state the Saudis helped financially when it was building its nuclear capabilities.
- 7 The main points of her address: Resolving the conflict is a European interest and is central to resolving other regional problems; the solution can be advanced through cooperation to achieve comprehensive peace on the basis of international law, involvement of Syria and Lebanon, and the Arab peace initiative; commitment to the security of the State of Israel; and commitment to the two-state solution. The current objective is to establish a viable Palestinian state (in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip) on the basis of the 1967 borders; finding a just solution to the refugee problem; proximity talks (announced by the American administration in March 2010) that can form the beginning of a new opportunity to find a solution; the need for demonstrating a real commitment rather than reiterating old positions; the Israeli decision to build in East Jerusalem is dangerous and damages the possibility of launching proximity talks; Israeli settlements in the territories are illegal, are an obstacle

to peace, and endanger the possibility of realizing a two-state solution; putting cultural and religious sites in the territories on the list of Israeli Heritage Sites is not helpful; the siege of the Gaza Strip is unacceptable: it creates human suffering and damages the political process; the Palestinians, too, bear responsibility: PA president Mahmoud Abbas and Palestinian prime minister Salaam Fayyad, in tandem with constructing institutions of statehood, must also enforce order at home. The ongoing struggle within the Palestinian camp, as well as the split between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, does not serve the Palestinian cause; the Arab world is also responsible for aiding the effort to find a resolution; the EU is willing to assume responsibility and increase its involvement. Further, Ashton pointed to a number of areas in which the EU can advance the political process: extending an aid package (the commitment is not open-ended but rather dependent on rapid progress towards the establishment of a Palestinian state); willingness to consider granting political, economic, and security guarantees to the sides; interest in joint development with key players such as the United States and the Quartet. In addition to these points, Ashton emphasized the need for setting goals and assessing progress on the basis of the Roadmap as well as the need for active mediation. She also said that the efforts by the United States to promote the political process would earn the backing of the Quartet and the Arab League. The policy presented by Ashton corresponded to the thrust of the EU's position as was spelled out in the December 2009 announcement of the Council of the European Union.

- 8 The spokesperson for the rotating president from the Czech Republic (*The Independent*, January 5, 2009) described the action as “defensive, not offensive.” As the result of criticism from some member states, Czech sources claimed the president had been misunderstood.
- 9 The growing criticism of Israel was also expressed in demonstrations throughout Europe. Demonstrators compared Israeli actions to those of the Nazis. Indeed, in recent years accusing Israel of genocide has become fairly common in Europe.
- 10 In early January, a delegation sponsored by the EU was dispatched to visit Israel, the PA, and Jordan. While the delegation was in the region and without prior coordination, President Nicolas Sarkozy also arrived in the area. He visited Israel, the PA, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. This was evidence that European states operate without regard for the collective interest on issues understood by EU member states as being important to the national interest. Another delegation, which included the French president, German chancellor Angela Merkel, and heads of state from Israel, Spain, Great Britain, and the Czech Republic, visited Israel and Egypt. This delegation, which did not comment on disproportionality in Israel's military action, issued a call to allow humanitarian aid to enter the

Gaza Strip along with a call to end the arms smuggling into the Strip. Other than demonstrating solidarity with the residents of Gaza, the visit lacked political significance.

- 11 *BBC Monitor*, January 1, 2009.
- 12 On the question of how to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there is much in common between the two sides of the Atlantic. However, concerning several other issues on the international agenda, the United States and the EU do not see eye to eye. One such issue is the fighting in Afghanistan. An expression of dissatisfaction with the conduct of the European NATO members could be heard from Secretary of Defense Gates (*AFP*, February 23, 2010), such that European states currently abhor any type of military force and as a result are not investing in weapon systems. He added that while the demilitarization of Europe in the twentieth century was a blessing, in this century an anti-military mindset is an obstacle to attaining lasting peace and security. President Obama's decision to cancel his participation in the EU-United States summit that was to have taken place in April 2009, with the excuse that he could not leave Washington because of urgent domestic matters (the health care bill), was viewed by the EU as a lack of interest in the EU as an organization. There are those who claim, with a great deal of justification, that the president understands that on the important issues, the leaders of the big three are to be addressed rather than the institutions of the EU.
- 13 In recent months, a total of thirty-eight states in various stages of acceptance to the EU (Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Azerbaijan) have been mentioned in the EU presidential announcements.
- 14 Reaction to the Goldstone report was twofold. On March 10, 2009, the European parliament discussed the report's conclusions and accepted a resolution calling on Israel and the Palestinians to undertake an internal investigation within five months. Similarly, the representative on foreign relations and the member states were charged with following up on the implementation of the report's conclusions. When attempting to formulate the EU's position before the voting in UN institutions, the council of foreign ministers discovered internal differences of opinion that made it impossible to reach a consensus. The result was a split in the voting of EU member nations in the Human Rights Council and in the UN General Assembly. Thus, even after the Treaty of Lisbon went into effect, national considerations continued to tip the scales over unity in the thinking of member states.
- 15 In July 2009, even before the formulation of the foreign ministers' announcement, Javier Solana, then in charge of EU foreign relations, called on the UN to set a

target date for the establishment of a Palestinian state and to recognize it even if Israel and the Palestinians had not yet reached a settlement. A draft of the December 2009 announcement, formulated by the Swedish foreign minister, included a call to recognize East Jerusalem as the capital of the future Palestinian state.

- 16 The resolution did not include any reference to Hizbollah's arms smuggling, in violation of a UN resolution, or to the internal situation in Lebanon. President Obama's decision to renew the dialogue with President Asad as part of his inclusive engagement approach is in line with the position of most EU states that were, during Bush's term in office, forced to shun Syria because of its involvement in terrorism. This approach and the dialogue between France and President Asad have turned Syria into a legitimate partner for dialogue. Although Asad has not changed his policies on key questions, he is no longer considered a political pariah.
- 17 In April 2008, Israel submitted a request to reevaluate its relations with the EU. A favorable response to the Israeli request, which proceeded with the implementation of the working program that had been agreed on, was granted by the EU at the Association Council conference that took place in June 2008. The decision was accompanied by a string of critical declarations, stressing the link between progress in the political process and the reevaluation/upgrading of relations. For example, the foreign minister of Luxembourg (*Irish Times*, March 28, 2009) declared that upgrading relations should always be viewed in the context of the political process. The head of the Commission's delegation to Israel noted that the decision on when to renew the talks would depend on the way Israel concluded the conflict in the Gaza Strip (*FT*, January 15, 2009).
- 18 Solana concluded his term in office when the Treaty of Lisbon went into force. Solana served in the position for ten years and visited the Middle East many times in this period. In an interview with *Haaretz* (October 23, 2009) on the eve of his retirement from the post, he noted that the goal of the EU was the establishment of a Palestinian state in the 1967 borders as soon as possible; that without third party mediation the sides would be unable to reach a settlement; and that Israel would do well to place some of its eggs in the European basket rather than leave all of them in the American one. Solana added that Europe would respond favorably to a request by the parties to station forces in areas to be evacuated by Israel. He also said that the United States is the best mediator for the region.
- 19 Contrary to the position of the United States and Israel, whereby all options are on the table, most EU member states, with the possible exception of France, disagree. Most of the member states, if not all, would prefer to live with a nuclear Iran rather than assist or participate in a military move.

- 20 President Obama's willingness to enter into negotiations before Iran suspended its uranium enrichment process is something of a violation of Security Council resolutions demanding that Iran suspend uranium enrichment before the start of negotiations. Neither the EU nor the Security Council protested the president's decision. For his part, the president made it clear that the United States has not changed its fundamental position on the need for Iran to ultimately suspend its enrichment activities.
- 21 The gap between rhetoric and reality regarding sanctions is evident in the data about the scope of trade between EU member states and Iran. In 2008, trade between four states (Germany, Italy, Great Britain, and France) as well as Switzerland amounted to \$15.4 billion (*BBC Monitor*, April 26, 2009).
- 22 *Financial Times*, June 20, 2009.
- 23 On November 18, 2009, the EU and Iraq signed a memorandum entitled "Strategic Partnership in the Field of Energy." The memorandum is supposed to serve as a political framework to tighten the energy relationship between the EU and Iraq.
- 24 Merkel broke with her standard posture and leveled public criticism of the Netanyahu government's decision to grant building permits in Ramat Shlomo in East Jerusalem.
- 25 *TAZ*, June 28, 2009.
- 26 Sarkozy's proposal generated criticism on the part of the EU, particularly Germany. As the result of pressure from Chancellor Merkel, Sarkozy was forced to compromise and bring the organization under the aegis of the EU's Council on Foreign Relations as the successor to the Barcelona Process.
- 27 Since the beginning of activity of the Mediterranean Union no decisions have been made with regard to a long line of fundamental issues concerning ongoing activity, including the composition and mandate of the General Commission that would manage the agreed-upon programs and funding.
- 28 It is also possible to detect a change in Britain's stance since the retirement of Tony Blair, who saw himself as the mediating factor between the EU and the United States. Even in the setting of the EU, since Operation Cast Lead Great Britain has departed from its positive approach towards Israel.

Approaching the End of the Mubarak Era: Egypt's Achievements and Challenges

Yoram Meital

Egypt's overall policy is designed around the concept of "openness" (*al-infitah*), which was formulated 35 years ago by President Anwar el-Sadat and adopted by his successor, Hosni Mubarak. The premise of this policy is that there is a close connection between Egypt's social, economic, and demographic reality and its political and security strategy. Accordingly, Egypt's ability to cope with its domestic challenges is highly dependent on its political conduct. In its political and security aspects, this policy is grounded on a strategic partnership with the United States and a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, in accordance with the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement and the establishment of a Palestinian state within the borders of June 4, 1967. In the economic realm this policy centers on advancing incrementally towards a market economy.

Signs of this process have been reflected in economic, social, political, and cultural changes. Since the early eighties the private sector has grown, the GDP has increased, and the market's average growth rate exceeded the average demographic growth, which declined significantly. The peace agreement with Israel brought unprecedented prosperity to the Egyptian economy. Tens of billions of dollars flowed into its depleted treasury, huge sums of money were erased from its national debt, advanced knowledge and technology became available, and new markets and trade agreements were opened to Egyptian goods. The state of peace led to a substantial

increase in Egypt's revenues as a result of an unprecedented rise in tourism (which constitutes a major source of income for millions of Egyptians), Suez Canal toll revenues, and the export of oil and gas (from reserves located in part in the Sinai territories evacuated by Israel) – all critical components of the Egyptian economy. Furthermore, extensive quality military aid significantly upgraded the Egyptian military. A serious escalation in relations with Israel and the US might critically harm these assets, and as such, Egypt's most important national interests.

At the same time, the economic openness has had negative effects on large parts of Egypt's population, estimated at 84 million. The government's available resources are limited, and the pressure on the country's infrastructures and services has grown. An inefficient bureaucracy, poor planning, and increased corruption have had negative impacts. Together with the economic openness came a dramatic increase in the cost of living, ongoing reduction in commodities and fuel subsidies, and a serious increase in unemployment (15-20 percent in recent years) – mainly among those with a higher education. A significant gap has emerged between production and local export and the import of merchandise and technology; the Egyptian pound has declined; and the policy of privatization of public companies and assets has failed. These developments have led to even wider gaps between the wealthy and the poor, and nurtured a growing frustration within large segments of the population faced with their inability to breach the circle of poverty and despair. The slow rate of increase in local production and the limited resources have created a situation of ongoing dependence on external aid (mainly American), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.¹

The effects of the openness policy were apparent in the struggle between the Egyptian government and its domestic rivals. As part of the expanded political pluralism, political parties renewed their activities, and elections were held for the parliament as well as for the local authorities, trade unions, and recently (2005) for the presidency. The openness is also apparent in the expanding fields of media and advertising and in the government's increased tolerance towards its critics. Civil society gradually resumed activity in various areas, after years in which these activities were stifled. Leaders proclaimed their commitment to advance political pluralism,

amend the constitution, and assist disadvantaged populations hurt by the market's economic changes.

In practice, however, there was a significant gap between this rhetorical commitment and the measures taken to implement it. The key goals held by the ruling establishment (civilian and military) and the Egyptian elite were and remain the continuation of the existing governmental and constitutional order, and preservation of Husni Mubarak's influence in public and parliamentary circles. The regime was willing to adopt changes as long as they did not significantly undermine its control in the political arena and its ability to shape Egyptian policy as it saw fit. The centers of power – headed by the security services, the military, and the bureaucracy – are governed exclusively by President Mubarak and the National Democratic Party (NDP), and allow the regime to use strong measures to supervise and restrain opposition elements. The opposition is limited by laws and regulations, particularly the laws on political parties, the press, and states of emergency. The legislative and executive authorities are completely controlled by the ruling party. Severe restrictions on freedom of speech are occasionally imposed on the opposition parties, and local and international organizations repeatedly report violations of free speech and human rights. Newspapers and non-governmental publications are still subject to severe restrictions and largely operate at the mercy of the regime. Yet despite the government's efforts to limit its domestic opponents' room to maneuver, the opposition elements have various ways to express strong criticism of the Egyptian government, Egyptian policy on internal affairs, foreign affairs and defense, and the leaders' impotence in dealing with Israel and the US. In this political reality most citizens act as a "silent majority" when it comes to taking a political stand.

Internal Political Tension

The most recent presidential and parliamentary elections (September-December 2005) symbolized the dawn of a new phase in the struggle between the Egyptian regime and its domestic opponents. The future of the ruling government, Egyptian policy on various issues, and the struggle over a successor to Mubarak were in question. On the one hand, the 2005 elections were characterized by an atmosphere of openness, constitutional

amendments that for the first time allowed more than one candidate for the presidency, intensive public political activity, and the growing anticipation of significant change. On the other hand, the regime was determined to prevent its domestic rivals from achieving any goals that might undermine the existing political ruling order.²

The opposition factions, and mainly the Muslim Brotherhood movement, share three demands: amendment of the constitution to prevent the president and the ruling party from absolute control of the political and parliamentary scene; cancellation of the state of emergency in place for almost three decades; and liberalization of the media, which is now subject to heavy governmental control.

Although as expected President Mubarak won a fifth term, the parliamentary election results were highly surprising. The ruling party candidates failed in dozens of districts, and only due to the efforts of the regime leaders was a coalition formed based on independent candidates and the NDP delegates, which together claimed a majority (75 percent) in the parliament. The opposition parties suffered an even worse failure, with only fourteen of their delegates elected. On the other hand, the Muslim Brotherhood reached an unprecedented achievement of 88 delegates in the parliament – almost six times their representation in the previous parliament. This achievement might have been even greater had the government not disrupted the third round of elections.

At the end of the election year the Egyptian leadership faced a serious dilemma as to the future of the political reform, based on two possible courses of action. The first involved continuing the political and constitutional reforms, restoring NDP public status, and adopting a policy of containment vis-à-vis their political rivals – mainly the Muslim Brotherhood. This approach could jeopardize the NDP control in the parliament and in most of the local authorities. The presidency would remain under its control for now, but its hold would be weakened and exposed to constant threat from political rivals. This move could have generated a change in the political balance of power in Egypt and its policy. The second approach required an indefinite freeze of the political and constitutional reform, minimizing the opposition's freedom of action, and initiating a direct, open conflict with its main elements, especially the Muslim Brotherhood. The regime leaders

would continue to profess allegiance to the principles of democracy and promotion of political and constitutional reforms. This move would ensure that the present government stays in power, while a strong message would be delivered to the Egyptian public in general and to regime opponents in particular that the regime will not hesitate to use all available means to prevent a change in the rules of Egypt's political game.

Soon enough it became clear that the regime had chosen the second approach. The regime escalated its struggle against its political opponents, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood, which was portrayed as an illegal organization exploiting religion and the naiveté of ordinary citizens to promote their political goals. In many official statements the significant differences between this Islamic political movement and militant groups, such as the jihad, Hizbollah, and even al-Qaeda were intentionally blurred. Large amounts of money and property were confiscated and restrictions on movement were imposed on many activists – some were forbidden to leave the country. Hundreds of activists (including several officials) were arrested and tried before military courts, which in quick and controversial judicial procedures sentenced them to heavy punishments.

Relations with Israel

The Egyptian regime perceives the peace with Israel through the prism of the “openness” policy. According to Egyptian policymakers, peace with Israel was intended to be a cornerstone for a just and comprehensive peace between Israel and the Arabs, including the Palestinians. The term “comprehensive peace” refers to agreements that will lead to the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict and a reshaped balance of power in the Middle East. In this framework, the Arab states will agree to recognize Israel and its right to security within the borders of June 1967, while Israel will retreat from the territories occupied during the Six Day War, with an option for minor adjustments agreed on by both sides. In the Palestinian context, Israel will be required to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, establishment of an independent state with al-Quds (East Jerusalem) as its capital, and an agreed resolution of all the permanent status issues.

Similar to Israel, official Egyptian spokespersons view the peace accord as a “strategic choice.” Both countries insist on fulfilling their commitments in accordance with the peace agreement (including the military appendix), excluding the normalization of ties between the two countries. Indeed, the Egyptian regime is adamant about retaining the peace agreement with Israel. Even in times of severe crisis, including the second intifada and during and after Operation Cast Lead, President Mubarak rejected calls to reexamine Egypt’s commitment to the peace process in light of actions carried out by Israel.

Israeli-Egyptian relations have also known mutual disagreements – from the Taba crisis to the Azzam Azzam affair – and the countries differ in their approach to dozens of normalization agreements signed by them. Egypt in effect froze the implementation of these agreements, claiming they could not be implemented in the reality of a political freeze and the escalated conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Public surveys show that Israel’s image among the Egyptian public is extremely negative, with the Israeli government and society often portrayed in a hostile manner by the media. Furthermore, Egypt is concerned about Israel’s military advantage, and makes special effort to neutralize its nuclear advantage. Since the mid-eighties, Egypt has worked to promote an initiative that would lead to a nuclear demilitarized Middle East, while demanding that Israel join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Israel and Egypt do not see eye to eye on developments in the Middle East, particularly ways to overcome the various regional crises. The standard Egyptian contention is that the continuation of the settlement enterprise and the strong arm policy that Israel uses in the Palestinian territories prove that Israel is not willing to pay the price for peace. This behavior perpetuates the instability in the region and serves the interest of countries and organizations pursuing a militant agenda. The continuation of this negative process also threatens Egypt’s essential interests, as seen in Egypt’s attitude toward the crisis in the Gaza Strip. Moreover, Cairo perceives ongoing activity by Israeli and pro-Israeli elements (headed by AIPAC) as aiming to taint Egypt’s image in the eyes of the US government, for example even demanding that the US reduce its military aid to Egypt.

The Crisis in the Gaza Strip

In recent years, Egypt's policy vis-à-vis the ongoing crisis in the Gaza Strip has gone through significant changes. Egypt's strong opposition against the establishment of a "mini state" led by Hamas within the borders of the Gaza Strip has intensified since the establishment of Ismail Haniyeh's government, following the Hamas victory in the Palestinian National Council elections (January 2006). The Hamas takeover of Gaza along with the expulsion of Fatah rivals the following year was described by Egypt as a "military coup," and Egyptian spokespersons labeled some of the actions taken by Hamas as a threat to Egyptian national security. In coordination with Israel, Egypt reinforced its forces along the border with the Gaza Strip, showing greater determination to curb the smuggling through Sinai and strongly objecting to a regular opening of the Rafah crossing (which connects the Gaza Strip and Egypt and is not under Israeli control), claiming that opening the crossing will be possible only if the conditions from the 2005 agreement are kept. In the internal-Palestinian debate, Egypt sided with the Palestinian Authority leadership and blamed Hamas for the failure to reach an agreement on Palestinian reconciliation.

Egypt's failed efforts to mediate between Israel and Hamas over the extension of the calm (*tahdiya*), followed by Israel's Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip, challenged Egypt's leadership. While condemning the Israeli offensive, particularly the massive use of force and the high number of casualties, Egypt – in uncharacteristic fashion – also held the Hamas leadership responsible for the outbreak of the crisis and claimed that its mistaken policies provided Israel with a reason to attack Gaza. Underlying this message is Egypt's fundamental objection to the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip, which resembles Israel's objection and is based on the concept that Hamas is a terrorist organization that should be forcefully overthrown or at least be curtailed in its capacity to govern.

As the Israeli attack continued and the number of casualties in Gaza mounted, more criticism towards Egypt's policy was sounded in the Arab media. Egypt was portrayed as cooperating with the Israeli-imposed closure and as turning a cold shoulder to the bitter suffering of the million and a half Palestinians living in Gaza. Egypt was the target of harsh criticism from the Arab League and particularly from the spokesmen of the resistance camp,

including Iran, Hizbollah, Hamas, and the Muslim Brotherhood. The latter vigorously criticized Mubarak's policy and pointed out his incompetence in dealing with the severe crisis near Egypt's eastern border. These spokesmen described the Israeli attack as a massacre, and demanded that Egypt open the Rafah crossing, expel the Israeli ambassador from Cairo, and recall the Egyptian ambassador from Tel Aviv. In the midst of Operation Cast Lead, Hizbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah released the harshest Arabic public criticism against Egypt and defiantly called for the Egyptian people and the security forces to demonstrate publicly and voice their objection to the policy of the regime. Nasrallah's statement was perceived by Cairo as a parroting of the slurs hurled at Egypt and President Mubarak by Iran's leadership. Egyptian spokesmen called Nasrallah an Iranian agent, and his statements were termed "a declaration of war on the Egyptian people."

On April 8, 2009, a terror network operating under Hizbollah threatening Egyptian national and security interests was exposed. The 49 operatives working on behalf of Hizbollah were accused of planning terrorist acts, damaging Egypt's national security, and committing acts of subversion against the regime. The timing of the affair's exposure and the manner in which it was described indicated that in the eyes of Egypt's decision makers there was more in question than the mere exposure of another group suspected of initiating terrorist acts.

Egypt's implication of Iran in this affair brought the crisis with Tehran (ongoing for three decades) to a new low point, and revealed the significant difference in their respective political agendas. Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran's policy has been driven by opposition to US measures in the Middle East and by the principle of armed struggle against Israel. In contrast, Egyptian policy is based on cooperation with the US and commitment to the peace agreement with Israel. The Egyptian leadership is portrayed in Tehran as serving the interests of the US and Israel. In turn, Iran is described in Cairo as a factor that destabilizes the Middle East, working to undermine Arab regimes and instigating civil war between Muslims, Sunnis, and Shiites. A host of crises have pitted Egypt and Iran against one another, and for a long time no diplomatic ties existed between the two countries. Since the Second Lebanon War, and particularly during last year's crisis in the Gaza Strip, the exchange of verbal blows between Cairo

and Tehran has intensified. With the exposure of the Hizbollah affair, the Egyptian regime was able to garner domestic support in its struggle against rivals at home and abroad. The massive media attack against the resistance camp bore fruit, and soon enough a public consensus was formed against the subversive involvement of Iran and Hizbollah. Increasing criticism against the leaderships of Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood was heard and the two movements were forced into a defensive position vis-à-vis the Egyptian public.

In early 2009, the Egyptian regime was compelled to adopt a public posture regarding the newly elected leaderships in Israel and the US. Egypt minimized its criticism of the Obama administration's appeasement policy towards Iran, and praised the American president for his determination to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of a two-state solution. At the same time, Mubarak sent his right hand man, Omar Suleiman, to meet with the members of the new Netanyahu government, and the Israeli prime minister and defense minister were invited to work meetings in Egypt. Cairo noted with satisfaction statements by Israeli leaders on Egypt's importance in the region. In turn, Israel emphasized Suleiman's harsh criticism of Iran and Tehran's portrayal as the most threatening factor to Middle East stability.

These channels of dialogue cannot obscure the different political agendas of the two countries, especially regarding measures to resolve the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Nonetheless, the dialogue has exposed the mutual objection to the continuation of Hamas's rule in the Gaza Strip. In this context, unprecedented security agreements were achieved in order to maximize the struggle against smuggling from Egypt into the Gaza Strip. Indeed, following Operation Cast Lead a dramatic change occurred in Egypt's policy towards Hamas and the deepening crisis in the Gaza Strip. The leadership ordered the construction of a steel barrier deep in Sinai along the border with the Gaza Strip, and instructed its forces to take firm action against any attempt to breach the Egyptian border.³ These measures were intended to reduce smuggling via the tunnels, even though at the same time they might worsen the already severe distress of a million and a half residents in the Gaza Strip and lead to an unforeseeable degree of escalation.

Planting the steel barrier in the Sinai soil and securing the Rafah crossing are in line with the ongoing demand by Israel and the US that Egypt should act more decisively to block the smuggling channels from its territory to the Gaza Strip. However, these measures should also be examined in context of two scenarios that have long threatened Egypt's decision makers. The first is an invasion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians into the Sinai territory following an Israeli attack or a humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. The second scenario relates to political plans, originating mainly in Israel, whereby the permanent agreement will demand that Egypt contribute its share by allocating areas of Sinai to be annexed to the Palestinian state. The recent measures taken by Egypt are intended to obstruct these scenarios.

The *Mavi Marama* episode on May 31, 2010 added to Egypt's anger towards Israel. Immediately after the incident, Mubarak ordered the opening of the Rafah crossing to commercial goods and people. When Israel informed Egypt a few days later of its decision to allow food and other items – barring weapons – into the Gaza Strip, the Egyptian regime saw this dramatic shift in policy as a worrisome expression of aimlessness on the part of the Netanyahu government. The concern that Israel will try to shift responsibility for the Gaza Strip onto Egypt has increased, and in several public statements President Mubarak stressed that Egypt would not accept any such scenario. Should this tension continue, it may undermine some of the understandings that have been achieved between Israel and Egypt vis-à-vis the Gaza Strip and taint the connections that have been nurtured over the last few years with much effort.

Looking Ahead: The Question of Succession

On March 6, 2010, President Mubarak was admitted to the Heidelberg Hospital in Berlin, where according to an official statement he underwent surgery to remove his gall bladder. The wave of rumors surrounding the 82-year old president's health continued even after his return to Egypt three weeks later and the debate surrounding succession returned to the focus. In parallel, the Egyptian political arena is abuzz preparing for the parliamentary elections later in 2010 and the presidential election in the summer of 2011.

In recent years Gamal Mubarak has become the most influential persona in the ruling party except for his father, the president. The initiatives that he promoted as the head of the Policy Committee in the NDP, his public statements, and the wide coverage they have received in the semi-establishment media have all cultivated his image as a reformer striving to bring comprehensive change to his country. Mubarak's son is identified with the Egyptian financial elite and there is no doubt of his control of the NDP. However, he is not seen as close to the military, the intelligence establishment, and the internal security agencies, which are heavily tied to the Egyptian regime. While Husni Mubarak managed to control these centers of power, his son's lack of experience might interfere in his own attempt to do the same.

There is broad opposition to Gamal Mubarak's potential ascent to power, but the opposition is too divided to choose a presidential candidate. Dr. Mohamed El-Baradei, former director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency and Nobel Peace Prize winner, announced his intention to compete as an independent candidate for the presidency and demanded amendments to the constitution to allow a just election procedure. Both his candidacy and his urge for reform are widely supported, but the chance that the demands will be accepted by the leadership is slim. The change within the Muslim Brotherhood leadership in early 2010 also has major implications for the political circle. The "reformers" who led the movement to its historical achievement in the 2005 parliamentary elections were excluded from any position of power and the movement's leadership shifted to the conservative side, which supports reducing the involvement in the political arena. This dramatic change within one of the biggest opposition movements makes it significantly easier for the regime's leadership to rule the political arena in Egypt.

The succession question also preoccupies government leaders. President Mubarak, whose own position is of central importance, is faced with three main options. The first is announcing early retirement from the presidency, holding the elections earlier than planned, and inviting the other parties to take part in a "democratic" presidential election. This option could insure Gamal Mubarak's candidacy as the head of the ruling party. However, this move will require Husni Mubarak to gain the support of the military,

intelligence, and internal security leaders and to closely monitor the process of transferring power. Although it would be possible to earn this support, Mubarak's avoidance of this step over the years indicates the risk involved. The second option is holding the elections at the scheduled time and announcing his support for a new NDP candidate on the eve of the elections. A third option would be for Husni Mubarak himself to run for a sixth term.

Throughout the thirty years of his rule Husni Mubarak has been extremely cautious in decision making and has avoided unnecessary risks. He initiated amendments to the constitution that grant a huge advantage to the ruling party candidate and undermine the opposition's chances to offer a candidate of its own. The most significant challenge he faces on the succession issue is ensuring the support of the leaders of the defense establishment for his chosen candidate. It is possible that he has so far avoided declaring his support for Gamal's candidacy due to uncertainty concerning the support of security top brass. In such a situation, Husni Mubarak might opt to run for another term.

In the event of a severe deterioration in the president's health or his death, the leaders of the government and the security forces will be required to agree on a candidate who will subsequently be presented as the NDP candidate. Under these circumstances, the chances that Gamal Mubarak would become the ruling party's candidate are slim, and it is much more likely that a candidate with a proven security background would be chosen.

The significance of these scenarios is that despite the opposition's discontent, the rules of the political game in Egypt are not about to change, and the hopes that a candidate of their choosing will assume the presidency are not realistic. As for general Egyptian policy, the commitment to the guideline of "openness" will continue and naturally will be welcomed in Washington, Jerusalem, and Ramallah.

Towards the end of Husni Mubarak's long presidential era, significant achievements based on his policies are evident. At the same time, substantial challenges, both domestic and external, await his successor in the presidential palace. The government and security forces assure the continuation of the ruling order in Egypt, but they do not guarantee automatic broad public support. The conditions of tens of millions of

citizens are worsening, and thus the criticism of the regime has sharpened. The demand for swift and overall change in the rules of the political game is shared by different sectors in the Egyptian society, and these cannot be solved by rhetorical commitments to democratization and ongoing oppression of the opposition.

Notes

- 1 In light of the 1991 Gulf War and the US need to guarantee Egypt's support in the war against Iraq, some of the creditors – led by the US – agreed to erase about \$30 billion of Egypt's debt in return for its participation in the war effort. Nonetheless the national debt continued to rise, and by the early nineties totaled approximately \$50 billion.
- 2 For an analysis of the elections and a discussion of issues including amendment of article 76 in the constitution, see Yoram Meital, "The Struggle over Political Order in Egypt: The 2005 Elections," *Middle East Journal* 60, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 257-79.
- 3 The plan is to construct a 13.8 km steel barrier starting from the beach in the north until Kerem Shalom in the south, which will be buried in an average depth of about 20 meters. The barrier will be made of massive steel plates attached with sensors monitoring voice and ground movements.

Lebanon: Between Democratization and Islamization

Benedetta Berti

In 2010, Lebanon yet again embarked on another round of “national dialogue” to formulate a comprehensive and unified national defense strategy, and to tackle the regulation of armed militias and “resistance” groups, including Hizbollah.¹ The process, which was first inaugurated in 2006, has highlighted the differences between the ruling March 14 coalition – advocating a normalization of the internal power distribution by disarming all armed groups – and the Hizbollah-led opposition forces, which reject this option and stress the need to preserve a defense model based on the concept of popular resistance. The chances that the 2010 talks will lead to a definitive agreement on this topic are slim, as Lebanon’s current political environment is still sharply divided and the elected government largely lacks the strength to impose its political agenda on the opposition forces.

Indeed, in the aftermath of the 2005 Cedar Revolution, which culminated with the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, the country has been struggling to implement a democratization and national reconciliation agenda while dealing with the rise of sectarian particularism and societal Islamization. On the one hand, Lebanon has adopted a series of political reforms to increase the transparency and effectiveness of its political system, hoping to move beyond the limits of sectarian politics and foster national unity, which is essential both to ensure internal stability and to adopt a national defense strategy. On the other hand, the path towards implementing broad political reforms has been stalled by the inherent weakness of the elected

government and its need to preserve a delicate power sharing arrangement with the opposition forces. In addition, preexisting sectarian divisions and particularism have only grown stronger in the past years, fueled in part by the rise of a more active and confrontational Salafist movement. Thus, the prospects of inter-sectarian conflict and radicalization have increased.

Democratization, Electoral Reforms, and Elections: A Prolonged Stalemate

Since 2005, Lebanon has launched a series of badly needed electoral reforms, with the goal of overcoming the practical and logistical fallacies of the electoral system in place during the years of Syrian “tutelage.” This process, which started in August 2005 with the creation of Fouad Boutros’s National Commission for a New Electoral Law, ultimately led the Parliament in September 2008 to approve a new law based on the Commission’s recommendations.²

These electoral reforms constituted an important first attempt to devise a more transparent, accountable, and ultimately democratic political system. Among its key achievements, the new electoral law introduced more stringent media and campaign financing regulation,³ and it effectively repealed the Syrian-based demarcation of the electoral districts, moving beyond the politics of gerrymandering and replacing the fourteen electoral districts established by the 2000 electoral law with 26 smaller districts.⁴ In turn, this provision made seat allocation more proportional by preventing occurrences of one political group gaining all the available seats in large electoral districts by a small margin, thus leaving all the other groups underrepresented.⁵

However, despite these significant improvements, the new electoral law still suffered from several shortcomings. First, the law fell short of dealing aggressively with vote buying, an extremely widespread and destructive pattern that critically undermines the transparency and integrity of the elections,⁶ and that allows external actors – like Iran or Saudi Arabia – to meddle into Lebanese national politics directly by funding the vote buying campaigns of their local political allies. Vote buying is such a common practice in Lebanon in part because the country does not rely on unified, pre-printed ballots, leaving parties the right to distribute their own pre-

printed ballots to clients and supporters and making it relatively easy to ensure that the money invested in buying votes does not go to waste.⁷ While the Boutros Commission had suggested introducing official uniform ballots to minimize the chances of vote buying and guarantee voting secrecy (currently undermined by the fact that all pre-printed ballots handed out by parties vary in color, size, and print),⁸ the Lebanese Parliament failed to implement this provision in its newly revised electoral law.

Second, the new electoral law did not enact the Boutros Commission's most important recommendation: the introduction of the principle of proportional representation into the Lebanese electoral system. The draft law had recommended electing the 128 MPs on the basis of a mixed system, with 77 deputies selected according to the current majoritarian system and 51 representatives chosen with a proportional system.⁹ Instead, the approved electoral law left in place the preexisting majoritarian block vote system, thus forfeiting the opportunity of moving beyond sectarianism and of strengthening national unity. Moreover, the newly approved electoral law did not adjust the political system's anomaly whereby Shia representatives require far more votes to be elected into office than Christian candidates. Although the Shia community has been growing exponentially in the past decades, the number of political seats assigned to them has not been altered to meet this new demographic reality.

Despite these serious flaws, the process that led to the approval of the 2008 electoral law is a positive step towards the promotion of national reconciliation and effective representation. Furthermore, even in the aftermath of the approval of the electoral law, the debate on the necessity of introducing new legislation on the subject has not ended: in March 2010 President Michel Suleiman reiterated the need to adopt the principles of proportional representation and go beyond sectarianism, thus re-opening the political debate on the topic.¹⁰ Similarly, there have been regular calls from the civil society to enact a series of additional political reforms, including full implementation of the recommendations contained in the original Boutros Draft Law.

The newly reformed electoral law was first implemented in the course of the June 2009 parliamentary elections, won by the anti-Syrian March 14 forces led by Saad Hariri's Future Movement, the same political alliance

that had spurred the 2005 Cedar Revolution. Therefore, at first sight, the March 14 victory – read together with the ongoing push towards electoral reforms – seems to confirm a trend of growing democratization of the Lebanese political system.

Nonetheless, the Lebanese political landscape of 2010 appears to be more complicated than meets the eye. The first issue is a function of the electoral system, which produces systemic disparities between the number of votes obtained by each party and the corresponding seats allocated.¹¹ Thus although the March 14 coalition won 71 of the 128 available seats, it obtained only roughly 45 percent of the total electoral votes, while the Hizbollah-led March 8 forces, despite gaining the remaining 55 percent of the votes, earned only 57 parliamentary seats.¹² In other words, while the elections confirmed the political power of the March 14 forces, they simultaneously recognized the popular and political legitimacy of the opposition forces. This confirmation of the opposition's political strength eventually led Saad Hariri, the elected prime minister, to agree to form a national unity executive cabinet in November 2009, integrating ten members of the Hizbollah-led opposition and five independent candidates appointed by President Suleiman to the fifteen cabinet members chosen by the March 14 coalition.¹³ In turn, this power sharing arrangement dramatically reduced the effective power of the elected majority and lowered the chances of speedily implementing its political agenda and planned reforms. Moreover, in the months following its electoral victory, the March 14 coalition was further undermined by the drifting of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), headed by Druze leader Walid Junblatt, away from Hariri's camp and closer to the March 8 forces and Syria.¹⁴

This state of internal division and weakness of the elected government now challenges the possibility of implementing sweeping reforms and adopting a cohesive national position on delicate subjects such as the formulation of a national defense strategy. In this sense, the 2009 electoral results and the political process in play since then seem to confirm the state of profound division of the Lebanese political and social arena.

Second, while it is true that the March 14 forces maintain a generally pro-Western and democratic orientation, the democratization and liberalization agenda does not belong exclusively to the majority coalition.

In fact, it is the Hizbollah-led opposition that has been at the forefront of the political campaign to introduce proportional representation and abolish the sectarian political system, measures generally interpreted as necessary to improve the degree of internal democracy within Lebanon. Similarly, the opposition engaged (without achieving any substantial results in the short term) in a political campaign for additional substantial reforms of the electoral law.¹⁵ Hizbollah's campaign against confessionalism and in favor of proportional representation is clearly shaped by self-interest: a proportional electoral system would in fact strongly favor the Shia community, underrepresented in the current electoral arrangement. Nonetheless, the common assumption on a clear cut division between pro-democracy forces (the March 14 coalition) and reactionary ones (the March 8 opposition coalition) constitutes a gross oversimplification and exaggeration of the actual political alignments.

Thus while Lebanon has gradually embarked on a process of democratization in the aftermath of the Syrian withdrawal, the serious shortcomings of the electoral reforms implemented, the current semi-paralysis of the elected government under the "national unity" arrangement, and the persistence of strong confessional divisions within society all hinder the internal democratization process. Another element that further contributes to weakening the prospects of national reconciliation and democratic development is the ongoing rise of particularism and identity politics, as exemplified by the trend of growing domestic Islamization.

The Rise of Particularism: Islamist and Salafist Influence in Lebanon

Since its founding in 1982, Hizbollah has proclaimed itself the main political force within the Lebanese Shia community. In the years following the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, a number of Sunni Islamist groups have also gained increased power and legitimacy. During the Syrian occupation, Islamist groups were closely watched by the Syrians and prevented from criticizing both the government and the occupation, thus reducing these groups' political status and their level of activities.¹⁶ It is therefore not surprising that in recent years the level of political activism of historic Islamist political groups, such as al-Jamaa al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group),

the local autonomous branch of the Muslim Brotherhood,¹⁷ or Harakat al-Tawhid al-Islam (the Islamic Unification Movement)¹⁸ has risen steadily. In addition, in 2006 the March 14 government legalized a previously banned Islamist party, Hizb al-Tahrir,¹⁹ in line with Hariri's Future Movement's strategy to coopt Islamist forces to boost the unity of the Sunni community.

Concomitant with the rise of Islamist political parties, there has also been a trend of increased activism among Islamist-Salafist groups, both through social and political activism as well as through military-jihadist operations. Salafist groups have been present in Lebanon since the 1980s, but they also increased their visibility and activism in the aftermath of the 2005 Syrian withdrawal. The Salafist movement includes both armed organizations as well as non-violent, "mainstream" Salafist groups, such as the *dawa*-based, Wahhabi-inspired al-Harakat al-Salafiyya, and the more reformist Lebanese Islamic Forum for Dialogue and *Dawa*.²⁰ While the Future Movement never publicly endorsed these groups, it has in the past fostered links with them by relying on the common anti-Syrian and Hizbollah agenda in an effort to unite the Sunni community and ensure the political dominance of the party. Not surprisingly, these efforts have been repeatedly criticized for both enhancing existing sectarian divisions within the Lebanese society and for threatening to radicalize the Sunni community.

Furthermore, Sunni Future Movement leaders have also been accused of turning a blind eye with respect to the rising influence of violent Salafist groups, allowing them to regroup and receive assistance from Saudi Arabia. Jihadist Salafist organizations have in fact become more prominent in the past few years, in part because of the "Iraqi spillover effect," namely, the ongoing return of *mujahidin* who fought in Iraq to their home countries or to the neighboring countries where they had once found safe haven. Thus far the main jihadist Salafist organizations in Lebanon are Asbat al-Ansar, Jund al-Sham, and the newer Fatah al-Islam. All these groups are mostly concentrated in the areas around Tripoli and the Nahr al-Barid refugee camp in the north, and in Sidon and the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian camp in the south, and they are largely composed of Palestinian militants, although their ranks also include Lebanese and foreign fighters.²¹

The growing presence and influence of Salafist groups within Palestinian camps has in the past few years led to increased internal polarization, resulting both in challenges to the historic authority of Fatah over the camps and in repeated internal clashes along the Salafist secular line. While defying Fatah's supremacy within the camps, jihadist Salafist factions also began to openly attack the Lebanese state. In turn, this trend has partially undermined the long accepted bargain between the PLO and the Lebanese government, whereby Beirut abstained from interfering in the camp's administration and allowed Fatah to be in charge internally, in exchange for preventing "spillovers" of internal violence into Lebanon.

To date, the most serious confrontation between Salafist forces and the Lebanese government occurred in May 2007, when following Fatah al-Islam's ambush of an army checkpoint near Nahr al-Barid, the two sides engaged in a bloody confrontation that lasted over a hundred days, claiming more than 400 lives.²² Although the Salafists' defeat in 2007 inflicted a serious blow to these groups, and despite the strengthened surveillance that the government has been exercising over them, as of 2010 violent Salafists have not been entirely pacified.

Following Hizbollah's armed takeover of West Beirut in May 2008, pro-government Sunni factions and the pro-Hizbollah Alawite community clashed repeatedly in northern Lebanon, causing more than twenty fatalities between June and July 2008. The Sunni-Alawite conflict, which also saw the involvement of groups such as the Palestinian Salafist Jund al-Sham, was finally resolved in September 2009 when the two parties signed a reconciliation agreement.²³ However, despite the current cessation of the hostilities, the sectarian tensions between the two communities have not entirely disappeared and they are likely to surface again in the future.

In addition, violent Salafist groups have not ceased their operations against the state, and thus clashes either within the camps or with the Lebanese Armed Forces continue to occur periodically.²⁴ For example, in September 2009, Fatah al-Islam-affiliated cells were discovered monitoring UNIFIL bases in Lebanon, in an attempt to repeat the June 2007 car bomb attack that killed six UNIFIL members and wounded three others.²⁵ In addition, Salafist groups have maintained international terrorist ties with groups such as al-Qaeda, and have continued to participate in the

recruitment and dispatch of fighters to Iraq. For instance, in October 2009 the Lebanese authorities indicted 21 Syrian, Palestinian, and Lebanese militants for their alleged ties with Bin Laden's organization and for providing assistance to military jihad in Iraq.²⁶

The relationship between these Salafist groups and the more established and powerful Hizbollah has been tense, alternating between phases of reciprocal animosity and stages of open conflict, often reenacting preexisting tensions along Shia-Sunni lines. For instance, Jund al-Sham conducted a series of operations directly against Hizbollah, including the killing of a Hizbollah official in July 2004 and an April 2006 foiled plot to assassinate Hassan Nasrallah.²⁷ Yet in any case, the Salafist movement does not currently represent a serious threat to Hizbollah. While the Lebanese Salafists still appear to be rather marginal, both from a political as well as from a military point of view, the Shia organization remains a primary political actor within Lebanon, as well as the most powerful and sophisticated non-state armed group in the region. Nonetheless, and despite their secondary status when compared to the Shia Hizbollah, the rise of Islamist and Salafist forces within Lebanon represents a noteworthy phenomenon and contributes to strengthening preexisting confessional divisions within the country, further encouraging particularism, radicalization, and greater chances for inter-sectarian strife.

Navigating the Trends

The road towards the normalization of inter-sectarian relations within Lebanon is strewn with difficulties. Lebanese politics continue to be conceived as more community-based than nation-based, and the rise of the Islamist and Salafist movements since 2005 has only enhanced existing confessional divisions and encouraged sectarian particularism and radicalization. At the same time, another confessional organization, Hizbollah, has asserted its role as central political player, both by performing well in the 2009 parliamentary elections and by leveraging its popular and political power to obtain the creation of a national unity cabinet, thus transcending the role of a typical opposition party.

The intra-Lebanese security implications of a prolonged state of internal division and ongoing radicalization are negative, and include a higher risk

of eruption of internal conflict along confessional lines and a potential threat to internal stability. This in turn could have regional implications. Likewise, as far as the State of Israel is concerned, the rise of an Islamist and Salafist trend, especially in its jihadist form, represents a potential source of concern, as these groups' anti-Israeli ideological orientation has already occasionally turned operational (for instance, sporadically participating in the firing of rockets into Israel). In particular, these groups could significantly step up their armed activities against Israel in the event of renewed hostilities between Israel and Hizbollah, or even attempt to trigger the next round of armed confrontations.

Moreover, the lack of comprehensive and effective political reforms hinders the legitimacy of the political system and limits its capacity to promote true national reconciliation and unity, both necessary to ensure long term domestic stability. In addition, the current elected majority's effective capacity to govern and implement political and social reforms is impaired by the need to maintain a national unity cabinet with the opposition forces, a situation that could easily lead to a renewed political impasse.

In the short term, this leaves little room for optimism regarding dramatic changes both at the confessional and at the political level, as well as regarding the possibility of moving towards the approval of a national defense strategy. From an Israeli perspective, this means that expectations that UN Security Council Resolution 1701 will be implemented, or that the issue of dismantling existing armed groups such as Hizbollah will be tackled in the course of the upcoming national dialogue, are at best unrealistic. This fact is particularly worrisome in light of the recent Israeli claims first made by President Shimon Peres in April 2010 that Syria has been supplying Hizbollah with Scud missiles.²⁸ Following these initial revelations, Kuwait's *al-Rai al-Aam* newspaper specified that the alleged weapons transfer may have included Scud-D missiles, as well as anti-aircraft missiles.²⁹ These allegations were also backed by anonymous US intelligence sources,³⁰ although official sources subsequently specified that they had no direct confirmation of Scud missiles being provided to Hizbollah.³¹ Even so, the Obama administration did meet with Syrian diplomats in Washington to voice their concerns over the alleged transfer.³²

Since the initial release of these reports, Syria has vehemently denied the claims, stating that Israel is aiming to disrupt ongoing US-Syria engagement efforts.³³ Within Lebanon, political leaders agreed to refrain from discussing the issue publicly, while the PM dismissed the reports as without merit.³⁴ Hizbollah has similarly avoided commenting, but the group's MP Hassan Fadlallah criticized the US for giving credit to the Israeli allegations.³⁵ Yet if these claims were to be accurate, this would additionally heighten the tensions between the parties and the potential for military escalation. Israel would have reason to be highly concerned about Scud missiles in Hizbollah's possession, as even the shorter range type has the potential of reaching most of Israel. In this context, the question of Hizbollah's disarmament assumes a new, even more critical dimension.

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Sunni Islamist Militancy in the Region and Beyond

Yoram Schweitzer and Jonathan Schachter

In 2009, efforts by al-Qaeda and the various global jihad splinter groups affiliated with it to carry out terrorist activities with familiar operational characteristics – showcase multi-casualty attacks and suicide bombings – continued unabated in locales around the world. This year most of the activity shifted away from the Iraqi arena, which in recent years was the focus for global jihadists, to the Afghanistan and Pakistan combat arena. In the Afghan-Pakistani arena, al-Qaeda and other jihadists operate alongside local Taliban operatives. At the same time, ties have grown closer between al-Qaeda Central and regional organizations on the various front lines, in particular in the Arabian Peninsula, the Maghreb, and East Africa. These ties help upgrade the activities of the local activists and place new emphasis on senior local government and foreign targets. Also this past year a number of terrorist cells and operatives were discovered in the United States; these elements demonstrated that al-Qaeda intends to persevere in its attempts to carry out terrorist acts on American sovereign territory through the use of American as well as foreign nationals.

The results of the concerted effort by the United States and its allies in the campaign against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan will influence the ability of al-Qaeda and the global jihadists to act in that local arena and beyond. The organizations continue to prepare for large operations by training operatives from various countries, including those in the West, to be sent on terrorist missions. The degree of success of counterterrorism activity, as well as the capability of local security services

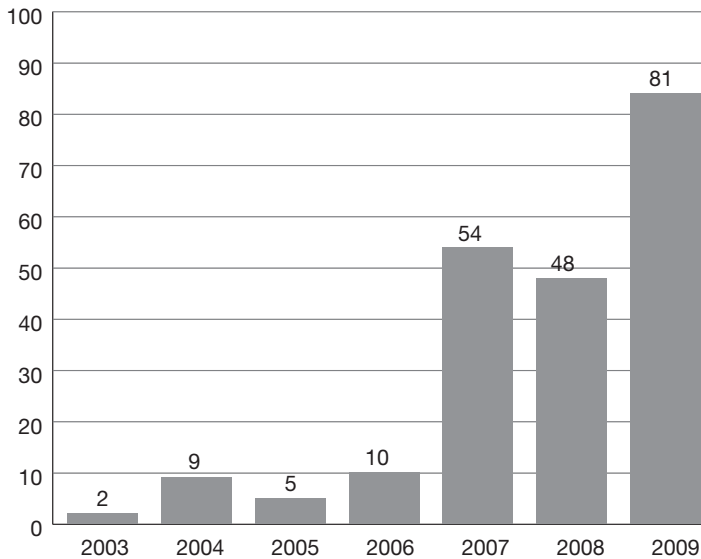
in Middle Eastern countries to foil attempted attacks, will to a large extent dictate the nature and extent of global jihadist anti-Israel activities, as from their perspective Israel remains a desirable target for attack.

The Afghan-Pakistani Arena

In the past year, the Afghan and Pakistani arenas became more firmly established as the focus of the principal international struggle against terrorism, led by the United States and NATO members in cooperation with the relevant states, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In light of the bleak picture prevalent in Afghanistan following the Afghan Taliban's takeover of most of the country, the United States, under the direction of President Barack Obama, reassessed its performance in the region and adopted a new fighting strategy. As a part of the new policy, US forces in Afghanistan would be supplemented by some 30,000 soldiers for a period of about eighteen months, after which these forces would be withdrawn. Later, it was decided that the withdrawal would take place after a new situational assessment.¹ The American forces were deployed in Afghanistan gradually, and at first they concentrated their activities in the southern provinces of Helmand and Kandahar, the primary strongholds of the Afghan Taliban and its affiliates.

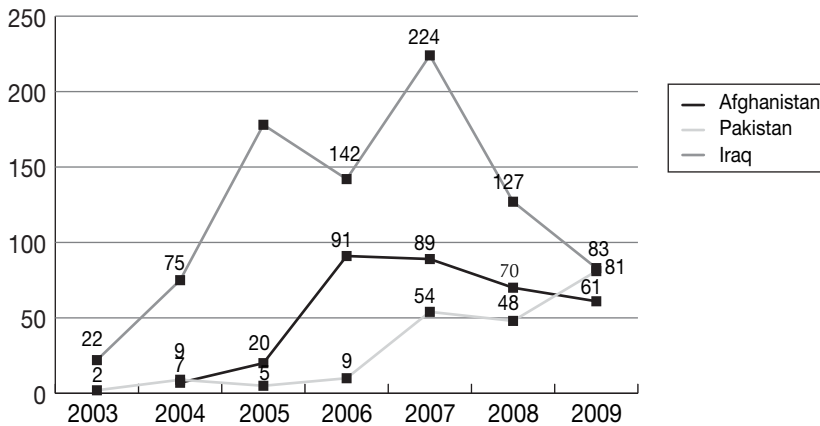
The confrontation arena expanded, with the Pakistani Taliban and their Afghan affiliates taking refuge in the northwestern provinces of Pakistan. Pakistan, which is largely responsible for the growth of the Taliban, has for years straddled the fence with regard to tackling the group. However, several developments compelled the Pakistani regime to assist in the fighting: an attack by the Pakistani Taliban – the TTP – in the Swat Valley, which began in late 2008 and continued until mid-2009 and threatened to spread towards the capital of Islamabad; escalation in guerilla and terrorist activities, including suicide bombings in numerous Pakistani cities (figures 1 and 2); and substantial American pressure on the government. In addition, Pakistan allowed American forces and armed RPVs – albeit unofficially – to carry out limited attacks on al-Qaeda and Taliban elements in Pakistani territory. In 2009, these strikes were an especially prominent part of the effort: the Americans carried out 59 drone attacks against senior al-Qaeda and Taliban personnel (a 47 percent increase compared to 2008).² The first quarter of 2010 already saw 22 such attacks.³

Figure 1. Suicide Attacks in Pakistan



Source: INSS Program on Terrorism and Low Intensity Conflict database

Figure 2. Suicide Attacks in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan



Source: INSS Program on Terrorism and Low Intensity Conflict database

Note: The increase in the number of suicide attacks in Pakistan is especially noteworthy in comparison with the parallel arenas of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Al-Qaeda Central, which in recent years strengthened its infrastructure, particularly in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of the Afghan-Pakistani border region, has cooperated with the Taliban and established even closer ties with it while maintaining an autonomous organizational hierarchy. In order to fight common enemies, however, al-Qaeda subordinated its military units and regional commands – including its operational battalion, Leshkar al-Zil – to the Afghan Taliban’s military force and made a special contribution in the form of special operations. A prominent example of this cooperation was the infiltration by a Jordanian double agent, Dr. Khalil Balawi, of the CIA’s Camp Chapman, where he carried out a suicide attack on December 30, 2009. Eight people were killed, including seven senior CIA agents and Balawi’s Jordanian handler. Those killed led the covert intelligence campaign against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in the region. Their elimination was a severe blow to the Americans and an al-Qaeda-Taliban intelligence and operational success.⁴

Similarly, al-Qaeda continued to maintain close ties with the Islamist terrorist groups that share al-Qaeda’s philosophy and also cooperate with the Taliban, including the Kashmiri Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami (HUJI) and the Uzbeki Islamic Jihad (IJU). Al-Qaeda continues to enlist and train reserves of Muslim activists and Western converts to Islam for future terrorist activity in the West.⁵ The division responsible for al-Qaeda activity throughout the world continues to operate, despite the severe blows rendered to it by American-led activity, which damaged the leadership and in recent years caused the death or imprisonment of prominent operational personnel.

Unification Trends

Guided by its philosophy and strategy, al-Qaeda is working hard at encouraging unification and cooperation between the organizations supporting militant jihad across the globe. Al-Qaeda’s philosophy maintains that uniting the ranks and forming inter-organizational fronts to operate in specific geographical areas is crucial to the success of global jihad. Therefore, al-Qaeda promotes this trend and even accedes, albeit

selectively, to requests by local front organizations to unite and carry its name along with their own. Al-Qaeda is careful to respond to unification and cooperation requests made by organizations that demonstrate real ability to act and that are ready to attack international targets, whether in their local arenas or beyond. As part of such cooperation, these organizations swear allegiance (*ba'iaa*) to Bin Laden and declare their acceptance of his leadership as the emir of al-Qaeda. This was the basis for the cooperation between al-Qaeda and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who led the activities of al-Qaeda in Iraq (al-Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers) until his death in 2006; this was the case with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (which announced its merger with al-Qaeda at the end of 2006); and this is what happened in 2009 when al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (al-Qaeda in the Hijaz) swore allegiance to Bin Laden and merged the Saudi al-Qaeda with the Yemeni al-Qaeda.⁶ In January 2010, the Somali group al-Shabab also announced that it was formally joining al-Qaeda after several of its leaders declared their support for global jihad in 2009 and swore allegiance to Bin Laden.⁷ Al-Qaeda has yet to formally accept this organization under its umbrella, but in 2009 Zawahiri expressed support for al-Shabab activities.⁸

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

As a result of vigorous activity by Saudi security services against al-Qaeda operatives in Saudi Arabia, including systematic arrests and elimination of suspects appearing on wanted lists, those who managed to elude capture were forced to flee to Yemen across the long and largely unguarded common border. With the encouragement of al-Qaeda Central, the Saudi and Yemeni organizations merged under the leadership of Nasser Wakhayshi, a former secretary of Bin Laden who escaped from a Yemeni jail in 2006. In 2009, the united organization committed a number of daring attacks, including an attempt in August to murder the Saudi deputy minister of the interior. The agent, who hid an explosive charge in his underwear, managed to secure a personal meeting with Prince Mohammad bin Naif bin Abd al-Aziz al-Saud on the pretext of seeking a personal pardon from him in honor of his decision to retire from terrorist activity.⁹ Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula was likewise behind the attempted attack on a Northwest Airlines flight to Detroit on Christmas Day by Umar Farouk Abd al-Mutallab, also with

explosives hidden in his underwear. In an audiotape released by Bin Laden (January 24, 2010), he praised the act and its perpetrator, and threatened additional attacks in the future.¹⁰

In part to fulfill al-Qaeda Central doctrine and expand the range of targets, and in part to target Israel, Sa'id al-Shaharai, the deputy commander in the Arabian peninsula, called for using the closer ties forged between the organizations to attack the interests of Israel and its supporters around the world, in particular focusing on blocking Israel's access to the Red Sea.¹¹

The Somali al-Shabab

The Somali organization al-Shabab is an important example of inter-organizational cooperation with al-Qaeda. The organization is the youth movement and the militant faction of the Islamic Courts Union, which controlled Somalia until its ouster in 2006 following the incursion of Ethiopian forces into the country. This organization gradually adopted al-Qaeda's ideology and enlisted senior al-Qaeda operatives into its ranks, who then assumed prominent leadership positions. Sallah Nabahan, for example, a senior member of an al-Qaeda Central cell that carried out the attack against the Arkia Airlines plane and the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa in November 2002, became the head of the military wing. After the attack, Nabahan fled to Somalia and was absorbed into the organization's leadership. He was killed by the Americans in September 2009; his senior rank in the Somali organization was fully revealed in the eulogies published by the organization in his memory.¹² After his death, he was succeeded in the organization's leadership by Fasoul Haroun, who was also involved in the attack in Mombasa and who in August 1998 participated in the double attack against the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.¹³

This organization has adopted the operating patterns of al-Qaeda, upgraded its activity to include attacks on decision makers in Somalia, and adopted suicide attacks – al-Qaeda's trademark – in its repertoire of activities. In 2009, al-Shabab committed a number of major attacks, including the suicide bombing at the Medinah Hotel (June 18, 2009) in which 35 people were killed, including the Somali defense minister and members of the diplomatic corps,¹⁴ and a suicide bombing during a medical school graduation ceremony (December 4, 2009), in which three Somali

government ministers, in addition to graduating students, were killed.¹⁵ The organization had already carried out suicide attacks in 2008 and 2009 with American volunteers of Somali extraction.¹⁶

On November 1, 2009, the leader of al-Shabab declared that his organization had established a special unit called the al-Quds Brigade that would focus on harming Israeli interests in Africa and would even send operatives to Israel and the Gaza Strip to help “free the Islamic holy places.”¹⁷ There is a risk that the flow of African infiltrators into Israel in recent years might facilitate the organization’s efforts to insert its own operatives into Israel for the purpose of carrying out terrorist attacks.

Terrorism in the United States

The attempted attack on the Northwest flight in December 2009 by a Nigerian would-be suicide bomber sent by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula¹⁸ served as a reminder that al-Qaeda and its affiliates have not abandoned their intention to carry out terrorist attacks on American soil. This attack joins a list of actions planned in 2009-10, for the most part foiled with arrests in the United States and elsewhere of American citizens and immigrants, most of whom were of Muslim descent. The people involved in these incidents had adopted the philosophy of global jihad and at a certain point some of them volunteered for training, usually in the Afghan-Pakistani region, with terrorists belonging to or identified with al-Qaeda. Some of the operatives intended to carry out attacks in the US, and some left the US to carry out attacks elsewhere in the world. Daoud Gilani (age 49, also known as David Coleman Headley), is a native-born American with a Pakistani father and American mother who moved to the United States as a teen. He was arrested in Chicago in December 2009 for his involvement in intelligence gathering that served the Pakistani Lashkar-e-Taiba in its major attack in November 2008 in Mumbai, in which over 160 people were killed, including eight Israelis and Jews. Gilani and his Pakistani-American partner were also instructed to carry out an attack against a Danish newspaper’s editorial staff to avenge the paper’s publication of cartoons of the prophet Muhammad that were deemed offensive to Islam.¹⁹

In another incident, Najibullah Zazi (age 24), a native of Afghanistan who immigrated with his family to the United States and lived in New York,

was arrested in September 2009. After marrying his cousin in Pakistan, he joined up with radicals and enlisted in the ranks of global jihad. He volunteered for training at an al-Qaeda camp in the Peshawar region of Pakistan. In 2009 he returned to the United States and was directed by his handler to gather intelligence about transportation and sports arena targets; he even amassed materials for preparing explosive charges to carry out a suicide bombing at a Manhattan subway station.²⁰ On February 22, 2010, Zazi pled guilty to the charges against him.²¹ His partner in the planned attack, Zarian Ahmadzei, pled guilty on April 23, 2010, and claimed that in 2008 two senior al-Qaeda members in Pakistan instructed them to carry out the attack.²²

In October 2008, Bryant Neal Vinas was arrested. Vinas, a Christian American convert to Islam who trained in explosives at an al-Qaeda camp in Waziristan, took part in al-Qaeda attacks against American bases in Afghanistan and even volunteered for a suicide bombing on behalf of the organization in Afghanistan. His request, however, was denied because of the assessment that as an American citizen he would be able to serve the organization in future activities on American soil. The indictment against him included information about additional attacks planned for Belgium, which were to have been carried out by members of another terrorist cell with which he was in contact. To date the details of that affair remain undisclosed.²³

The Fort Hood, Texas active shooter attack in November 2009, carried out by Major Nidal Malik Hasan, a psychiatrist in the US Army who is a Muslim American of Palestinian extraction, resulted in the deaths of twelve soldiers and a civilian and the wounding of some thirty soldiers and bystanders. The attack served as a fresh reminder of terrorist activity in the United States inspired by global jihad incitement. Under interrogation, Hasan, who survived, though he was paralyzed by police fire, revealed his close ties to Anwar al-Awlaki, an extremist Muslim cleric of Yemeni extraction who was born in the United States and lived there for some years before returning to Yemen. There he acts as one of the most virulent preachers in favor of terrorism against the United States, and his name has been mentioned as one of the people who influenced the would-be Christmas airplane bomber.²⁴

Additional attacks in the United States, including some planned by American citizens, and carried out or foiled in 2009, include the following: In May, four Muslim Americans (including three who had converted to Islam in prison) were arrested immediately after placing fake bombs in cars near a synagogue and Jewish community center in New York. Operatives collaborating with the FBI supplied the bombs.²⁵ On June 1, Abd al-Hakim Mujahad Muhammad, an American convert to Islam, opened fire at a US Army recruitment center in Little Rock, Arkansas, killing one soldier and wounding another. There are contradictory reports regarding Muhammad's motives and his links to terrorists in the Middle East, but it was reported that he had been arrested in Yemen where he was jailed for some months in 2007-8, then expelled to the United States. Similarly, it was reported that before the shooting attack he had gathered intelligence on Jewish targets throughout the United States.²⁶ In September, there were two unconnected attempts to blow up buildings in the United States. In Springfield, Illinois, Michael Finton, an American convert to Islam, attempted to activate a fake car bomb supplied by the FBI next to a federal government building in the city and was arrested. On the same day, Maher Hussein Smadi, a Jordanian citizen, was arrested after also trying to set off a fake car bomb, again supplied by the FBI, next to a skyscraper in Dallas.²⁷ Other developments include the involvement of American citizens of Somali extraction who were American-educated from birth (in Minneapolis, which has the highest concentration of Somali immigrants in the US) and who volunteered to fight in Somalia. At least two Somalis from the United States carried out suicide bombings in Somalia in the name of the local al-Shabab. Should this organization choose to send Somali American citizens to carry out suicide bombings on American soil, under the direction of al-Qaeda or with its blessing, it will likely not lack for volunteers.²⁸

The success of the American intelligence and enforcement services in foiling attempts to carry out terrorist acts in the United States is impressive. Nonetheless, the renewed vigor in recent years to bring terrorism to America using local operatives, Muslims, and converts to Islam, and even to export terrorism by American citizens to other countries highlights the risk to the United States from within, and is liable at some point to prevail over the opposing efforts of the security services.

The participation of American citizens in jihad activities, especially those who do not hail from the Middle East, represents a danger to Israel because it is relatively easy for American citizens to enter Israel. Israel may encounter an attempt to repeat the pattern of the terrorists who attacked Mike's Place in Tel Aviv (2003), who arrived in Israel on British passports and operated on behalf of Hamas.

Global Jihad in the Middle East

In the last year, sporadic attempts by global jihadists to carry out attacks throughout the Middle East persisted. Members of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb continued to act in Algeria and abroad. Most of their activity in Algeria consisted of ambushing military forces, but it also included kidnapping Westerners for ransom, which catered to al-Qaeda Central's demand to pursue terrorist activities with an international flavor. In early January 2009, British journalist Edwin Dwyer was kidnapped in Niger, along with other four Europeans. In June, the organization announced that the British subject had been executed as a warning to British and American citizens concerning their continuing involvement in the Muslim world and cooperation with the Jews. Also in January, the Canadian UN representative, Robert Fowler, and his deputy were kidnapped on the border between Niger and Mali. In August, the organization carried out a suicide bombing at the French embassy in Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania. Two security guards were lightly injured in the attack, the first of its kind in the country.²⁹ A shooting attack against the Israeli embassy there took place in February 2008, about a year after Zawahiri called on his followers to attack the embassy.³⁰

In Jordan security services continued their effective efforts to prevent attacks by local supporters of global jihad, but in early 2010 an attack was carried out against a convoy of Israeli diplomatic vehicles en route to Israel. The attack was carried out by setting off an explosive charge in an ambush and was the product of extensive intelligence gathering. Local global jihadists were suspected in the attack, which was fairly amateurish in its execution and caused no fatalities.

On February 22 a terrorist attack was carried out in the Khan al-Halili marketplace in Egypt by means of two explosive charges hidden near a café

full of foreign tourists. One of the charges exploded while the other was rendered safe.³¹ The attack killed a French tourist and injured 24 people, mostly tourists from France. Another large attack targeting tourists and vacation spots was foiled in 2008 and led to a string of arrests during 2009. The planned attack was attributed to jihadists with links to Hizbollah.³²

In recent years, there were at least four incidents of rocket fire (in January, February, September, and October³³) from Lebanon towards northern Israel, none of which caused any damage or casualties. Elements identified with global jihad, apparently belonging to Fatah al-Islam, assumed responsibility for the attacks. In the Gaza Strip, global jihadists have rejected Hamas's willingness to participate in the Palestinian political system, opposed the organization's agreement to a de facto ceasefire with Israel, and continued their efforts to drag Hamas into a confrontation with Israel. Thus since the end of the fighting in January 2009 Hamas has taken care to avoid shooting rockets at Israel and made efforts to prevent others from doing so in order to avoid a fierce response from Israel. Terrorist elements in Gaza, mostly those belonging to global jihadist groups, have continued sporadic rocket and mortar fire at Israel. From the end of Operation Cast Lead until March 2010, these groups fired 220 volleys.³⁴

Similarly, members of the Jaljalat (elements identified with global jihad in Gaza) continued to try to carry out terrorist attacks against Israel. In June 2009 members of Jund Ansar Allah (Soldiers of the Companions of God) attempted a massive attack using suicide bombers riding booby-trapped horses in order to abduct Israeli soldiers. The attack was foiled without Israeli casualties.³⁵ On August 14, 2009, against the background of ongoing tension between Hamas and Jaljalat members and following sermons of incitement by the Jund Ansar Allah leader, the imam of the mosque in Rafah, Hamas's security services acted forcefully against organization members who had barricaded themselves in the mosque.³⁶ Twenty-four people were killed and more than 130 were wounded.

Conclusion

Recent trends in the struggle against international terrorism are likely to continue in the coming years, especially the direct confrontation in the Afghan-Pakistani arena. There has been a significant decrease in the

number of terrorist attacks in the Iraqi arena, formerly an important locus of the fighting, and the power of al-Qaeda in Iraq has been curtailed. At the same time, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of attacks in the Afghan-Pakistani arena, which has become the center for al-Qaeda activity and remains the home base of the central leadership.

The decision to deploy 30,000 more American troops in the region indicates that President Obama and his advisors understand very well the importance of this arena in the struggle against global jihad in general and al-Qaeda in particular. Similarly, it seems that the bitter experience in Pakistan in recent years has pushed the regime to act against terrorists with greater vigor than before and to cooperate more closely with the United States, if only by means of turning a blind eye to American activity on Pakistani soil or at least in Pakistani airspace. The results of the intensifying confrontation between al-Qaeda and American and NATO forces in this arena are likely to determine the fate of al-Qaeda Central in the next several years and may also bring about changes in the group's organizational structure and its patterns of activity.

The American struggle against Islamist terrorism continues and is expanding to include activity in the United States proper. Despite ongoing efforts to secure America's sovereign territory against external enemies, 2009 saw a significant number of attempted attacks by American citizens on American soil. Although Muslim immigrants have generally integrated successfully into American society, certainly better than in host nations in Europe, it has become clear that there is still a real danger that a small number of immigrants and converts to Islam will adopt global jihad ideology and translate their beliefs into terrorist activities.

Adopting aggressive, resolute policies, security services of Middle East states continued relatively successfully to foil attempted attacks by al-Qaeda and its affiliates. In most instances, terrorist networks and operatives were arrested in time. In the Arabian Peninsula, activity in Yemen was especially prominent over the past year because of the difficulties of the local regime in tackling the challenge of terrorism. As a result, the United States increased its efforts to help Yemen act effectively against al-Qaeda, and the level of success will be examined over the next few years.

Israel continues to figure as a declared target for al-Qaeda and its affiliates. Alongside its own routine preventive efforts with regard to terrorism, Israel benefits from the preventive efforts of its neighboring states, especially Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon. In addition, the Hamas regime in the Gaza Strip continues to work at consolidating its exclusive rule in the Strip and its monopoly on the use of force, and therefore is acting to curb local global jihadists – the Jaljalat – which seek to continue attacking Israel and thus set off another round of fighting between Hamas and Israel in the Gaza arena.

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Conclusion

Darkening Clouds on the Horizon

Shlomo Brom and Anat Kurz

Israel is now in a period characterized by accelerated diplomatic and security threats. The recent worsening of Israel's strategic situation has occurred partly as a result of developments in the Middle East and the global arena over which Israel has only limited control, and partly because of the lack of an appropriate response to these developments from Israel's political establishment. The Israeli government, composed of political powers with what at times are diametrically opposing views, has avoided formulating a consistent policy with clear goals on key issues on the agenda, and has chosen instead to postpone decisions or mitigate immediate international pressure through partial steps. As a result, more than a year after the formation of the government headed by Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel does not have answers to many of the challenges that will influence its political status and its security situation in the coming years.

The principal differences of opinion in Israel's government focus on the degree of openness to negotiations on a political and territorial compromise in the two areas that hold the key to improving Israel's regional status, and as such, its international status: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Israeli-Syrian conflict. Those who oppose effective striving for a compromise are not prepared to pay the price of promoting and formulating an agreement, especially when it concerns territory. There are a variety of reasons for this opposition, some fundamentally ideological. Other reasons include the lack of trust in the other side's intentions/capabilities to fulfill its part

of the agreement if it is achieved, and therefore, the fear that territorial concessions will create an intolerable security danger. In addition, there is the internal political context and the reluctance to confront opponents of compromise among the Israeli public. In contrast, other members of the government maintain that striving for agreements is an Israeli interest of the first order, given their assessment that Israel will pay a heavy price if it does not try to advance agreements in the conflict arenas. In the short term, this will be a political price manifested in a worsening of relations with central international actors; an accelerated process of delegitimization; and increasing security threats. In the long term, Israel will be facing these same ever-growing challenges, as well as a concrete threat to its character as the democratic state of the Jewish people.

In the face of international pressure to renew the diplomatic process – and heavy pressure from the Obama administration in particular – the Israeli government decided to give preference to the Israeli-Palestinian track and to the renewal of the negotiations with the Palestinian Authority. Apparently the assessment was that the domestic or international political price of stalemate on this track would be higher than the price of stalemate in the Israeli-Syrian arena. In addition, Israel assumed it could cope successfully with the security threats resulting from a stalemate on the Syrian track, especially through the deterrence posture it succeeded in establishing following the 2006 war in Lebanon. Nevertheless, the drive to renew the negotiations on the Palestinian track, which enabled the launching of proximity talks with the PA in May 2010 with American mediation, was not based on a definition of clear goals and an intention to reach a permanent status agreement that realizes a two-state solution in a defined time frame. The renewal of dialogue with the Palestinian Authority became a means to ease American pressure. Israel and the PA share the assessment that there is little chance of the proximity talks' success; therefore, the two sides' main goal is at the end of the four-month period allotted for the proximity talks by the US and the PA to be in a situation in which they can place the blame for the failure on the other. From Israel's point of view, this means mainly postponing the decisions and the expected crises, both between Israel and the PA and Israel and the American administration, the mediator and sponsor of the talks.

The first crisis is expected in September 2010: the chance that at the end of four months it will be possible to bridge the substantive gaps between the sides and make the proximity talks the basis of direct talks is tenuous at best. In addition, at that time Israel's commitment to a construction freeze in the settlements will expire. The Palestinians and the US will expect the freeze to be extended, but the government of Israel will find it difficult to do so because of internal and domestic pressures. The main reason that the freeze encountered relatively moderate opposition is that it was limited to a number of months. Extending the freeze will create a new situation that would in practice mean a freeze not limited in time, and therefore there will also be serious opposition within the Likud, the party in power.

The deadlock in the diplomatic process has prompted the Palestinians to consider a unilateral solution in the form of the establishment of a Palestinian state without Israel's cooperation, which would include a strong element of international coercion towards Israel. It is not clear how much substance there is to this idea in its various versions, and to what extent the international community is ready to adopt ideas of coercing Israel. In any case, the plan to prepare the infrastructure for a state within two years, published in August 2009 by Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayyad, could bring the PA to a situation in which at the end of the period, the international community would conclude that the sole obstacle to implementation of the two-state solution is Israel's policy. An additional challenge that faces Israel is the possibility that a deadlock will threaten the PA's status and its survival in its present form and bring about a situation in which the achievements in building new PA security forces with the help of the United States, the European Union, and Jordan will disappear. Any undermining of the security situation in the West Bank could be accompanied by escalation in Gaza, which will have severe ramifications for Israel.

The sad state of the diplomatic process has grave implications for Israel's international and regional standing. Against the backdrop of the stalemate, a great deal of tension developed over the past year in relations between Israel and the US, Israel's chief source of strategic support. Although tensions on this front have been mitigated to a certain extent – because of the compromise on the construction freeze in the settlements,

the opening of proximity talks, and the US domestic political focus on mid-term Congressional elections – it is quite possible that this calm is only temporary. The Obama administration has given high priority to attaining an Israeli-Palestinian agreement on the assumption that settling the conflict, or at least laying out a clear and binding course to realize the idea of two states, will make it easier to cope with advancing the American agenda in the Greater Middle East: recruiting pragmatic Arab states for an anti-Iranian front, stabilizing the security situation and the political system in Iraq, and curbing the influence of radical Islam in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The administration has therefore formulated a policy that combines pressure on Israel's government to progress in negotiations with the Palestinians with steps that demonstrate a major commitment to Israel's security and a willingness to provide security guarantees that will allow Israel to advance toward an agreement.

The stalemate in the diplomatic process and in particular, the criticism of Israel's part in this stalemate – to which even outstanding friends of Israel, including German chancellor Angela Merkel, are party – has accelerated a process of delegitimization of Israel in the international arena. Even governments friendly to Israel have a hard time coping with the animosity to Israel among their respective publics. Israel's military moves in recent years, especially the campaigns in Lebanon and Gaza, led to severe condemnation of what were perceived as violations of international law; the Goldstone report and the international community's reaction to it reflected this atmosphere well. The friction between Israel and the United States over Israel's policy in the Palestinian arena contributes a great deal to this process of delegitimization: scathing criticism from the US removed restrictions and gave the green light to unrestrained attacks on Israel. Against this backdrop, the only recent ray of light in Israel's international status is its economic performance. Israel has succeeded in coping with the world economic crisis better than most Western states. Its economic achievements led to a decision by the OECD, which brings together the developed nations of the world, to accept Israel into its ranks.

Israel's relations with Middle Eastern countries have also deteriorated. In this context, the decline of relations with Turkey and the move from partnership to tension and hostility is especially noticeable. The change

in the nature of the government in Turkey, including the weakening of the military's influence on the political establishment, has played a central role in the changed relations with Israel. At the same time, the stalemate in the diplomatic process and the rejectionist image of Israel's government make it difficult for Israel to meet the strengthening of Islamic forces in Turkey with optimal tools that will lessen the tension.

Relations with Arab countries, which appeared to be improving at the end of the previous government's term, are also in the process of deteriorating; in the current situation, it is difficult for the Arab states that have common interests with Israel to cultivate them. Two examples of this situation are Israel-Jordan relations and Israel-Egypt relations. There has been an unprecedented worsening of Israel-Jordan relations, and the dialogue between the countries has ceased almost entirely. King Abdullah of Jordan has no trust in Israel, and the Jordanians are afraid of a flare-up in the Israeli-Palestinian arena – as a result of the diplomatic stalemate or an Israeli military response to a provocation by militant Palestinian elements – that will threaten the stability of the Jordanian regime. The Hamas takeover of Gaza and the fears of Iran going nuclear have strengthened the interest shared by Israel and Egypt to contain these threats. However, against the backdrop of the political stalemate, Egypt is hard pressed to cooperate with Israel, and the dialogue between the sides is laden with friction.

Israel's increasing regional and international isolation is especially severe in light of the fact that without international cooperation and coordination, it will face heightened difficulties in coping with the threats that it faces. This subject is especially relevant to two current major security challenges: Iran's nuclearization and the asymmetric struggle with non-state actors, or more precisely, quasi-state actors.

Iran progresses with its nuclear program without any real interference; it continues to stockpile fissile material with a low level of enrichment, and it is moving to the next stage of enrichment to a level of 20 percent. More than a year after President Obama entered the White House, his policy of dialogue with Iran is in a hopeless situation. The riots in Iran following the presidential elections delayed the dialogue, and the partial and limited dialogue that took place stopped when Iran rejected the proposal to transfer material that had already been enriched to other countries, in exchange for

fuel rods for its research reactor. The domestic tension in Iran makes it more difficult to renew the dialogue and progress toward understandings. Indeed, the United States has difficulty holding an effective dialogue with an oppressive regime, seen as having erased the small amount of democracy it had in its country. For its part, the Iranian regime has hardened its positions toward the West, which it sees as inciting and aiding the elements that threaten the regime's stability. Overall, then, even the fourth round of sanctions against Iran, approved by the Security Council in June 2010, do not bespeak a qualitative improvement in the US-led drive to deal with the Iranian challenge.

Any means of action that Israel's decision makers consider to stop Iran's nuclear program will require the cooperation of the international community, especially the United States. The need for international cooperation is clear concerning diplomacy and imposition of effective sanctions, and even more so regarding military options. The resource-rich United States, whose forces are already deployed in countries around Iran, has the most auspicious capability to deal with Iran's nuclear program through military means. It is true that Israel can carry out aerial attacks in Iran even without American cooperation, as it did in Iraq in 1981, but its achievements would be far more limited because of the longer ranges involved, the difficulties of executing more than one round of attack, and the dispersal of the Iranian nuclear project. The price of the attack, particularly in diplomatic terms, would be great. For this reason, Israel will find it difficult to attack Iran without a green light, or at least a yellow light, from the United States, and without an assessment of whether the diplomatic price of the action will be tolerable.

If the attempts to stop the Iranian nuclear program fail, the need for international cooperation to contain the Iranian threat will grow. Israel is liable to need American nuclear guarantees to strengthen its deterrence against Iran. There will be a need, no less strong, for guarantees and American aid to Arab Gulf states lest some of them defect to the Iranian camp, believing that if they cannot beat Iran, they would do better to join it and receive its protection.

Furthermore, an attempt to stop the spread of nuclear weapons in the Middle East is liable to increase the pressure on Israel to take steps to help

realize the vision of a nuclear-free Middle East. Signs of this trend were seen at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference that met in New York in May 2010. US administration spokesmen, including the secretary of state and the national security advisor, reiterated the traditional policy: the United States has adopted the vision of a nuclear-free Middle East, but it does not think that with the current political situation in the Middle East it is possible to make concrete moves to realize the vision. However, America's ability to withstand pressures in this realm has been weakened, which could be seen in the closing statement of the review conference.

At the same time, it will be necessary to create means to block Iran's efforts and those of its allies to exploit Iran's improved strategic status and exert greater pressure on Israel and the pragmatic Arab states, while employing Tehran's various protégés, especially Hizbollah in Lebanon and Hamas.

Hizbollah and Hamas are a key tool in Iran's hands in its struggle against Israel, the pragmatic Arab states, and the West, but as political organizations representing local populations, they also have independent agendas. For this reason, the increasing tension between Israel and the Iran-led radical camp was not manifested on Israel's borders with Lebanon and the Gaza Strip in the last year. From a security standpoint, the past year was one of the quietest periods for Israel since the 1960s. This quiet is a result of the strengthening of Israel's deterrence and internal considerations of both Hizbollah and Hamas following the 2006 military campaign in Lebanon and the 2008-9 operation in the Gaza Strip. Hizbollah's leadership is coping with the political damage caused by its image as a party that in the name of foreign interests dragged Lebanon into a war that brought disaster to the country. Therefore, it is not eager to renew conflict with Israel. For its part, Hamas was also dealt a hard blow in Operation Cast Lead without managing to exact a significant price from Israel, other than the diplomatic price that Israel paid for the intensity of the attack on Gaza. The Hamas leadership is aware of a sharp drop in its public support in the Gaza Strip, and it fears that another round with Israel would only make things worse.

Nevertheless, Hamas and Hizbollah have exploited the past year to strengthen their military capabilities and to increase their stockpiles of

weapons while they improve their capabilities of launching rockets, and possibly missiles, deep into Israel. At this stage, Israel's deterrence is stable on both fronts and therefore the talk, mostly in Lebanon, about a war in the near future seems groundless, but it will be difficult for deterrence alone to ensure quiet for the long term; on both fronts, there are also destabilizing factors.

For example, an Israeli or American attack on Iran's nuclear facilities could bring about Iranian pressure on Hizbollah to cooperate in the battle by setting Israel's northern border ablaze, though it is not certain that Iran will choose to endanger its outpost in Lebanon when Iran itself is under military attack. Likewise, it is not certain that pressure from Iran will bring about a Hizbollah action against Israel; Hizbollah's leadership is liable to recoil from a conflict that will strengthen its image as an organization willing to sacrifice Lebanon for the sake of foreign interests. On the other hand, Hizbollah has not yet succeeded in taking revenge on Israel for the assassination of its senior member Imad Mughniyeh, and the organization might err again in assessing Israel's response and carry out a retaliatory action that will ignite the Lebanese front.

On the southern front, the main cause of instability is the increasing pressure on Hamas from both within and without. The change in Egyptian policy following the failure of attempts to bring about internal Palestinian reconciliation, as well as the discovery of a Hizbollah network in Egypt, has been expressed in increased and more effective action to stop the smuggling of weapons and money into the Gaza Strip. Hamas is suffering financial difficulties due to fewer money transfers from Iran, and it is having difficulty financing the salaries of government workers in Gaza. This fact contributes to the decline in the organization's popularity. If the deterioration in Hamas's situation continues, the organization's leaders may conclude that an additional round of violence will extricate them from their domestic distress. Another scenario – though far less likely given the slim chance of a breakthrough in the negotiations between Israel and the PA – is that Hamas will try to escalate the conflict with Israel in order to foil any significant progress in the talks.

Nevertheless, it is very possible that the negative trends that are worsening Israel's strategic situation will not come to dramatic fruition in

the coming year and that it will be a relatively quiet year from a security standpoint. Such a situation is liable to create the illusion of calm in Israel and encourage a belief that the continuation of the status quo is the best option. This would delay, if not preempt, the concentrated efforts necessary to improve Israel's security situation, promote its regional and international status, and prevent further deterioration.

Appendix

The Middle East Military Balance

Trends in Military Buildup in the Middle East

Yiftah Shapir / 229

Review of Armed Forces

239

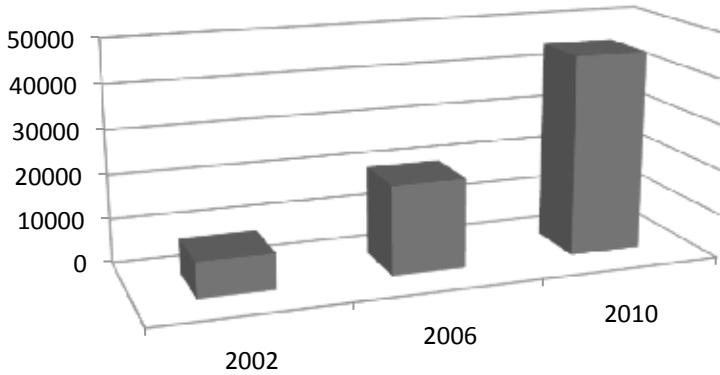
Trends in Military Buildup in the Middle East

Yiftah Shapir

Middle East states continue to figure among the world's leading arms customers. However, executions of arms deals are slow processes, and changes in the military capacities of states rarely occur overnight. As such, trends in arms acquisitions presented in previous recent INSS annual publications are still valid. These include: acquisition of the most advanced and sophisticated weapon systems, primarily by oil-rich countries; efforts to develop indigenous military industries; and reduction of expenses by upgrading older weapon systems instead of buying new ones. The non-oil-rich countries in the region that do not receive security assistance from the US cannot participate in the advanced weaponry market. Instead, they tend to adopt asymmetrical doctrines that enable them to balance the technological advantages of their rivals. They rely more and more on guerilla warfare and terrorism on the one hand, and on strategic capability achieved by acquisition of ballistic missiles, artillery rockets, and weapons of mass destruction on the other. Non-state actors such as Hizbollah and Hamas continue to develop semi-regular military forces with large inventories of artillery rockets, as well as anti-tank and anti-aircraft capabilities (figure 1).

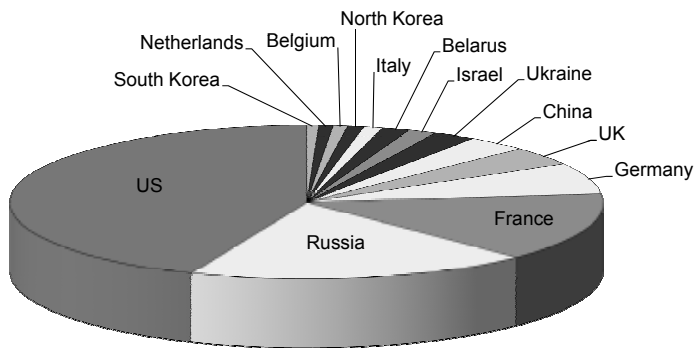
The US remains the biggest weapons supplier to the region. Russia has also made attempts to extend its market share in the region, but so far with limited success. Other important players are key European Union countries, particularly France and the UK (figure 2). In addition, indigenous military industry plays a very important role in some states in the region. Israel and

Figure 1. Hizbollah Rocket Arsenal



Source: INSS Middle East Military Balance Project

Figure 2. Weapons Suppliers to the Middle East



Source: INSS Middle East Military Balance Project

Turkey operate the most advanced industries, while the UAE is investing extensive resources to build its own military industry. Iran has tried to be as autonomous as possible in its weapons production, although its industry's actual capability is far smaller than officially declared.

What follows is a brief summary of the most important recent developments in some of the region's countries.

Algeria

Algeria is in the midst of a large weapons deal with Russia (approximately \$7 billion). As part of this deal, Algeria received T-90 tanks and Su-30 MKA combat aircraft. It was also supposed to take possession of long range S-300 PMU-2 anti-aircraft missile systems, Pantsyr S-1 anti-aircraft systems for point defense, and Yak-130 training planes. The deal, however, encountered many obstacles. Dozens of Mig-29 SMT jets were supplied and then rejected by Algeria, because their performance was deemed unsatisfactory. In return Algeria received 28 additional Su-30 MKA planes. For its navy, Algeria issued a tender for four frigates, with France, Germany, and Great Britain competing for the deal; it seems that the deal will eventually go to Italy. Algeria also benefits from limited American military aid (a total of \$700,000 in 2008), and it purchased night vision equipment, as well as Beechcraft 1900D surveillance planes from the US.

Egypt

Egypt, like Israel, benefits from steady American defense aid, and receives \$1.3 billion a year. An agreement signed in 2007 ensures Egypt the continuation of this aid at least until 2018, which enables Egypt to purchase American-made weapons without having to worry about economic difficulties. Egypt's primary deals in recent years have included AH-64D Apache attack helicopters (though the acquisition of the Longbow radar system for these helicopters has not yet been approved) and additional M1A1 tanks. These tanks are bought as kits for assembly in Egypt. Since starting to purchase these tanks, the Egyptian defense industry has assembled 880 such tanks, and the most recent transaction, now underway, includes an additional 125 tanks. At the same time, Egypt has not refrained from buying weapons from other sources, finances permitting. It is negotiating with Germany to buy Type 214 submarines (a model quite similar to the Israeli Dolphin class submarine).

Iran

Iran is in the midst of a long process of rearming its military. Reports of large arms deals with Russia appear regularly in the media, although several of these deals have not in fact materialized. The most important

of these deals is the contract to supply Iran with the S-300-PMU-1 model of long range air defense missile systems. Although Russian officials have repeatedly reiterated their commitment to proceed with the deal, the deal has not yet materialized. Russia seems to be dragging its feet under international pressure against arming Iran, while refraining from canceling the deal altogether.

Iran continues to rearm itself with locally produced arms, mainly missiles and rockets. In the field of long range ballistic missiles, Iran has made progress on two tracks: liquid fuel-based missiles and solid fuel-based missiles. In the first track, Iran developed the Safir-e Omid satellite launcher, a liquid fuel two-stage missile that launched the Kavoshgar research capsule and the Omid satellite in February 2009. A further development in the same direction was the heavy satellite launcher Simorgh, which was displayed in public but not yet tested. In the second track, Iran is also developing a two-stage solid fuel powered surface-to-surface missile intended to reach a range of up to 2,000 km. This missile, alternately known as Ghadr, Sejjil, or Ashura, was tested for the first time in November 2007 (and again in May and December 2009), and may enter operational service within a few years.

It is harder to estimate Iran's true R&D and production capabilities in other fields. The Iranian media reports regularly about the development of innovative weapon systems – tanks, armored personnel carriers, fighter planes, helicopters, various missiles (sea-to-sea, air-to-air, anti-tank), and more – but it is difficult to distinguish between propaganda and actual progress. It does not seem that Iran is in fact capable of producing in significant quantities all the types and models it professes to produce. Iran is certainly capable of producing several models of artillery rockets, and perhaps some anti-tank and sea-to-sea missiles (based on Russian and Chinese designs). However there is no evidence, for example, that Iran is producing fighter planes with real capabilities of engaging in a modern battle, although it claims to have this capability.

Iraq

Iraq is in the process of rebuilding its army from scratch. This is taking longer than expected, and has been accompanied by a host of problems

– recruitment of suitable personnel, graft and corruption connected to questionable arms deals, and more. In purchasing, the Iraqi army is mostly engaged in the most basic outfitting of a military force, because little of the old Iraqi armed forces remain.

In late 2008, the US Congress was asked to authorize a number of large arms acquisitions valued at several billion dollars that will ultimately include M1A1 MBTs (some of which are already in Iraq), several hundred Styker and Guardian APCs, AT-6B training planes, and Bell 407 helicopters armed with Hellfire missiles. The Iraqi government also announced its future intention to procure F-16 combat aircraft. Coupled with the difficulties involved in its force buildup, Iraq is also starting to face the challenge of the withdrawal of most of the US forces, which by virtue of their presence have thus far guaranteed the day to day security of the country.

Israel

Annual US military aid to Israel for 2010 is in the amount of \$2.77 billion. This sum is intended almost in its entirety for military buildup. On the basis of an agreement reached with the US in August 2007, this aid is slated to increase gradually and will total, in the decade ending in 2018, \$30 billion. Israel's rearmament is therefore a fairly predetermined and continuous process and does not portend any unexpected reversals. Thus, Israel is also less affected than other nations by changes in the global or local economic situation.

After the Second Lebanon War (2006), the IDF invested large sums in restocking weapons and munitions, with an emphasis on procurement of large quantities of modern types of munitions for the air force, such as the GBU-39 small diameter bombs and GPS-guided JDAM bombs. As for large arms deals, Israel has completed its intake of all 100 Sufa F-16I fighter jets, and also took delivery of five Nahshon aircraft (Gulfstream G550), some intended for intelligence gathering (going under the name of Eitam in the air force) and some for aerial command and control missions (known in Israel under the name Shavit). The platforms were bought in the US and arrived in Israel starting in 2005, to be installed with Israeli-made systems.

Israel announced its intention to equip its air force with F-35 planes in the coming decade, but negotiations are still underway on the terms of the deal. There are numerous obstacles to conclusion of the deal at the moment. First of all, the F-35 program itself suffers from delays and runoffs. The price of a single unit is rising as delays are accumulating and is now estimated at over \$130 million. Second, Israel demands access to the aircraft's software, as well as the ability to install Israeli-made systems – requests that have not been granted by the US authorities. Third, there are concerns that the political tensions between Prime Minister Netanyahu's government and the US administration may affect President Obama's willingness to approve large arms deals with Israel in the near future. Thus far, however, the Obama administration has consistently addressed Israel's security needs very positively.

In addition to the F-35, the Israeli air force ordered nine advanced C-130J transport aircraft, estimated at \$1.9 billion. The air force is also replacing its Tzukit training planes that have served for over 40 years with the US-made Beechcraft T-6 Texan II (which received the name Efroni in the IAF). In addition, the Israeli navy ordered two more Dolphin class submarines, which are being constructed in Germany.

In many areas Israel is rearming with locally produced arms. Recent emphasis has been on development and production of active anti-ballistic missile defense systems and anti-rocket defense systems. Israel ordered more Arrow batteries on top of the two operational batteries it already deploys. At the same time the entire Arrow project is undergoing a process of upgrading to help it achieve greater success in handling the long range missile threat from Iran. Similarly, Israel is investing in two additional active defense systems. The first is David's Sling, meant to provide defense against rockets and short range ballistic missiles with a range of 40-200 km (particularly heavy rockets of the kind fired from Lebanon in 2006). The second is Iron Dome, meant to defend against shorter range rockets and missiles such as the Qassams and Grads fired both from the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. David's Sling is scheduled to finish the development stage in 2012, while Iron Dome is scheduled to enter operational service this year.

In addition, Israel continues to develop and acquire space assets: in 2007, the Ofeq-7 photo reconnaissance satellite, replacing the old Ofeq-5,

was launched into space, and in early 2008, using an Indian Polar satellite launcher (PSLV), the TecSAR surveillance satellite was launched, allowing for intelligence gathering by day or night and in any weather.

Israel has very little competition in the area of UAVs. Recently the air force deployed the new Shoal and Eitan long endurance UAVs, capable of loitering in the air for extended periods of time at high altitudes. Both are intended to fulfill extended missions – over 40 hours long – and will undertake reconnaissance and intelligence gathering missions. Side by side with the larger UAVs, IDF units are being equipped with the Skylark-I mini UAVs, made by Elbit. These are small, quiet, and easily operated mini UAVs, carried by soldiers in combat units for the purpose of intelligence gathering from “the other side of the hill” at short distances (up to 10 km). Recently, the Skylark I LE, which has somewhat extended endurance, was chosen as the model for additional military units.

Finally, Israel has expanded its acquisition of self-produced weapon systems for the ground forces. One of the lessons of the Second Lebanon War led to the military starting to equip itself with the Namer IFV, based on the hull of the Merkava MBT. In addition, both the Merkava Mark IV and the Namer will be equipped with active anti-tank defense systems (using two different, competing systems: Trophy, produced by Rafael, for the Merkava Mk IV, and Iron Fist, produced by IMI and Elbit, for the Namer).

Saudi Arabia

The most impressive deal in recent years was the purchase of 72 Typhoons ordered from Great Britain at a cost of \$7-9 billion. Saudi Arabia also ordered upgrades for its Tornado and for its F-15S combat aircraft. Another major deal, signed in mid-2009, involves upgrade to the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG). The contract, worth some \$2.2 billion, is for the acquisition of different types of combat armored vehicles. The upgrade program is typically divided between the US and France, from which SANG ordered new artillery pieces.

Additional arms orders include more M1A2 tanks from the US, as well as upgrades for existing tanks, a transaction of some \$3 billion. This project also includes setting up a large facility that will assemble the tanks in the kingdom.

UAE

The UAE armed forces are among the militaries that have grown most intensively. The UAE, like other Gulf states, prefers to deal with a variety of vendors, and buys primarily from the US and France, though it is willing to do big business with Russia as well. After the supply of the newest fighter jets was completed (the UAE beefed up its air force with 63 Mirage 2000-9 planes from France and 80 F-16E/F planes, a model developed specifically for the Emirates), the country has continued to procure equipment for the air force, navy, and air defense forces. It signed a deal to upgrade 30 Apache helicopters to the AH-64D model, and ordered three Airbus A330 refueling aircraft. More recently it ordered twelve C-130J tactical transport aircraft as well as six C-17 Globemaster strategic transport aircraft.

The Baynunah ships project has been underway for several years. These corvettes were designed in France, and the first of them is being built by the CMN shipyard in Cherbourg, France. The rest are constructed in Abu Dhabi by ADSB. Despite the French design and local manufacture, some of the armaments will actually be American-made. Thus, for example, the UAE has ordered RAM missiles from Raytheon Corporation to defend the ships against sea-to-sea missiles.

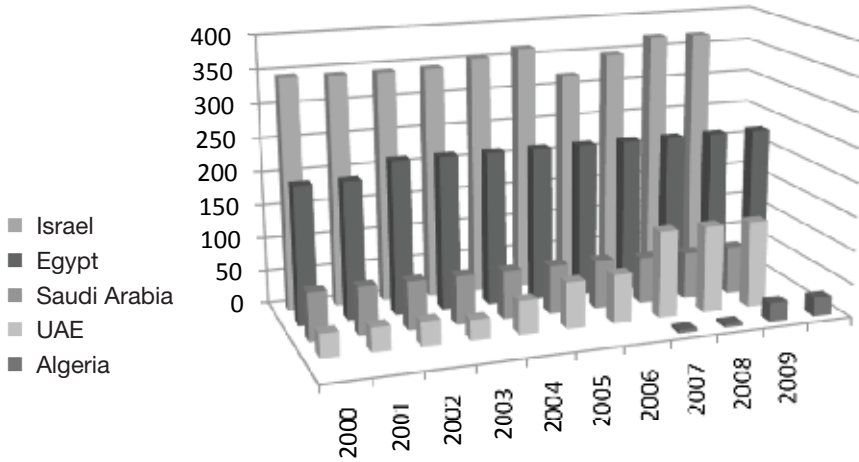
In the realm of air defense, the UAE was scheduled to receive the Russian-made Pantsyr S-1 systems, short range mobile air defense systems developed in Russia at the UAE's request and with its funding. The UAE is investing heavily in air defense systems and ballistic missile defense systems that will be supplied in the coming years in different deals estimated at some \$9 billion, to include in the short run upgrades for the Patriot missile batteries it already has and purchases of the PAC-3 interceptors (for missile interception) for these batteries. In the longer run it will include the purchase from the US of THAAD dedicated anti-ballistic missile defense systems. The value of this transaction is estimated at about \$7 billion.

Conclusion

The Middle East continues to be a major market for weapons, and of late there have been no substantial changes in the main trends of arms procurements. General trends in the region's inventories of main aerial, naval, and ground

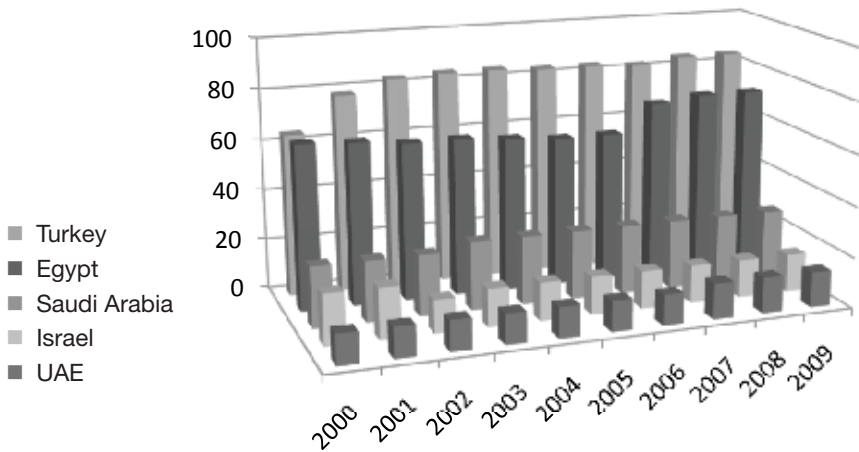
platforms appear in figures 3, 4, and 5. The recent conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon, however, have had some effects on the overall picture.

Figure 3. Advanced Combat Aircraft 2000–2009



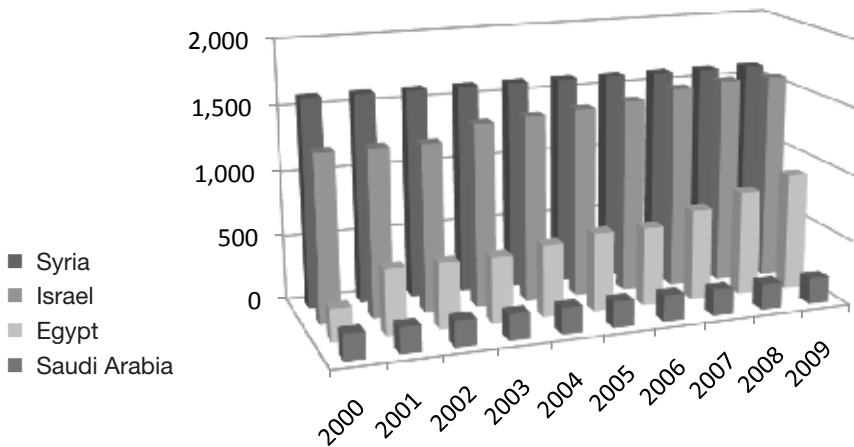
Source: INSS Middle East Military Balance Project

Figure 4. Naval Combat Vessels 2000–2009



Source: INSS Middle East Military Balance Project

Figure 5. High Quality Tanks ORBAT Development



Source: INSS Middle East Military Balance Project

For Israel and Syria, the lessons of the Second Lebanon War and Operation Cast Lead in Gaza were studied and have begun to be implemented. Israel, while still buying advanced fighter jets, surveillance, and early warning planes, and expanding its satellite capabilities, has also accelerated the rate of outfitting the military with anti-rocket systems and with better protected armored personnel carriers and tanks. For its part, Syria is enlarging its stock of artillery rockets and anti-tank weaponry. Hizbollah and Hamas, the non-state entities buoyed by the perception of successes of asymmetrical engagements, continue to rearm themselves with the same types of weapon systems, as well as some anti-aircraft weapons.

It is likely that weapons purchases in the Middle East will level off in the coming years. States with financing capabilities will continue to arm themselves with precision guided weapon systems, aerial warning systems, and intelligence. However, the importance of arms dedicated to fighting terrorism, defending against rockets and missiles, and protecting population centers will continue to grow as the threat of terrorism and guerilla warfare within and outside the region's states increases.

Review of Armed Forces

1. ALGERIA

Major Changes

- The Algerian air force received all of its Su-30MKA combat aircraft from Russia.
 - Thus far the Algerian land forces received 180 T-90 MBTs from Russia. More MBTs are expected.
-

General Data

Official Name of the State: Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria

Head of State: President of the High State Council Abdul Aziz Bouteflika

Prime Minister: Ahmed Ouyahia

Minister of Defense: Abdul Aziz Bouteflika

Chief of General Staff: Major General Salih Ahmad Jaid

Commander of the Ground Forces: Major General Ahsan Tafer

Commander of the Air Force: Brigadier General Muhammad Ibn Suleiman

Commander of Air Defense Force: Brigadier General Achour Laoudi

Commander of the Navy: Admiral Mohammed Taher Yali

Area: 2,460,500 sq. km.

Population: 34,900,000

The tables that appear in the pages that follow present a summary of data on Middle East armed forces. More data is available on the INSS website, where it is updated regularly.

The table representing the order-of-battle of each country often gives two numbers for each weapon category. The first number refers to quantities in active service, whereas the second number (in parentheses) refers to the total inventory.

Strategic Assets

NBC Capabilities

Nuclear capability

One 15 MW nuclear reactor, probably upgraded to 40 MW (from PRC), allegedly serves a clandestine nuclear weapons program; one 1 MW nuclear research reactor (from Argentina); basic R&D; signatory to the NPT. Safeguards agreement with the IAEA in force. Signed and ratified the African Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba).

Chemical weapons and protective equipment

No data on CW activities available. Signed and ratified the CWC.

Biological weapons

No data on BW activities available. Signed and ratified the BWC.

Space Assets

Model	Type	Notes
Satellites		
• ALSAT-1	Remote sensing	90 kg, 32m resolution, earth monitoring civilian satellite for natural disasters
Future launch		
• ALSAT-2	Remote sensing	

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	127,000	127,000	127,000	127,000	127,000
Ground forces					
• Divisions	5	5	5	5	5
• Total number of brigades	26	26	26	26	26
• Tanks	900 (1,100)	900 (1,100)	940 (1,140)	1,000 (1,200)	1,080 (1,240)
• APCs/AFVs	1,915 (2,015)	1,915 (2,015)	1,955 (2,055)	1,955 (2,055)	1,955 (2,055)
• Artillery (including MRLs)	920 (1,000)	920 (1,000)	920 (1,000)	920 (1,000)	920 (1,000)

Order-of-Battle – cont'd

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	213 (243)	213 (243)	213 (243)	223 (253)	241 (271)
• Transport aircraft	41 (46)	41 (46)	41 (46)	46 (52)	46 (52)
• Helicopters	177 (186)	177 (186)	177 (186)	177 (186)	177 (186)
Air defense forces					
• Heavy SAM batteries	11	11	11	11	11
• Medium SAM batteries	18	18	18	18	18
• Light SAM launchers	78	78	78	78	78
Navy					
• Combat vessels	26	26	26	26	26
• Patrol craft	16	16	16	16	21
• Submarines	2	2	2	2	3

2. BAHRAIN

Major Changes

-
- No major change was recorded for the Bahraini armed forces in 2009.
-

General Data

Official Name of the State: State of Bahrain

Head of State: Amir Shaykh Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa

Prime Minister: Khalifa bin Salman al-Khalifa

Deputy Supreme Commander: Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad al-Khalifa

State Minister for Defense: Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa

Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces: Lieutenant General Khalifa bin Ahmed al-Khalifa

Chief of Staff of the Bahraini Defense Forces: Major General Duaij bin Salman al-Khalifa

Commander of the Air Force: Hamad bin Abdallah al-Khalifa

Commander of the Navy: Lieutenant Commander Yusuf al-Maluallah

Area: 620 sq. km.

Population: 800,000

Strategic Assets

Ballistic Missiles

Model	Launchers	Missiles	Since	Notes
• ATACMS	9	30	2002	Using MLRS

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	8,200	8,200	8,200	8,200	8,200
• SSM launchers	9	9	9	9	9
Ground forces					
• Total number of brigades	3	3	3	3	3
• Number of battalions	7	7	7	7	7

Order-of-Battle – cont'd

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
• Tanks	180	180	180	180	180
• APCs/AFVs	277 (297)	277 (297)	277 (297)	277 (297)	277 (297)
• Artillery (including MRLs)	48 (50)	48 (50)	48 (50)	68 (70)	68 (70)
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	33 (34)	34*	34	34	34
• Transport aircraft	4	4	4	4	5
• Helicopters	48*	48	48	48	48
Air defense forces					
• Heavy SAM batteries	1	1	1	1	1
• Medium SAM batteries	2	2	2	2	2
• Light SAM launchers	40	40	40	40	40
Navy					
• Combat vessels	11	11	11	11	11
• Patrol craft	22	22	22	26	26

* Due to change in estimate

3. EGYPT

Major Changes

- The Egyptian military industry is producing 125 additional Abrams M1A1 MBTs, beyond the existing 880 tanks already produced, bringing the total to 1,005 tanks.
-

General Data

Official Name of the State: The Arab Republic of Egypt

Head of State: President Muhammad Husni Mubarak

Prime Minister: Ahmad Nadhif

Minister of Defense and Military Production: Field Marshal Muhammad Hussayn Tantawi

Chief of General Staff: Lieutenant General Samy Hafez Anan

Commander of the Air Force: Maj. Gen. Reda Mahmoud Hafez Mohamed

Commander of the Navy: Vice Admiral Mohab Mameesh

Area: 1,000,258 sq. km. (dispute with Sudan over "Halaib triangle" area)

Population: 75,500,000

Strategic Assets

NBC Capabilities

Nuclear capability

A 22 MW research reactor from Argentina completed in 1997; 2 MW research reactor from the USSR, in operation since 1961. Party to the NPT. Safeguards agreement with the IAEA in force. Signed but not ratified the African Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba).

Chemical weapons and protective equipment

Alleged continued research and possible production of chemical warfare agents. Alleged stockpile of chemical agents (mustard and nerve agents). Personal protective equipment, Soviet type decontamination units, Fuchs (Fox) ABC detection vehicle (12), SPW-40 P2Ch ABC detection vehicle (small numbers). Refused to sign the CWC.

Biological weapons

Suspected biological warfare program, no details available. Not a party to the BWC.

Ballistic Missiles

Model	Launchers	Missiles	Since	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SS-1 (Scud B/Scud C) 	24	100	1973	Possibly some upgraded
Future procurement				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scud C/ Project-T 		90		Locally produced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vector 				Unconfirmed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No-Dong 		24		Alleged

Space Assets

Model	Type	Notes
Satellites		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NILESAT-1/2 Egypt Sat 1 	Communication Remote sensing	Civilian 100 kg; a sun-synchronous, 668 km orbit
Ground stations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aswan 	Remote sensing	Receiving and processing satellite images for desert research
Future procurement		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desert Sat 	Environmental	Monitoring coastal erosion, desertification and water resources

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel (regular) 	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSM launchers 	24	24	24	24	24
Ground forces					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divisions 	12	12	12	12	12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total number of brigades 	49	49	49	49	49
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tanks 	~3,100 (3,705)	~3,100 (3,705)	~3,200 (3,830)	~3,200 (3,830)	~3,200 (3,830)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> APCs/AFVs 	~3,680 (~4,950)	~3,680 (~4,950)	~3,680 (~4,950)	4,125 (5,305)	4,125 (5,305)

Order-of-Battle – cont'd

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
• Artillery (including MRLs)	~3,590 (~3,750)	~3,590 (~3,750)	~3,590 (~3,750)	4,050	4,050
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	505 (518)	505 (518)	505 (518)	505 (518)	505 (518)
• Transport aircraft	48	48	53 (55)	53 (55)	53 (55)
• Helicopters	~225	~225	230	230	230
Air defense forces					
• Heavy SAM batteries	109	109	109	109	109
• Medium SAM batteries	44	44	46	46	46
• Light SAM launchers	105	130	130	155	155
Navy					
• Submarines	4	4	4	4	4
• Combat vessels	59	59	70	72	72
• Patrol craft	103	103	103	109	109

4. IRAN

Major Changes

- Iran continues its nuclear weapons project in spite of massive international pressure not to do so.
 - The acquisition of Iran's S-300PMU advanced air defense system is still questionable, despite previous reports to the contrary.
 - The Iranian military industry continues to develop more and more advanced systems. Among these are long range coastal anti-ship missiles, submarine launched and airborne versions of anti-ship missiles, long range ballistic missiles (principally the two stage solid-fueled Sejil missile, and the satellite launch vehicle Safir-e Omid), midget submarines (Ghader and Nahang), missile boats (Kaman class), and patrol boats. Mass production of combat aircraft like the Azarakhsh and Saegheh, and UAVs.
-

General Data

Official Name of the State: Islamic Republic of Iran

Supreme Religious and Political National Leader (Rahbar): Ayatollah Ali Hoseini Khamenei

Head of State (formally subordinate to National Leader): President Mahmud Ahmadinejad

Minister of Defense: Ahmed Vahidi

General Commander of the Armed Forces: Major General Ataollah Salehi

Head of the Armed Forces General Command Headquarters: Major General Hasan Firuzabadi

Chief of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces: Brigadier General Abdolrahim Mousavi

Commander of the Ground Forces: Brigadier General Ahmad-Reza Pourdastan

Commander of the Air Force: Brigadier General Hassan Shahsafi

Commander of the Air-Defense Forces: Brigadier General Ahmad Miqani

Commander of the Navy: Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari

Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC): Major General Mohammed Ali Jaafari

Chief of the Joint Staff of the IRGC: Brigadier General Mohammed Hejazi

Commander of the IRGC Ground Forces: Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour

Commander of the IRGC Air Wing: Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh

Commander of the IRGC Naval Wing: Rear Admiral Ali Morteza Saffari

Commander of the IRGC Resistance Force (Basij): Brigadier General Mohammed Reza Naqbi

Area: 1,647,240 sq. km. (not including Abu Musa Island and two Tunb islands; control disputed)

Population: 74,200,000 est.

Strategic Assets

NBC Capabilities

Nuclear capability

One 5 MW research reactor acquired from the US in the 1960s (in Tehran) and one small 30 kW miniature neutron source reactor (in Esfahan). One 1,000 MW VVER power reactor under construction, under a contract with Russia, in Bushehr; uranium enrichment facility in Natanz; and heavy water production facility in Arak – connected to an alleged nuclear weapons program. Party to the NPT. Safeguards agreement with the IAEA in force.

Chemical weapons and protective equipment

Iran admitted in 1999 it had possessed chemical weapons in the past. Party to the CWC, but nevertheless suspected of still producing and stockpiling mustard, sarin, soman, tabun, VX, and other chemical agents. Alleged delivery systems include aerial bombs, artillery shells, and SSM warheads. PRC and Russian firms and individuals allegedly provide assistance in CW technology and precursors. Personal protective equipment and munitions decontamination units for part of the armed forces.

Biological weapons

Suspected biological warfare program; no details available. Party to the BWC.

Ballistic Missiles

Model	Launchers	Missiles	Notes
• SS-1 (Scud B/Scud C)	~20	300 Scud B, 100 Scud C	
• Shehab-2	+	+	Probably similar to the Syrian Scud-D
• Shehab-3 / 3B	10	90	
• Ghadr-101/110	+		Alleged
• BM-25	+	18	Operational status unknown
• Tondar-69 (CSS-8)	16		
• Fateh-110	+		Operational status unknown
Total	~60		

Ballistic Missiles – cont'd

Model	Launchers	Missiles	Notes
Future procurement			
• Shehab 3B			Includes new RV, believed to be in production Solid propellant
• Ghadr / Ashura / Sejil			

Space Assets

Name	Type	Notes
Satellites		
• Sina-1	Remote sensing	170 kg satellite with 50m resolution camera for earth observation
• SMMS	Remote sensing	Multi-mission satellite, launched in cooperation with China and Thailand
• Omid	Research	20 kg micro satellite
Ground station		
• Semnan		Ground command and communication station
• IRSC	Remote sensing	Multi-spectral remote sensing
Satellite launcher		
• Kavoshgar		Sounding rocket
• Safir / Simorgh		SLV
Future procurement		
• Toloo	Reconnaissance	100 kg military reconnaissance satellite, 500 km in orbit
• Ya-Mahdi	Research	Test bed for indigenous camera equipment
• Mesbah	Research	65 kg store and forward satellite. To be launched in 2011, cooperation with Italy
• Zohreh	Communication	Russian-built communication satellite

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	520,000	520,000	520,000	520,000	520,000
• SSM launchers	40	50	60	60	60
Ground forces					
• Divisions	32	32	32	32	32
• Total number of brigades	87	87	87	87	87
• Tanks	~1,620	~1,620	~1,620	~1,620	~1,620
• APCs/AFVs	~1,400	~1,400	~1,400	~1,400	~1,400
• Artillery (including MRLs)	~2,700 (~3,000)	~2,700 (~3,000)	~2,700 (~3,000)	~2,700 (~3,000)	~2,700 (~3,000)
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	203 (341)	203 (341)	237 (343)	235 (341)	235 (341)
• Transport aircraft	80 (114)	101 (125)	101 (125)	105 (129)	105 (129)
• Helicopters	340 (570)	340 (570)	340 (570)	340 (570)	340 (570)
Air defense forces					
• Heavy SAM batteries	30	30	30	30	30
• Medium SAM batteries	+	+	6	6	6
• Light SAM launchers	95	100	120	120	120
Navy					
• Submarines	3	6	8	8	8
• Combat vessels	56	56	90	90	91
• Patrol craft	160	160	185	185	185

5. IRAQ

Major Changes

- The Iraqi government ordered and is gradually receiving weapons and equipment for its evolving armed forces. The ground forces are receiving mostly lightly armored vehicles, though some more advanced M1A1 MBTs have been ordered.
 - The air force ordered and is receiving light aircraft – mostly for reconnaissance missions, but some do have light attack capabilities. No combat aircraft have been ordered to date. The air force is also receiving transport helicopters, with some of these lightly armed.
 - The navy is receiving light patrol boats and some transport ships.
 - The US force is in the process of withdrawing its forces from Iraq. A force of some 50,000 US soldiers will remain in Iraq in a training and support role for the Iraqi armed forces.
-

General Data

Official Name of the State: The Republic of Iraq

Head of State: President Jalal Talabani

Prime Minister: Nouri al-Maliki

Minister of Defense: Abdul Qadir Muhammad al-Mufriji

Minister of Interior: Jawad al-Bulani

Chief of General Staff: Lt. General Babkir Bederkhan al-Zibari

Commander of the Ground Forces: Lt. General Ali Gheedan

Commander of the Air Force: Lt. General Anwar Hamad Amen Ahmed

Commander of the Navy: Admiral Mohammed Jawad Kadham

Commander of Advisory Forces in Iraq: Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin

Area: 432,162 sq. km.

Population: 30,700,000 est.

Armed Forces**Order-of-Battle**

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	100,000	100,000	162,000	190,000	190,000
Ground forces					
• Number of Battalions	120	120	160	185	190
• Tanks	97	97	97	97	171
• APCs/AFVs	335 (430)	335 (430)	4,794 (4.869)	7,895	13,440
Air force					
• Combat aircraft					3
• Reconnaissance aircraft	2(16)	2(16)	10	11	19
• Transport aircraft	3	3	8	11	9
• Helicopters	9 (21)	9 (21)	36	56	53
Navy					
• Patrol craft	8	8	11	12	15

Note: The number in parentheses refers to the total inventory.

6. ISRAEL

Major Changes

- The capability of the Israeli intelligence community has been upgraded by the launch of the Ofeq-9 reconnaissance satellite (in June 2010) and the TecSAR radar reconnaissance satellite (in October 2007).
 - Israel is acquiring new short range anti-ballistic missile systems. The Iron Dome is entering into operational service. Two batteries will be deployed as a first stage. A second system, David's Sling, designed to counter longer range rockets, is scheduled to enter service in 2012.
 - An additional third Arrow BMD battery is scheduled to enter service, and some of Israel's Patriot batteries will be upgraded to the PAC-3 standard.
 - The Israeli army is still absorbing its Merkava Mk IV MBTs, while withdrawing older MBTs from service. Meanwhile the Israeli industry began producing and the IDF is introducing into service the new Namer IFV, which is based on the Merkava automotive system.
 - Following the lessons of the Second Lebanon War, the IDF is equipping its MBTs with the Trophy APS. A different APS system, Iron Fist, is being installed on the Namer IFVs.
 - The IAF is replacing its aging Tzukit training aircraft with the new T-6A Texan (Efroni).
 - The IAF acquired the new Heron-2 HALE UAV (Shoval) and the Heron TP UAV (Eitan). The IAF is also acquiring the Hermes 900 UAV.
 - IDF ground forces are being equipped with the Skylark short range UAVs.
 - The navy acquired two additional Dolphin submarines, which are being constructed in Germany.
-

General Data

Official Name of the State: State of Israel

Head of State: President Shimon Peres

Prime Minister: Binyamin Netanyahu

Minister of Defense: Ehud Barak

Chief of General Staff: Lieutenant General Gabi Ashkenazi

Commander of Army HQ: Major General Sami Turgeman

Commander of the Air Force: Major General Ido Nehushtan

Commander of the Navy: Rear Admiral Eli Marom

Area: 22,145 sq. km, including East Jerusalem and its vicinity, and the Golan Heights.

Population: 7,400,000

Strategic Assets

NBC Capabilities

Nuclear capabilities

Two nuclear research reactors; alleged stockpile of nuclear weapons.* Nuclear-safety cooperation agreement with the US. Not a party to the NPT.

Chemical weapons and protective equipment

Personal protective equipment; unit decontamination equipment. Fuchs (Fox) NBC detection vehicles (8 vehicles); SPW-40 P2Ch NBC detection vehicles (50 vehicles); AP-2C CW detectors. Signed but not yet ratified the CWC.

BW capabilities

Not a party to the BWC.

* According to foreign publications, as cited by Israeli publications.

Ballistic Missiles

Model	Launchers	Missiles	Since	Notes
• MGM-52C (Lance)	12		1976	
• Jericho Mk 1/2/3 SSM *	+			Upgraded
• Black/ Blue Sparrow	+			Target decoy
Total	+			
Future procurement				
• LORA	+			Under negotiations

* According to foreign publications, as cited by Israeli publications.

Space Assets

Model	Type	Notes
Satellites		
• Amos	Communication	Civilian, currently deployed Amos-3.
• Ofeq	Reconnaissance	Currently deployed Ofeq-7 and Ofeq-9
• Eros	Reconnaissance	Civilian derivative of Ofeq, currently Eros-1B
• TECHSAR	Reconnaissance	SAR imagery satellite, 260 kg, 550 km in orbit
• TechSat	Research	Civilian

Space Assets – cont'd

Model	Type	Notes
Satellite launcher		
• Shavit	SLV	
Future procurement		
• Amos-3/4	Communication	Civilian-owned satellites
• MILCOM	Communication	
• David	Remote sensing	

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	176,500	176,500	176,500	176,500	176,500
• SSM launchers	+	+	+	+	+
Ground forces					
• Divisions	16	16	16	16	16
• Total number of brigades	76	78	78	79	79
• Tanks	3,510 (3,890)	3,400 (3,800)	3,360 (3,740)	3,290 (3,730)	3,290 (3,730)
• APCs/AFVs	6,750	6,930	7,070	7,000 (7,500)	7,000 (7,500)
• Artillery (including MRLs)	+	+	+	+	+
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	494 (845)	520 (875)	541 (875)	541 (875)	541 (875)
• Transport aircraft	60 (75)	71 (84)	66 (77)	66 (77)	66 (77)
• Helicopters	183 (291)	184 (286)	172 (285)	169 (285)	169 (285)
Air defense forces					
• Heavy SAM batteries	25	25	25	25	25
• Light SAM launchers	70	70	70	70	70

Order-of-Battle – cont'd

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Navy					
• Submarines	3	3	3	3	3
• Combat vessels	15	15	15	15	15
• Patrol craft	42	50	52	55	55

7. JORDAN

Major Changes

- The Royal Jordanian Air Force has received 22 F-16C/D from Belgium and Holland. Meanwhile the RJAF upgraded its older F-16A/B to the C/D standard, in Turkey.
- The Jordanian armed forces are acquiring both Kornet ATGMs and Igla-S SAMs from Russia. Both types of missiles will be mounted on lightly armored vehicles.
- The Jordanian armed forces received 340 Ratel IFVs from South Africa.

General Data

Official Name of the State: The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Head of State: King Abdullah II bin Hussein al-Hashimi

Prime Minister: Samir al-Rifai

Minister of Defense: Samir al-Rifai

Inspector General of the Armed Forces: Major General Abd Khalaf al-Najada

Chief of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces: Lieutenant General Mashaal Mohammed al-Zaben

Commander of the Air Force: Major General Hussein al-Biss

Commander of the Navy: Major General Dari al-Zaben

Area: 90,700 sq. km.

Population: 5,900,000

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	100,700	100,700	100,700	100,700	100,700
Ground forces					
• Divisions	4	4	4	4	4
• Total number of brigades	14	14	14	14	14
• Tanks	921 (1,223)*	927 (1,217)	927 (1,217)	927 (1,217)	927 (1,217)
• APCs/AFVs	1,643 (1,943)*	1,643 (1,943)	1,846 (2,056)	2,235 (2,295)	2,235 (2,295)

Order-of-Battle – cont'd

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
• Artillery (including MRLs)	853 (878)	853 (878)	853 (878)	853 (878)	853 (878)
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	96 (105)	96 (105)	94 (108)	80 (106)	83 (101)
• Transport aircraft	16	16	16	18	18
• Helicopters	74 (90)	67	67	79	82
Air defense forces					
• Heavy SAM batteries	17	17	17	17	17
• Medium SAM batteries	12	12	12	12	12
• Light SAM launchers	50	50	50	50	50
Navy					
• Patrol craft	10	17	17	17	17

* Due to change in estimate

8. KUWAIT

Major Changes

- The Kuwaiti air force received all of its new AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopters.
 - The Kuwaiti air defense is undergoing a major upgrade: apart from upgrading the old Amoun point defense system, a large scale program to upgrade the Patriot SAMs is also underway. Under this project Kuwait will receive the new PAC-3 interceptors, while the older PAC-2 will be upgraded to the GEM-T standard.
 - The National Guard is being reinforced and upgraded. Its manpower will be increased to 10,000, and new equipment is being procured.
-

General Data

Official Name of the State: State of Kuwait

Head of State: Emir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah

Prime Minister: Nasser al-Mohammed al-Ahmad al-Sabah

Minister of Defense: Jabar al-Mubarak al-Ahmad al-Sabah

Chief of General Staff: Major General Fahd Ahmad al-Amir

Commander of the Ground Forces: Lieutenant General Ibrahim al-Wasmi

Commander of the Air Force: Vice Marshall Yusef al-Otaibi

Commander of the Navy: Vice Admiral Ahmad Yousuf al-Mualla

Area: 17,820 sq. km. (including 2,590 sq. km. of the Neutral Zone)

Population: 3,400,000

Strategic Assets

NBC Capabilities

Nuclear capability

No known nuclear activity. Party to the NPT.

Chemical weapons and protective equipment

Fuchs (Fox) ABC detection vehicle (11), Personal protective equipment, unit decontamination equipment. No known CW activities. Party to the CWC.

Biological weapons

No known BW activities. Party to the BWC.

Armed Forces**Order-of-Battle**

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	15,500	15,500	15,500	15,500	15,500
Ground forces					
• Number of brigades	7	7	7	7	7
• Tanks	293 (483)	293 (483)	293 (483)	293 (483)	293 (483)
• APCs/AFVs	~690* (920)	~690 (920)	~690 (920)	~690 (920)	~690 (920)
• Artillery	127 (155)	127 (155)	147 (177)	147 (177)	147 (177)
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	39 (58)	39 (58)	39 (58)	39 (58)	39 (58)
• Transport aircraft	5	5	5	5	5
• Helicopters	25(30)	33(38)	35 (40)	39 (48)	39 (48)
Air defense forces					
• Heavy SAM batteries	6	11	11	11	11
• Medium SAM batteries	6	6	6	6	6
Navy					
• Combat vessels	10	10	10	10	10
• Patrol craft	77	77	86	86	86

* Due to change in estimate

9. LEBANON

Major Changes

- Following the war in the summer of 2006 the Lebanese armed forces are undergoing some significant changes. The Lebanese armed forces received substantial foreign aid, stocks are being refurbished, and some new equipment was received – mostly through donations. This includes 9 Gazelle helicopters, 300 HMMWV (300 more to be delivered) from the US, and patrol boats from Germany and from the UAE.
- The internal security force of the Lebanese government nearly doubled its force to some 50,000 and is still expanding. The force is part of the Ministry of the Interior which is controlled by a Sunni Muslim.
- Hizbollah forces (non governmental) renewed all of its stocks of short and medium range artillery rockets and advanced ATGM, which were used extensively during the 2006 war. Their stock may include some Fateh-110 guided missiles and an air defense element.

General Data

Official Name of the State: Republic of Lebanon

Head of State: President Michel Suleiman

Prime Minister: Saad al-din al-Hariri

Minister of Defense: Elias Murr

Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces: Lieutenant General Jean Kahwaji

Chief of General Staff: Brigadier General Sawqi al-Massri

Commander of the Air Force: Brigadier General George Shaàban

Commander of the Navy: Rear Admiral Ali al-Moallem

Area: 10,452 sq. km.

Population: 4,100,000

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	61,400	61,400	61,400	61,400	61,400
Ground forces					
• Number of brigades	12	12	12	12	12

Order-of-Battle – cont'd

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
• Tanks	280 (350)	280 (350)	240 (350)	240 (350)	240 (350)
• APCs/AFVs	1,235 (1,380)	1,235 (1,380)	1,520 (1,665)	1,545 (1,680)	1,545 (1,680)
• Artillery (including MRLs)	~335	~335	~335	~335	~335
Air force					
• Helicopters	14 (36)*	14 (36)	24 (38)	36 (43)	36 (43)
Navy					
• Patrol craft	20	27	38	40	40

* Due to change in estimate

10. LIBYA

Major Changes

- The Libyan navy received 6 MV115 patrol boats from Italy, in the framework of cooperation between the Libyan and the Italian navies to curb maritime smuggling and piracy. The Libyan navy received 4 additional boats from Croatia.
-

General Data

Official Name of the State: The Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Head of State: Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi

Prime Minister: al-Baghdadi Ali al-Mahdmoudi

Minister of Defense: Colonel Abu-Bakr Yunis Jaber

Inspector General of the Armed Forces: Colonel Mustapha al-Kharrubi

Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces: Colonel Abu-Bakr Yunis Jaber

Chief of Staff: Brigadier General Ahmed Abdallah Awn

Commander of the Air Force and Air Defense Forces: Brigadier General Ali Riffi al-Sharif

Area: 1,759,540 sq. km.

Population: 6,400,000

Strategic Assets

NBC Capabilities

Nuclear capabilities

5 MW Soviet-made research reactor at Tadjoura; Libya had a clandestine uranium enrichment program with a few thousand centrifuges. These were surrendered and removed in the framework of its steps to renounce its WMD programs.

Party to the NPT. Safeguards agreement with the IAEA in force. Signed but not ratified the African Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba).

Chemical weapons and protective equipment

CW production facilities, stockpile of chemical agents, nerve gas, and mustard gas. In the framework of its steps to renounce its WMD programs, work has been carried out to dismantle all past chemical weapons stockpiles. Libya also acceded to the CWC. Personal protective equipment; Soviet type decontamination units.

Biological weapons

Alleged production of toxins and other biological weapons (unconfirmed). Party to the BWC.

Ballistic Missiles

Model	Launchers	Missiles	Since	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scud B Scud C 	80	500	1976 1999	Scud C missiles have been removed
Total	~80			

Space Assets

Model	Type	Notes
Ground station		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIRUNI 	Remote sensing	Research center

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel SSM launchers 	76,000 80	76,000 80	76,000 80	76,000 80	76,000 80
Ground forces					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of brigades Number of battalions Tanks APCs/AFVs Artillery (including MRLs) 	1 46 650 (2,210) 2,230 (2,520) 2,320 (2,400)	1 46 650 (2,210) 2,230 (2,520) 2,320 (2,400)	1 46 650 (2,210) 2,230 (2,520) 2,320 (2,400)	1 46 650 (2,210) 2,230 (2,520) 2,320 (2,400)	1 46 650 (2,210) 2,230 (2,520) 2,320 (2,400)
Air force					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combat aircraft Transport aircraft Helicopters 	290 (391) 72 (77) 112 (189)	290 (391) 72 (77) 112 (189)	260 (386)* 78 (83) 109 (186)	260 (386) 83 (88) 117 (194)	260 (386) 83 (88) 117 (194)
Air defense forces					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy SAM batteries 	~30	~30	~30	~30	~30

Order-of-Battle – cont'd

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
• Medium SAM batteries	~17	~17	~17	~17	~17
• Light SAM launchers	55	55	55	55	55
Navy					
• Submarines	0(2)	0(2)	0(2)	0(2)	0(2)
• Combat vessels	24	24	17	17	17
• Patrol craft		2	6	6	12

* Due to change in estimate

11. MOROCCO

Major Changes

- No major change was recorded for the Moroccan armed forces.

General Data

Official Name of the State: Kingdom of Morocco

Head of State: King Mohammed VI

Prime Minister: Abbas al-Fassi

Secretary General of National Defense Administration: Abdel Rahaman Sbai

Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces: King Mohammed VI

Inspector General of the Armed Forces: General Abdul Aziz Bennani

Commander of the Air Force: Ali Abd al-Aziz al-Omrani

Commander of the Navy: Major Muhammad Barada

Area: 622,012 sq. km., including the former Spanish Sahara

Population: 32,000,000

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	198,500	198,500	198,500	198,500	198,500
Ground forces					
• Number of brigades	6	6	6	6	6
• Tanks	285 (640)*	285 (640)	285 (640)	285 (640)	285 (640)
• APCs/AFVs	1,089 (1,139)*	1,089 (1,139)	1,089 (1,139)	1,089 (1,139)	1,089 (1,139)
• Artillery (including MRLs)	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	59 (72)	58 (72)	58 (72)	58 (72)	58 (72)
• Transport aircraft	41 (43)	41 (43)	41 (43)	41 (43)	41 (43)
• Helicopters	122 (132)	122 (132)	123 (133)	123 (133)	120 (130)

Order-of-Battle – cont'd

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Air defense forces					
• Light SAM launchers	37	49	49	49	49
Navy					
• Combat vessels	15	15	15	15	15
• Patrol craft	52	52	55	55	55

* Due to change in estimate

12. OMAN

Major Changes

- The Omani air force is absorbing all of its new F-16-C/D combat aircraft. The air force also received its first NH90 utility helicopters.

General Data

Official Name of the State: Sultanate of Oman

Head of State: Sultan Qabus ibn Said al-Said

Prime Minister: Sultan Qabus ibn Said al-Said

Minister of Defense Affairs: Badr bin Saud bin Harib al-Busaidi

Chief of General Staff: Lieutenant General Ahmad bin Harith bin Naser al-Nabhani

Commander of the Ground Forces: Major General Said bin Naser bin Suleiman al-Salmi

Commander of the Air Force: Vice Air Marshal Yahya bin Rashid al-Juma'ah

Commander of the Navy: Rear Admiral Salim bin Abdalla bin Rashid al-Alawi

Area: 212,000 sq. km.

Population: 2,700,000

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	34,000	34,000	34,000	34,000	34,000
Ground forces					
• Number of brigades	4	4	4	4	4
• Total number of battalions	18	18	18	18	18
• Tanks	124 (201)	124 (201)	124 (201)	124 (201)	124 (201)
• APCs/AFVs	446 (476)	446 (476)	446 (476)	446 (476)	446 (476)
• Artillery	133 (139)	133 (139)	133 (139)	133 (139)	133 (139)
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	31 (32)	32 (33)	32 (33)	41	41
• Transport aircraft	50 (54)	50 (54)	50 (54)	50 (54)	50 (54)
• Helicopters	62	62	61	63	63

Order-of-Battle – cont'd

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Air defense forces					
• Light SAM launchers	112	112	112	112	112
Navy					
• Combat vessels	9	9	9	9	9
• Patrol craft	68	68	68	69	69

13. PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

Major Changes

- Following the takeover of the Gaza Strip in July 2007 by Hamas, the PA constitutes two different, separate entities. Therefore this chapter is divided into two sections – the first deals with the PA in the West Bank, and the second deals with the Hamas entity in Gaza.
 - In the West Bank the reorganized National Security Force is training extensively under Jordanian instruction and US supervision. It now constitutes 4 trained battalions out of the 10 projected battalions by the end of 2010.
-

General Data

Official Name: Palestinian National Authority (PA)

Chairman: Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen)

PA government in the West Bank

Prime Minister: Salam Fayyad

Minister of Internal security: Sayid Abu-Ali

Head of Security Forces: Haj Ismail Jaaber

Chief of National Security: Brigadier General Diyab al-Ali

Chief of Presidential Guards: Brigadier General Munir al-Zoubi

Chief on Civil Police: Brigadier General Hazem Atallah

Hamas government in Gaza

Prime Minister: Ismail Haniyeh

Minister of Internal security: Fathi Hammed

Chief on Civil Police: Major General Tawfiq Jabir

Chief of Executive Force: Jamal al-Jarakh

Area: 400 sq. km. (Gaza), 5,800 sq. km. (West Bank). By the terms of the Interim Agreement, the West Bank is divided into three areas, designated A, B, and C. The PA has civilian responsibility for Palestinians in all three areas, exclusive internal security responsibility for Area A (18.2%), and shared security responsibility for Area B (24.8%). Israel maintains full responsibility for the remaining 57% (Area C).

Population: 3,800,000

Security Forces

West Bank Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel	70,000	70,000	60,000	60,000	60,000
• Number of battalions			1	3	4
Ground forces					
• APCs	+	+	+	150	150

Note: Since the Hamas takeover of Gaza, this table represents Palestinian security Forces in the West Bank.

Gaza Order-of-Battle

Year	2007	2008	2009
General data			
• Personnel	10,000	11,000	11,000
Ground forces			
• APCs	+	+	+
• Artillery	+	+	+
AD systems			
• Shoulder launched missiles	+	110	110
• Short range guns		15	15

Note: Since Hamas takeover in Gaza, this table represents only Palestinian security forces in Gaza.

14. QATAR

Major Changes

- No major change was recorded for the Qatari armed forces.

General Data

Official Name of the State: State of Qatar

Head of State: Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani

Prime Minister: Hamad bin Jassem bin Jaber al-Thani

Minister of Defense: Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani

Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces: Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani

Chief of General Staff: Brigadier General Hamad bin Ali al-Attiyah

Commander of the Ground Forces: Colonel Saif Ali al-Hajiri

Commander of the Air Force: General Ali Saeed al-Hawal al-Marri

Commander of the Navy: Vice Adm. Ali Ahmed al-Badeed Al-Manai

Area: 11,437 sq. km.

Population: 1,600,000

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	11,800	11,800	11,800	11,800	11,800
Ground forces					
• Number of brigades	2	2	2	2	2
• Total number of battalions	11	11	11	11	11
• Tanks	30 (44)*	30 (44)	30 (44)	30 (44)	30 (44)
• APCs/AFVs	280 (310)*	280 (310)	280 (310)	280 (310)	280 (310)
• Artillery (including MRLs)	56	56	56	56	56
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	12*	12	12	12	12
• Transport aircraft	7 (8)	7 (8)	7 (8)	7 (8)	7 (8)
• Helicopters	24 (25)*	24 (25)	22*	22	22

Order-of-Battle – cont'd

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Air defense forces					
• Heavy SAM batteries			2*	2	2
• Light SAM launchers	51	51	51	51	51
Navy					
• Combat vessels	7	7	7	7	7
• Patrol craft	13	17	17	14	14

* Due to change in estimate

15. SAUDI ARABIA

Major Changes

- The RSAF ordered 72 new Typhoon combat aircraft from the UK, the first of which are being manufactured in Britain. The rest will be assembled in Saudi Arabia in a new facility now under construction.
 - The RSAF is upgrading 84 of its aging Tornado IDS attack aircraft to the GR-4 standard. Concurrently it will phase out its obsolete F-5 aircraft.
 - The RSAF has ordered additional 12 AH-64D Apache combat helicopters and will upgrade the 12 existing older Apache AH-64A to the same standard. Other programs for the RSAF include an order for 3 A330 MRTT refueling aircraft, and upgrade of the old E-3A AWACS
 - The air defense forces are upgrading their C⁴I system with new centers and new systems.
 - The Saudi Arabian National Guard launched a major upgrade program, including the procurement of numerous armored combat vehicles.
-

General Data

Official Name of the State: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Head of State: King Abdallah ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Saud

Prime Minister: King Abdallah ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Saud

First Deputy Prime Minister and Heir Apparent: Crown Prince Sultan ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Saud

Defense and Aviation Minister: Crown Prince Sultan ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Saud

Chief of General Staff: Lieutenant General Salih ibn Ali al-Muhaya

Commander of the Ground Forces: Lieutenant General Abdul Rahman ibn Abdullah al-Murshid

Commander of the National Guard: Crown Prince Abdallah ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Saud

Commander of the Air Force: Lieutenant General Mohammed ibn Abdullah al-Ayish

Commander of the Navy: Vice Admiral Dakhil Allah ibn Ahmed ibn Mohammed al-Waqdani

Area: 2,331,000 sq. km.

Population: 25,000,000

Strategic Assets

NBC Capabilities

Nuclear capability

No known nuclear activity. Party to the NPT.

Chemical weapons and protective equipment

No known CW activities. Personal protective equipment, decontamination units, US-made CAM chemical detection systems; Fuchs (Fox) NBC detection vehicles. Party to the CWC.

Biological weapons

No known BW activities. Party to the BWC.

Ballistic Missiles

Model	Launchers	Missiles	Since	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSS-2 	8-12	30-50	1988	Number of launchers unconfirmed

Space Assets

Model	Type	Notes
Satellites		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arabsat 1/2/3/4 	Communication	Civilian satellite communication network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Badr-4/5 	Communication	Civilian TV broadcasting satellite
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saudi Comsat 	Research	Commercial micro satellites; Seven satellites, out of 24; 12 kg each.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saudi Sat 1/2/3 	Remote sensing and space research	2 (10 kg. each) were launched in September 2000 by a Russian military rocket, and are orbiting 650 km above earth. The third satellite was launched in December 2002. Saudi Sat 2 (30 kg) was launched in June 2004. Saudi Sat 3 was launched in April 2007.
Ground Stations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCRS 	Imagery	Receiving SPOT, Landsat, and NOAA

Space Assets – cont'd

Model	Type	Notes
Future procurement		
• Badr-6	Communication	New-generation satellite
• Arabsat-5/6	Communication	Fifth generation satellite planned for launch in 2011, 2012

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	171,500	171,500	171,500	214,500	214,500
• SSM launchers	8-12	8-12	8-12	8-12	8-12
Ground forces					
• Number of brigades	20	20	20	20	20
• Tanks	750 (1,015)	750 (1,015)	750 (1,015)	750 (1,015)	750 (1,015)
• APCs/AFVs	~4,430 (~5,230)	~4,430 (~5,230)	~4,430 (~5,230)	~4,180 (~5,180)	~4,180 (~5,180)
• Artillery (incl. MRLs)	~410 (~780)	~410 (~780)	~410 (~780)	~410 (~780)	~410 (~780)
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	256* (~340)	253 (~320)	250 (~320)	250 (~320)	252 (~325)
• Transport aircraft	38 (51)	57 (59)*	57 (59)	57 (59)	57 (59)
• Helicopters	228	228	228	226	226
Air defense forces					
• Heavy SAM batteries	25	25	25	25	25
• Medium SAM batteries	21	21	21	21	21
Navy					
• Combat vessels	27	27	27	27	27
• Patrol craft	68	68	68	70	70

* Due to change in estimate

16. SUDAN

Major Changes

- The Sudanese armed forces underwent a major reorganization. Included here are many new entries – some of which refer to newly acquired systems but many refer to previous acquisitions that were revealed only recently. These include additional MiG-29 and Su-25 and A-5 combat aircraft, Mi-24 attack helicopters, Mi-17 utility helicopters, An-32 and Y-8 transport aircraft, Type 96 MBTs, WZ-551 and Boraq APCs, WS-2 and Shahin-2 long range artillery rockets.
- A large UN force is active in Southern Sudan – the UNAMID, with some 19,000 uniformed personnel.
- A mysterious delivery of T-72 MBTs arrived via Kenya – probably to the rebel forces in Southern Sudan.

General Data

Official Name of the State: The Republic of Sudan

Head of State: President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir

Defense Minister: Abdul Rahim Mohammed Hussein

Chief of General Staff: Lt. General Ahmed Ali al-Gaili

Inspector General of the Armed Forces: General Mohammed Abdul Qader Nasser Eddin

Commander of the Army: General Mohammed Mahmoud Jama

Commander of the Air Force: Air Marshal Hassan Abdul Qader

Commander of the Navy: Vice Admiral al-Zein Bala

Area: 2,504,530 sq. km.

Population: 42,300,000

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	104,000	104,000	104,000	104,000	104,000
Ground forces					
• Divisions	9	9	9	9	9
• Total number of brigades	61	61	61	61	61
• Tanks	350	350	350	350	350

Order-of-Battle – cont'd

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
• APCs/AFVs	670 (810)	670 (810)	725 (860)	725 (860)	725 (860)
• Artillery (including MRLs)	810 (815)	810 (815)	810 (815)	820 (825)	820 (825)
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	40 (62)	40 (62)	40 (62)	78 (100)*	78 (100)
• Transport aircraft	14	14	19*	19	19
• Helicopters	43 (48)	43 (48)	67*	67	67
Air defense forces					
• Heavy SAM batteries	20	20	20	20	20
Navy					
• Patrol craft	15	15	15	15	15

* Due to change in estimate

17. SYRIA

Major Changes

- The Syrian armed forces may have acquired the Iranian Fateh 110 Missiles, in addition to the long range rockets (220mm and 302mm). Syria may have also acquired the capability to produce them as well.
 - The Syrian air defense forces now operate at least some of the newly acquired Strelts and Pantsyr-S1 SAMs.
-

General Data

Official Name of the State: The Arab Republic of Syria

Head of State: President Bashar al-Asad

Prime Minister: Mohammed Jazi Otri

Minister of Defense: Lt. General Ali Mohammed Habib Mahmoud

Chief of General Staff: Major General Assaef Shawkat

Commander of the Air Force: Major General Akhmad al-Ratyb

Commander of the Navy: Vice Admiral Wa'il Nasser

Area: 185,180 sq. km.

Population: 20,500,000

Strategic Assets

NBC Capabilities

Nuclear capability

Basic research. Alleged deal with Russia for a 24 MW reactor. Deals with China for a 27 kW reactor and with Argentina for a 3 MW research reactor are probably cancelled. Party to the NPT; safeguards agreement with the IAEA in force.

Chemical weapons and protective equipment

Stockpiles of nerve gas, including sarin, mustard, and VX. There are unconfirmed allegations that Syria received Iraq's stockpile of chemical weapons just before the 2003 Iraq War broke out. Delivery vehicles include chemical warheads for SSMs and aerial bombs. Personal protective equipment; Soviet-type unit decontamination equipment. Not a party to the CWC.

Biological weapons

Biological weapons and toxins (unconfirmed). Signed but not ratified the BWC.

Ballistic Missiles

Model	Launchers	Missiles	Since	Notes
• SS-1 (Scud B)	18	200	1974	
• SS-1 (Scud C)	8	80	1992	
• SS-21 (Scarab)	18		1983	
• Fateh-110	+	+	2007	
• Scud D	+		2002	
Total	~50			

Space Assets

Name	Type	Notes
Satellite imaging		
• GORS	Remote sensing	Using images from Cosmos, ERS, Landsat, SPOT satellites

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	289,000	289,000	289,000	289,000	289,000
• SSM launchers	~45	~45	~50	~50	~50
Ground forces					
• Divisions	12	12	12	12	12
• Total number of brigades	67	67	67	67	67
• Tanks	3,700 (4,800)	3,700 (4,800)	3,700 (4,800)	3,700 (4,800)	3,700 (4,800)
• APCs/AFVs	5,060	5,060	5,060	5,060	5,060
• Artillery (including MRLs)	3,274 (3,674)*	3,274 (3,674)	3,274 (3,674)	3,274 (3,674)	3,274 (3,674)
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	350 (490)*	350 (490)	350 (490)	350 (490)	350 (490)
• Transport aircraft	23	23	23	23	23
• Helicopters	195 (225)*	195 (225)	195 (225)	195 (225)	195 (225)

Order-of-Battle – cont'd

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Air defense forces					
• Heavy SAM batteries	108	108	108	108	108
• Medium SAM batteries	64	64	64	67	67
• Light SAM launchers	55	55	88	88	88
Navy					
• Combat vessels	16	16	19	19	19
• Patrol craft	8	14	14	14	14

* Due to change in estimate

18. TUNISIA

Major Changes

- No major change was recorded for the Tunisian armed forces.

General Data

Official Name of the State: The Republic of Tunisia

Head of State: President Zayn al-Abedine Bin Ali

Prime Minister: Mohamed Ghannouchi

Minister of Defense: Reza Garira

Secretary of State for National Defense: Chokri Ayachi

Commander of the Ground Forces: Brigadier General Rashid Amar

Commander of the Air Force: Major General Rida Hamuda Atar

Commander of the Navy: Commodore Brahim Barak

Area: 164,206 sq. km.

Population: 9,800,000

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	35,500	35,500	35,500	35,500	35,500
Ground forces					
• Number of brigades	5	5	5	5	5
• Tanks	139 (144)	139 (144)	139 (144)	139 (144)	139 (144)
• APCs/AFVs	326	326	326	326	326
• Artillery (including MRLs)	205	205	205	205	205
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	18	18	18	18	18
• Transport aircraft	15 (17)	15 (17)	15 (17)	15 (17)	15 (17)
• Helicopters	47	47	47	47	47
Air defense forces					
• Light SAM launchers	83	83	83	83	83

Order-of-Battle – cont'd

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Navy					
• Combat vessels	15	15	15	15	15
• Patrol craft	40	41	41	41	41

19. TURKEY

Major Changes

- The land forces received all its 298 Leopard tanks from the Bundeswehr drawdown. Meanwhile, the Turkish industry continues the process of upgrading M60 tanks according to an Israeli design.
 - The land forces introduced into service 76 Bayraktar mini-UAV for tactical surveillance, intended for use by the lower echelons.
 - The air force launched a project to upgrade all 117 of its F-16 combat aircraft. The air force also ordered 30 additional F-16s. The air force ordered modern weapons that include the AGM-154 JSOW and the JDAM smart bombs and the SLAM-ER ALCM.
 - The air force received its 10 Heron MALE UAVs.
 - The navy's first MILGEM project corvette was launched. The navy ordered 8-12 such corvettes. The navy received its first ATR-72 ASW and CN-235 MP maritime patrol aircraft in the framework of the Meltem project. The navy will receive additional 17 Sea Hawk helicopters.
-

General Data

Official Name of the State: Republic of Turkey

Head of State: President Abdullah Gül

Prime Minister: Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Minister of National Defense: Mehmet Vecdi Gönül

Chief of General Staff: General Ilker Basbug

Commander of the Ground Forces: General Isik Kosaner

Commander of the Air Force: General Aydogan Babaoglu

Commander of the Navy: Admiral Muzaffer Metin Atac

Area: 780,580 sq. km.

Population: 76,200,000

Strategic Assets

NBC Capabilities

Nuclear capability

One 5 MW TR-2 research reactor at Cekmerce and one 250 kW ITV-TRR research reactor at Istanbul. Turkey intends to order a 1,000 MW reactor. As a member of NATO, nuclear weapons were deployed in Turkey in the past, and might be deployed again. Party to the NPT. Safeguards agreement with the IAEA in force.

Chemical weapons and protective equipment

Personal protective suits; portable chemical detectors; Fox detection vehicles. Party to the CWC.

Biological weapons

No known BW activity. Party to the BWC.

Ballistic Missiles

Model	Launchers	Missiles	Since	Notes
• ATACMS	12	72	1997	Using MLRS launchers
• J-600T Yildirim	6	+	2007	
Future procurement				
• J-600T Yildirim	+	+		Co-production with China (formerly referred to as "Project-J" or B-611)

Space Assets

Model	Type	Notes
Ground stations		
• BILTEN	Remote sensing	Receiving imagery from Bilsat
• SAGRES	Remote sensing	Receiving imagery from SPOT, ERS, RADARSAT and NOAA
Satellites		
• Turksat	Communication	Both civilian and military; both 2A and 3A are currently in orbit.
• Bilsat	Remote sensing	120 kg payload, 686 km orbit, 12m resolution Earth observation civilian satellite
Satellite imagery		
• Ikonos	Reconnaissance	Commercial satellite imagery

Space Assets – cont'd

Model	Type	Notes
• Ofeq-5 Future procurement	Reconnaissance	Sharing of Israeli satellite imagery
• Gokturk	Reconnaissance	To be build by Telespazio, launch in 2011

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	421,000	421,000	421,000	421,000	421,000
• SSM launchers	12	12	18	18	18
Ground forces					
• Divisions	3	3	3	3	3
• Total number of brigades	59	59	55	55	55
• Tanks	2,600 (4,180)	2,600 (4,180)	2,700 (4,280)	2,800 (4,470)	2,800 (4,470)
• APCs/AFVs	5,885	6,425	6,733	6,733	6,733
• Artillery (including MRLs)	4,370 (4,670)	4,380 (4,680)	4,470 (4,770)	4,500 (4,800)	4,500 (4,800)
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	400 (420)	373 (405)	356 (400)	356 (400)	356 (400)
• Transport aircraft	90 (107)	89 (106)	83 (92)	83 (92)	92
• Helicopters	467	473	412 (430)*	412 (430)	412 (430)
Air defense forces					
• Heavy SAM batteries	24	24	24	24	24
• Light SAM launchers	96	96	120	196	196
Navy					
• Submarines	12	12	12	14	14
• Combat vessels	83	83	83	83	84
• Patrol craft	106	106	110	117	117

* Due to change in estimate

20. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)

Major Changes

- Since the arrival of the last batch of F-16E/F there have been no deliveries of major weapon systems.
 - The UAE did, however, launch some major acquisition programs for the coming years. These include orders for new C-130J and C-17 transport aircraft, A-330 aerial refueling aircraft, airborne command and control aircraft, utility and light attack helicopters, and 48 M-346 training aircraft.
 - The UAE air defense forces are acquiring the latest version of Patriot SAMs, including the anti-ballistic PAC-3 missiles, the Avenger and SL-AMRAAM for point defense – and above all – 3 units of the THAAD anti-ballistic missile. The UAE will be the first non-US customer to possess this missile.
 - The Emiri Army will procure ATACMS ballistic missiles, as a part of a deal that also includes MLRS and GMLRS rockets.
 - The navy is awaiting its first Baynunah corvettes, the first of which was supposed to enter service in 2009, but did not. These corvettes will be equipped with Exocet MM-40 block III anti-ship missiles as well as RIM-7 and Sea Sparrow anti-aircraft and anti-missile systems.
-

General Data

Official Name of the State: United Arab Emirates

Head of State: Shaykh Khalifa ibn Zayid al-Nuhayan, Emir of Abu Dhabi

Prime Minister: Shaykh Mohammed ibn Rashid al-Maktum, Emir of Dubai

Minister of Defense: Shaykh Muhammed ibn Rashid al-Maktum

Chief of General Staff: HRH Lieutenant General Hamad Muhammad Thani al-Rumaihi

Commander of the Ground Forces: Major General Mohammed Subaith al-Kaabi

Commander of the Air Force and Air Defense Forces: Major General Mohammed bin Sweidan Saeed al-Qamzi

Commander of the Navy: Rear Admiral Ahmed al-Sabah al-Tenaiji

Area: 82,900 sq. km. (estimate)

Population: 5,500,000 (estimate)

Note: The UAE consists of seven principalities: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Ras al-Khaima, Sharja, Umm al-Qaiwain, Fujaira, and Ajman

Strategic Assets

Ballistic Missiles

Model	Launchers	Missiles	Since	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scud B 	6		1991	Owned by Dubai; unconfirmed
Future procurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MGM-140 ATACMS 		100		Using HIMARS launchers

Space Assets

Model	Type	Notes
Satellites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thuraya-1/2/3 	communication	Geosynchronous, civilian satellites. The first was launch in September 2000, the second in June 2003, the third in January 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DubaiSat-1 	Remote sensing	Civilian satellite, launched in 2009
Ground stations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dubai Space Imaging 	Remote sensing	Receiving satellite images from Ikonos and India's IRS satellites
Future launches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yahsat-1A 	Telecom	Privately owned civilian satellites, the first to be launched in 2010

Armed Forces

Order-of-Battle

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel (regular) 	65,500	65,500	65,500	65,500	65,500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSM launchers 	6	6	6	6	6
Ground forces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of brigades 	8	8	8	8	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tanks 	532 (604)	532 (604)	532 (604)	532 (604)	532 (604)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> APCs/AFVs 	~1,165	1,400*	1,460	1,460	1,460
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artillery (including MRLs) 	337 (360)	337 (360)	360	360	360

Order-of-Battle – cont'd

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	93 (103)	129 (142)	129 (142)	129 (142)	129 (142)
• Transport aircraft	30 (33)	30 (33)	35*	35	36
• Helicopters	102 (109)	111 (124)*	103 (120)	103 (120)	132 (153)
Air defense forces					
• Heavy SAM batteries	5	5	5	5	5
• Medium SAM batteries	6	6	7	9	9
• Light SAM launchers	~115	~115	~160	~160	~160
Navy					
• Combat vessels	12	14	14	14	14
• Patrol craft	92	92	92	92	92

* Due to change in estimate

21. YEMEN

Major Changes

- Yemen continues working to improve its defense relations with the US while ordering major pieces of equipment from Russia.
 - The Yemeni air force suffered some losses during its combat against Shiite rebels in the north of the country.
-

General Data

Official Name of the State: Republic of Yemen

Head of State: President Ali Abdallah Salih

Prime Minister: Ali Muhammad al-Mujawar

Minister of Defense: Brig. General Muhammad Nasir Ahmad Ali

Chief of General Staff: Brig. General Ahmed al-Ashwal

Commander of the Air Force: Colonel Muhammad Salih al-Ahmar

Commander of the Navy: Admiral Abdallah al-Mujawar

Area: 527,970 sq. km.

Population: 23,600,000

Strategic Assets

Ballistic Missiles

Model	Launchers	Missiles	Since	Notes
• SS-1 (Scud B)	6			New Missiles received from North Korea, possibly Scud C
• SS-21 (Scarab)	4		1988	
Total	10			

Armed Forces**Order-of-Battle**

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General data					
• Personnel (regular)	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000
• SSM launchers	10	10	10	10	10
Ground forces					
• Number of brigades	33	33	33	33	33
• Tanks	745 (1,230)	745 (1,230)	745 (1,230)	745 (1,230)	745 (1,230)
• APCs/AFVs	795 (1,390)	815 (1,410)	815 (1,410)	835 (1,430)	835 (1,430)
• Artillery (including MRLs)	675 (995)	675 (995)	675 (995)	675 (995)	675 (995)
Air force					
• Combat aircraft	62 (181)	62 (181)	62 (181)	62 (181)	58 (176)
• Transport aircraft	13 (14)	13 (14)	13 (14)	13 (14)	13 (14)
• Helicopters	24 (68)	24 (68)	24 (68)	24 (68)	24 (68)
Air defense forces					
• Heavy SAM batteries	25	25	25	25	25
• Medium SAM batteries	+	+	+	+	+
• Light SAM launchers	120	120	120	120	120
Navy					
• Combat vessels	10	10	10	10	10
• Patrol craft	30	142	142	142	142

Contributors

Editors

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INSS Memoranda 2008 – Present

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