

Strategic ASSESSMENT

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Strategic ASSESSMENT

The purpose of *Strategic Assessment* is to stimulate and enrich the public debate on issues that are, or should be, on Israel's national security agenda.

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Abstracts

The Prime Minister and “Smart Power”: The Role of the Israeli Prime Minister in the 21st Century Yair Lapid

Israel’s strength must be disproportionate to its size or to the challenges it faces, and it must be so strong that its enemies know in advance that they will lose any war against it. A strong Israel is much more than a strong IDF. It is an Israel that thrives economically, enjoys social cohesion and a shared ethos, is bolstered by undisputed strategic alliances and international backing, and boasts a decisive qualitative and technological edge. Creating this integrated power, which unites the military and civilian components into a single force, is the central role of the prime minister of Israel. His role is to connect three levels: Israel’s military strength, its socio-economic strength, and its political strength. These are not separate elements, but rather a single combined entity. The proper balance between them is a force multiplier for Israel’s strength. Creating and fortifying this combination creates “integrated power” (the Israeli version of “smart power”), which is the key to the development of Israel’s strength.

Keywords: Israel, security, smart power, integrated power

The Israeli-Palestinian Political Process: Back to the Process Approach Udi Dekel and Emma Petrack

Current common wisdom among politicians, experts, and the public alike on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides holds that a permanent status agreement is unattainable in the near future. The growing concern is that that the two-state solution will soon be beyond implementation and that the Oslo Accords have outlived their usefulness. Throughout the years of negotiations, several approaches aimed at a permanent status agreement were attempted: the process approach, to create the conditions for an agreement and promote confidence building measures on both sides; the end-state approach, which focused on negotiations regarding the core issues; and an approach that combined elements of each. This essay surveys

these approaches, and attempts to explain why the elusive permanent status agreement has never been achieved. It concludes that failures and frustration notwithstanding, it is imperative to revive the political process. The only possible way to do so at present is by adopting a phased process approach.

Keywords: Israeli-Palestinian conflict, political process, permanent status agreement, transition arrangements, process approach, end-state approach, two-state solution

Who's Afraid of BDS? Economic and Academic Boycotts and the Threat to Israel

Amit Efrati

In June 2015, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that the BDS campaign was a strategic threat to Israel, and called for a major counter operation. This call was immediately answered by pro-Israeli organizations throughout the world and the local media, and to this end, *Yediot Ahronot* convened a conference with the participation of foreign journalists. For the BDS campaign, whose greatest achievement until then was the cancellation of singer Lauryn Hill's appearance in Israel, the Prime Minister's remarks constituted official recognition of its status as the new leader in the struggle against Israel; in the first 11 years of the campaign's existence, Israel refrained from attributing any importance to it. This sudden interest prompted great anxiety among the Israeli public and Jews overseas, and gave a huge boost to the popularity of the BDS campaign. However, how much influence have the repeated efforts to boycott Israel wielded? This essay examines the question with a focus on economics and academia, and concludes that despite the growing noise created by the boycott efforts, mainly in the US and Europe, the practical effect has not caused Israel any significant damage.

Keywords: BDS, sanctions, economic boycott, academic boycott

Israel's Warming Ties with Regional Powers: Is Turkey Next?

Ari Heistein

Strained ties with Washington and growing security threats prompted Egypt and Saudi Arabia to seek closer cooperation with Israel on issues of common interest. Relations between Turkey and the United States have

also become tense due to issues surrounding the Syrian civil war, as well as the July 15, 2016 failed coup attempt in Turkey and Erdogan's growing acts of repression. However, despite the June 2016 agreement between Jerusalem and Ankara to normalize ties, it is unlikely that Turkey and Israel will expand security cooperation significantly in the near future, because shifting regional dynamics have caused their common interests, which served as the basis for their close ties in the 1990s, to diverge.

Keywords: Israel, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia

Hezbollah as an Army

Yiftah S. Shapir

Much has been written about Hezbollah in terms of its terrorist activities, ideology, and political characteristics. This essay attempts to assess Hezbollah as a military force and summarize what is known from public sources about the organization as an army. Overall, Hezbollah has managed to keep its military secrets well concealed, and relatively little has been published about it as an army. It maintains strict secrecy, compartmentalization, and information security. Nevertheless, the little that has been published invites the conclusion that Hezbollah is one of the best armies in the Middle East.

Keywords: Hezbollah, army, armor, rockets, air force, intelligence, organization, units

The Modi Government's Policy on Israel: The Rhetoric and Reality of De-hyphenation

Vinay Kaura

The past two and a half decades have seen a steady intensification of India-Israel relations. India has forged warm and mutually beneficial ties with Israel since the establishment of full diplomatic relations in 1992, and these relations have seen Israel becoming one of India's most important defense partners. Since Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister of India in 2014, the Indo-Israeli relationship has assumed an altogether new dynamic marked by symbolic breakthroughs and substantive steps, particularly in the field of defense cooperation and counterterrorism. Despite its lack of hard power in the West Asian region, India has successfully managed to pursue economic ties with Arab countries even as it promotes an ever-expanding diplomatic and security partnership with Israel. India's efforts

to avoid choosing sides between Israel and the Palestinians stem from its desire to avoid domestic backlash and maintain good relations with both sides. The article argues that the nature and scope of India's engagement with Israel are set to undergo a tectonic shift under Modi's leadership.

Keywords: Narendra Modi, India, Israel, Palestine, West Asia, United Nations, Non-Aligned Movement, jihadist, counterterrorism, defense cooperation

India-Israel Relations: Perceptions and Prospects

Manoj Kumar

The relationship between India and Israel is marked by political and diplomatic pragmatism and mutual interests. For a long time after gaining independence in 1947, India supported the Palestinian cause out of some very practical reasons. However, democracy has provided a sense of stability and security, and since the 1990s, India and Israel have balanced their relationship based on business and security issues. Terrorism is one such issue that brought the two countries together, particularly after the Mumbai terror attack in 2008. In tandem, there are many other areas in which India and Israel can work together, such as surveillance equipment manufacturing in India, which also involves Transfer of Technology and Research and Development. Israeli expertise in software development, water management, and dry farming are promising sectors in which institutions and corporate sectors of both countries work together and thereby strengthen institution-to-institution and people-to-people contacts. Israel and India can also explore joint projects in different countries of common strategic and economic interest. Overall, the potential of the relationship between the two countries has yet to be fully realized.

Keywords: security, strategy, terrorism, cooperation, business, interdependence

The Trump Effect in Eastern Europe: Heightened Risks of NATO-Russia Miscalculations

Sarah Fainberg

While bolstering Russia's perception of a disintegrating European Union and transatlantic alliance, the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom and Donald Trump's electoral upset in the United States reactivated Central and Eastern Europe's fears of imminent security threats from Moscow. Such

a situation creates fertile ground for hazardous miscalculations on both sides and increases the risk of a NATO-Russia confrontation on European soil. Meanwhile Poland and the Baltic states are monitoring the buildup of Russia's military presence on Israel's border with Syria and may seek intensified dialogue with Israel on the challenges posed by Russia's power projection into both areas.

Keywords: NATO, Russia, European defense and security, Israel, Syria

Negotiating Global Nuclear Disarmament: Between "Fairness" and Strategic Realities Emily B. Landau and Ephraim Asculai

As codified in Article VI of the NPT, global actors have contemplated nuclear disarmament since nuclear weapons first appeared. The latest initiative is the UN First Committee resolution on multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which passed in late October 2016 with significant support, albeit without the endorsement of most nuclear weapons states. When considering the initiative's feasibility, it is important to assess its normative and strategic underpinnings. Ironically, perhaps, the continued existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the few states that have carved out rules of the game in the nuclear realm is less of a challenge to international security than the potential spread of nuclear weapons to determined proliferators with a proven record of breaking the rules.

Keywords: nuclear, disarmament, proliferation, NPT Article VI, Iran, North Korea

The Prime Minister and “Smart Power”: The Role of the Israeli Prime Minister in the 21st Century

Yair Lapid

Any defense doctrine, no matter what time and place, must start with one question: what is the objective?

With the various upheavals that Israel and the Middle East have experienced in recent years, we have often lost sight of the objective, but in fact, it is as simple as it was from the first day. On this issue there was rare agreement between two of Zionism’s founding fathers, David Ben-Gurion and Ze’ev Jabotinsky. Ben-Gurion based the defense strategy document that he submitted to the government in 1953 on Jabotinsky’s well-known Iron Wall essay from 1923.¹ They both stated the basic principle that has not changed since then, despite its various formulations: “Israel must be so strong that its enemies know in advance that they will lose any war against it.”

Israel’s strength must be disproportionate to its size or to the challenges it faces, and our enemies need to know this. Any other situation will encourage our enemies – whether state actors or terrorist organizations – to test our strength. Israel must be strong enough so that it can win any war or operation, within a reasonable time, while demonstrating complete superiority. It must be even stronger if it aspires for an agreement with its neighbors. Even if someone believes that an agreement with the Palestinians is the solution to all of Israel’s security problems, it is worth remembering the sober warning of former National Security Council head Major General (ret.) Yaakov Amidror: “No agreement Israel reaches and signs will have

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any practical significance for the world being established in the Middle East unless Israel has in its hands the power to defend and enforce it."² Only such strength – decisive, intimidating strength, along with the willingness to use it – will bring us to the point where we will not have to use it, in other words, to the point where we can secure our future without having to fight.

In order to sustain this strength, we must understand its components. A "strong Israel" is not just a military concept. Military power is part of Israel's strength, but military power alone is not enough to achieve the objective. As Ben-Gurion stated, "Our security is not dependent only on the army...non-military factors will be decisive, no less than military factors."³ A strong Israel is much more than a strong IDF. It is an Israel that thrives economically, enjoys social cohesion and a shared ethos, is bolstered by undisputed strategic alliances and international backing, and boasts a decisive qualitative and technological edge. These are the basic conditions. Without them we will not be able to be strong enough to prevent wars, win them if they break out, or advance peace.

Creating this integrated power, which unites the military and civilian components into a single force, is the central role of the prime minister of Israel. The prime minister is not a member of the General Staff, and is certainly not supposed to be the one who maps special operations or assesses the deployment of the Border Police in the West Bank when there are attacks. His role is to connect three forces: Israel's military strength, its socio-economic strength, and its political strength. These are not separate elements, but rather a single combined entity. The proper balance between them is a force multiplier for Israel's strength. Creating and fortifying this combination creates "integrated power" (the Israeli version of "smart

power"),⁴ which is the key to the development of Israel's strength. Creating integrated power is the most important security role of any head of state. It is true in any place, and especially so in the State of Israel, which is a democratic, Western, modern "island" in the heart of a faltering, turbulent Middle East.

Developing integrated power is not a simple task.

The need to control the different forces driving the state requires judicious composure, a deep sense of responsibility, a broad view of the current geopolitical map, and effective governance that is able to devise and promote policy.

Harming Israel's economy and political standing harms Israel's security. The converse is also true: a strong economy is a basis for security.

The Elements of Integrated Power

In order to clarify the importance of integrated power in managing the country and in strengthening security, a micro to macro perspective is in order, from one specific defense procurement to its consequences for Israel's overall strength. Consider the following:

In June 2016, the unveiling ceremony for the Israeli Air Force's first Adir aircraft was held at Lockheed Martin's factory in Austin, Texas. The Adir – better known as the F-35 – is a multirole stealth plane that can reach any location in the Middle East. Aside from its stealth capabilities, its human-machine interface is the first and only one of its kind, and the plane as a whole represents a technological leap forward. The F-35 is also a source of Israeli pride, as some of its parts were developed and built in Israel. The "smart helmet" used by the pilots was developed by Elbit, and with unique technology, Israel Aerospace Industries produces the wings for some of the planes.

The Air Force's representative at the ceremony was Brig. Gen. Tal Kalman, who has been a combat pilot for over 30 years. Brig. Gen. Kalman did not hide his excitement over the plane's capabilities. "It was like holding the future in my hands," he said. In fact, he also held the past and the present in his hands, because this plane, and especially the way it came into Israel's hands, sums up not only Israel's military and technological capabilities, but also the three-pronged model of integrated power.

First, behind the acquisition stands a strong, consistent doctrine on developing military force that began during the days of Ben-Gurion, whereby Israel must maintain disproportionate strategic power, and make clear to its enemies that it will not tolerate existential threats. The corollary to this doctrine is that because Israel is geographically small, it needs to maintain the ability to take the campaign far beyond its borders. This doctrine has dictated the development of the Israeli Air Force, and in recent years has also dictated the upgrading of Israel's naval power.

Second, Israel's economic strength enabled it to purchase 33 F-35 aircraft, at a cost of \$5.25 billion, as part of a comprehensive deal in which Israel will eventually acquire 50 planes.⁵ In order for Israel to continue to sustain its qualitative edge, it must maintain a strong export-oriented economy, based on technology. This requires investments in education and infrastructure, and responsible management of the Israeli economy.

In this context, Israeli civil society must believe that the government has the right motivations and makes decisions in a thorough, judicious

manner. The enormous expense of the planes prompts the question whether there are alternatives that are more relevant to civilian life, such as smaller classrooms or more hospital beds. The fact that the acquisition of the planes is a higher national priority bespeaks a sacrifice on the part of civil society. Israeli society is willing to make this sacrifice, because it trusts that the government understands the ramifications of its actions. The public is unable to know, and does not need to know, the government's entire set of considerations, but it must believe that the government knows what it is doing. The trust in government and the existence of a shared ethos are the foundation of civil strength. A divided, conflicted society that lacks agreement on rules and values will not be able to meet the challenges of national security.

Third, Israel's international standing and the fact that it is considered a responsible and legitimate country enables the purchase of the planes. Israel and Turkey are the only countries in the region that were permitted by the American administration to purchase the F-35.⁶ Despite significant pressure from the American weapons industry, the administration has refused to sell the aircraft to other countries in the Middle East, because the vast majority of them are irresponsible countries, many with illegitimate regimes. The American administration assumes that Israel will not use the formidable weapon it has acquired for unnecessary military adventures; will notify it

Of all the responsibilities of a prime minister, the most challenging one is actually the one that is not in the rulebook: the need to navigate constantly among contradicting interests based on a broad perspective of the national good.

in advance of any strategically significant courses of action;⁷ will not act in violation of international law; and will maintain the standards of warfare accepted in Western countries.

As with military strength and economic strength, Israel's political strength comprises several elements: political, intelligence, and diplomatic ties; standing in international institutions (the UN, NATO, the European Union, the World Bank, and others); stature in international legal institutions; its image in the media, in social media, in academia, and in public opinion; and personal connections between leaders.

Israel's political standing is determined in three main arenas: Washington, the European Union, and international institutions (while countries like China and India have vast economic importance for Israel, on geopolitical issues the combined forces of the West set the tone, and this will continue in the foreseeable future).

Of these three arenas, the United States is the most important element. We must prevent cracks in our historical alliance with the US, and maintain our bipartisan standing in Congress. The change of administration in the United States should not make Israel complacent. Israel's standing in Washington has suffered in recent years, and this trend must not continue.

This is also the reason that Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot saw fit to define the securing and preservation of the State of Israel's legitimacy as one of the defense establishment's top strategic objectives.⁸ The Chief of Staff knows that Israel's legitimacy, while created in the international arena, affects local security. Legitimacy is the defense establishment's main means of persuasion when it seeks to acquire F-35s from the US (or to convince it not to sell them to certain countries in the region) or Dolphin submarines from Germany, or when it seeks intelligence cooperation with the European Union.

The story of the Adir – one of many – is proof that an up-to-date defense doctrine cannot rely solely on an operational or military perspective. Without properly integrating the three components of Israeli strength – military, socio-economic, and political – Israel would not have this aircraft. More generally, the IDF's qualitative advantage would erode, and Israel's security would suffer.

Comprehensive Integration

In order to develop and maintain the strength we need, military, socio-economic and political power must work together, based on an integrated outlook. This is exactly the difference between a security doctrine (which is the role of the military) and the concept of a national security policy, which is currently lacking. Ofer Shelah wrote: "From the political leadership to the IDF's top brass, Israel has difficulty formulating comprehensive definitions, and has even more difficulty acting on them – therefore it prefers not to formulate them at all."⁹

This phenomenon was especially prominent in the summer of 2014, when Israel launched Operation Protective Edge without defining the result it wanted to achieve, the exit strategy, or the timeframe. The decision makers knew during Operation Protective Edge that Hamas was embracing what Gabi Siboni called "the victim doctrine"¹⁰ against Israel, meaning that it was interested in drawing out the operation as much as possible in order to place international pressure on Israel and harm its political and economic standing. Nonetheless, those managing the operation, led by the

Prime Minister, did not think that they needed to provide the army with a timeframe or a required objective. In their no-longer relevant view, while the cannons roar, there is no room for economic or political considerations. During the operation the Prime Minister publicly declared: "We will continue to operate until this objective [returning the quiet] is achieved, as long as it takes and with as much force as necessary."¹¹ This decision to let the campaign continue without a set timeframe was not based on professional deliberation. Rather, the working assumption was that a security event can be isolated from its economic and political consequences. This is a mistake. There is no such separation.

A clear example is what happened at Ben Gurion Airport, Israel's only international airport. During Operation Protective Edge, a single rocket landed in the town of Yehud, 2 km from the airport. While it did not cause any casualties, it prompted the following chain of events: an American airplane that was supposed to land at Ben Gurion Airport turned around mid-air and landed in Europe; another American plane took off empty, leaving behind 300 passengers. Officials at the United States' Federal Aviation Administration decided to suspend all flights to Israel for 24 hours in order to assess the situation. The European aviation authority (EASA) followed suit and issued a "serious warning" that caused a series of European and other companies to stop their flights to Ben Gurion Airport. For the first time since 1973, Israel found itself cut off from the world.¹²

A concerted diplomatic effort, aimed mainly at the United States, led to a cancellation of the flight warnings after 24 hours. Had they continued for another two or three days, they could have had a domino effect on the Israeli economy. In the age of the global economy, which operates at the speed of light, Israel cannot afford to "go offline." In contrast to the landing of one rocket, which in military terms is a marginal event, the set of events described here is the precise implementation of Hamas's strategy since its establishment: Hamas knows that it is unable to destroy the State of Israel, and therefore seeks to harm Israel's economy, diplomacy, and public relations.

Hamas is a malevolent organization with a modern operational concept. Harming Israel's economy and political standing harms Israel's security. At the same time, the converse is also true: a strong economy is a basis for security. In the "National Security Strategy" document published by the White House in February 2015, President Obama noted US economic strength as foremost among the foundations of American national security.

Without a strong economy, the army does not have educated fighters, advanced weapon systems, or a strong home front in times of war. Later the document notes: "Scientific discovery and technological innovation empower American leadership with a competitive edge that secures our military advantage."¹³ Reflecting an idea familiar to every Israeli, this is the famous "qualitative edge" that Israel must preserve at all costs. This watchtower is not posted within an army camp, but rather in the civilian arena. A technologically advanced defense system cannot exist over time in a country that lags technologically. Without an advanced economy and society, we will not have an advanced military.

Professional Coordination

Since David Ben-Gurion formulated the foundations of Israel's security doctrine in 1953, it is customary to say that our security doctrine rests on three foundations: early warning, deterrence, and decision. The Meridor Commission report from 2006 added a fourth element to this doctrine: defense. At the Herzliya Conference in 2014, Alex Mintz and Shaul Shay proposed adding a fifth element: adaptation,¹⁴ meaning the flexibility to adjust the defense policy to an ever-changing world (while the idea received little public attention, I believe that it is critical and worthy of development).

There is an entire military doctrine behind each of these definitions, but the nature of dealing with security is such that we must reassess them as frequently as possible. MK Shelah, for example, has insisted that the concept of decision has changed dramatically in recent years, and may not be relevant any more.¹⁵ Whether or not this is the case (to my mind it is certainly true regarding Hamas in Gaza and against Hezbollah in the north), we must reevaluate the role of the political leadership in developing Israel's security doctrine.

All five of the elements – stated by Ben-Gurion, Meridor, and Mintz and Shay – are essentially operational. The prime minister has influence over them, but he cannot reduce his role to the operational aspect. It is no accident that the prime minister does not sit on the top floor of the Ministry of Defense at the Kirya in Tel Aviv, but rather in his office in Jerusalem. From there, he must steer the entire system such that Israel's centers of power do not clash with one another, but rather serve the cause of national security together. Years of bad habits and the political leadership's evasion of responsibility have led to a situation where it seems that the defense establishment and the IDF are the ones who must provide the political

leadership with the hierarchy of threats, analysis of the current military and political environment, and even the set of economic and political considerations. In fact, it should be the opposite. The defense establishment needs to provide the best intelligence that it can provide, and it is worth listening to its intelligence assessments (with a degree of healthy skepticism), but the prime minister and the cabinet are those who need to set policy. The prime minister needs to shape policy based on the principle of integrated power, and make all parts of the system operate in this vein.

Clearly the prime minister cannot do this alone. The establishment around him must be built such that the set of considerations brought before him is as broad as possible. The key body is the National Security Council (NSC). Since its establishment, it has gone through many changes and setbacks (since December 2015 no one heads the NSC), and all of Israel's prime ministers have yielded to the temptation to bypass it and speak directly with Military Intelligence, the generals in command of the respective territorial commands, the Israel Security Agency, and the Mossad. Faced with urgent events this is not necessarily bad, and in any case is unavoidable. The prime minister is the one who will pay the price for a serious operational mishap, and it is natural that he would want to be in contact with operational officials. The problem is that this leads to bad habits: this direct connection also occurs with long term strategic discussions, which should take a completely different form.

None of the security agencies can be aware of the entire range of economic considerations, the current political reality, or legal complications. Neither can they (nor should they) deal with Israel's long term strategic objectives (including the technological and commercial arenas, and issues such as social cohesion). This is not their role. The correct situation is that minor tactical discussions not be handled by the prime minister at all, while strategic discussions go through the NSC alone. The role of the NSC is to coordinate the information, input, and staff work for the prime minister and for the cabinet. This is especially true when not in the midst of a crisis, as this is when policy can and should be determined. Discussions on issues like the defense budget cannot be led by the IDF or dissolve into the perpetual conflict between the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Finance. The question of what we want to happen regarding Gaza should not be discussed during a confrontation in Gaza.

Is the prime minister the only person who can set in motion the kind of strategic processes that I have described here? The answer is no, but

the systems of government cannot operate without leadership that has direction. On a number of occasions I have read to those who work with me the "Moon Speech" that President Kennedy delivered at Rice University in Texas. "We choose to go to the moon," he said. All the experts berated Kennedy for setting a goal that the US would surely fail to achieve, but the young and energetic president understood that leadership means setting lofty goals and then continually striving to achieve them.

I am a big believer in the power of the individual; in the ability of determined leadership to shape history; in the fact that democracy is a form of government based on optimism; in the fact that there needs to be someone at the top of the pyramid who knows how to lead people to places that they hadn't thought of beforehand. Note, however, that President Kennedy did not say, "I will get to the moon" in his speech; he said "we." In order to fulfill Israel's national missions and overarching objectives, in order to defend our security and navigate among the various threats, the prime minister first of all must have a large staff of talented, opinionated people around him who are fully committed, and who will provide him with the informational and conceptual framework and meticulous staff work that will enable Israel to advance, prosper, and be secure.

Henry Kissinger stated that the basic questions of policy are simple: "what do we want to achieve, and what do we want to prevent?"¹⁶ In the Israeli version of this dilemma, the prime minister needs to decide whether his goal is to achieve an agreement with our neighbors based on the principle of two states, or to work toward perpetuating the existing situation with the Palestinians. The two options are on the table, and there were prime ministers who worked toward one or the other, but whether we seek peace or war, every prime minister will need all of Israel's might behind him. The Middle East believes in living "by the sword," that violence is a reasonable and readily available solution for most problems. In light of this, Israel will always need to sport power, indeed, a great deal of power.

The Network Approach

Even under optimal conditions, properly analyzing and determining policy in the reality of the Middle East is an incomparably complex task. In the past few years, even the United States often failed to read the regional map correctly, despite having enormously greater means at its disposal than Israel has (the Pentagon's budget is 50 times larger than Israel's defense budget; the State Department's budget is 80 times larger than that of Israel's

Ministry of Foreign Affairs). A few months before his departure from the State Department, Secretary of State John Kerry was asked what advice he has for his successor. Kerry answered: "It's really important to make sure that the entire policymaking establishment understands the country they're making policy about and sees it through the eyes of the people in it, not just through our eyes. We don't always do that."¹⁷ We too, the Israelis, don't always do this. The difference, however, is that the US can afford to have failures. Israel cannot.

The political and military environment has changed decisively in recent years. We are living in a completely different reality from the one of the first sixty-something years of existence: our enemies are no longer hostile states or conventional armies. Instead, we are faced with an age of civil wars and coups, terrorist organizations that are growing more sophisticated while gaining political recognition,¹⁸ cyber warfare that is increasingly dominant, nuclear ambitions of more than one country in the region, and an international front that is subject to the influence of hostile media and radical human rights organizations. All of these create an ongoing intelligence and operational campaign that is very different from the previous reality, in which the army fought an all-out war once every few years, followed by a lull when the army could draw conclusions and develop its strength. In today's world, there is no longer a clear separation between times of peace and times of war.

Under such conditions, studying the enemy – and studying the players in the region that are not defined as enemies – cannot be limited to a single truth, or to a single layer of information. The prime minister needs to create a work environment in which the IDF, the Israel Security Agency, the Mossad, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the cabinet are synchronized and complement one another, with economic and social professionals an integral part of the discussion. For example, the ongoing struggle against Hezbollah and Hamas's sources of funding involves the international banking system and agents who specialize in financial crime. The banking system's series of successes in identifying sources of funding for terrorism, the series of international partnerships, and the American Anti-Terror Law have enabled lawsuits to be filed against terrorist organizations and the companies that gave them funding. This created significant difficulties for terrorist organizations and forced them to look for complicated sources of funding that do not use banks, which expose them to being tracked. This struggle is far from being over, but this is additional proof that the

economy, foreign policy, and law are not separate worlds from the world of security. It is a single complex reality.

A proper analysis of the reality must include a state's history, religion, culture, regime structure, economic components, and social forces. This has always been complex, but in the past decade it has become even more so. The social media revolution that began in 2006; the economic crisis of 2008 whose effects are still being felt; the Arab Spring that began in 2010 – all of these present us with previously unknown challenges. Analytical tools have also become more complicated and sophisticated. As in other areas, regarding security the world is moving to a network-based approach (and as General Stanley McChrystal put it: "It takes a network to defeat a network").¹⁹ In the current era, conflicts are no longer one-time and local. They do not have a start or end point; they are everywhere and all the time. The attempt to keep track and adapt ourselves to the threats undermines the system and causes instability. In order to avoid this, the political leadership must always return to the starting point. The means may have become more complex, but the objectives remain clear and simple: a militarily and economically strong Israel, whose international standing is stable and firm.

Over the course of almost 70 years, the Israeli leadership spoke in terms of an "existential threat." The great fear was of an army or armies racing toward our borders in order to conquer Israel. No one in the professional echelons uses this terminology today. In the past year alone, those who served most recently as head of the Mossad, IDF Chief of Staff, and Minister of Defense strongly emphasized that today "Israel does not face an existential threat."²⁰ Instead, there are increasing sets of threats from terrorism, the collapsed states in the region, and an escalating delegitimization campaign against Israel. National decision making has not succeeded in adapting itself to this change. Try to imagine, for example, the impact of wisely investing \$10 million a year into Israeli public diplomacy focused on the Egyptian street, which is still hostile to us after 40 years of peace. Ten million dollars is about 0.0001 percent of the State of Israel's budget (which is about \$100 billion a year), but in a country like Egypt it could make a decisive difference.

We have no shortage of talented commanders, but we have a shortage of leaders who act like leaders.

In the absence of up-to-date, innovative, and comprehensive staff work, the prime minister will be unable to provide appropriate guidance to security agencies. Without understanding the overt and covert aspirations of each

regional player and properly analyzing its strengths and weaknesses, Israel will be unable to shape an effective foreign policy and develop the army in a way that is most suitable for its missions. Without close cooperation with the US and effective work with the European Union and international institutions, we will not receive the intelligence and operational partnerships (or the acquisitions) that are necessary for Israel's security.

The operational doctrine and development of military force cannot be defined in a vacuum, but rather in relation to threats and enemies. The well-known saying that we are "always preparing for the previous war," can only be avoided with proper teamwork, in which different voices and different opinions are heard. The size of the army and principles behind the development of military force, foreign policy guidelines, trade deals, and economic alliances – these all derive from knowing who is an enemy and who is a friend, what visible and invisible dangers Israel faces, which threats the army is supposed to address, which threats must be met with non-military capabilities, which opportunities we should exploit before others, and where we must be careful in order not to become entangled in wars that are not ours. Today, the government of Israel is not providing clear answers to these questions, because the prime minister doesn't have the professional tools or a suitable team to respond to changes and shape a realistic, up-to-date policy.

After a staff is put together, the principles of the staff work are defined, and up-to-date work plans are written, the prime minister's test will be his ability to work in accordance with them. This sounds like an easy task, almost obvious, but this is not so. Only very rarely do the security reality and the political reality overlap. Politics demands simple and immediate solutions, while security is complex, is based on processes, and requires staying power. In today's politics, there is constant longing for the simpler and more decisive days when it was clear who the enemies were, what war and victory were. Security professionals, in contrast, know that in the network-based world of terrorism and guerrilla warfare – in which even the definitions of "friend" and "enemy" are no longer absolute – most operations are surgical, complex, and unseen.

Is the army more moderate than the government? I don't believe so. We have a fighting army that is not daunted by conflicts and threats. Deeply ingrained in the IDF's organizational memory is Moshe Dayan's statement during his eulogy of Roi Rotberg: "This is the fate of our generation. This is our life's choice – to be prepared and armed, strong and determined,

lest the sword be stricken from our fist and our lives cut down.”²¹ Rather, the army operates in accordance with long term national objectives, and based on recognition of its responsibility for Israel’s social and economic resilience, its international standing, and Jewish and democratic values. Chief of Staff Eisenkot has emphasized this to the General Staff and to field officers.²²

There has been increasing discomfort in the army in recent years with the political leadership’s evasion of its responsibility for defining policy for the IDF. When there is no policy, the expectation of the army is to address all threats – instead of an “either-or” policy, it is expected to cope with a policy of “and, and, and,” and address low probability existential threats, high probability terrorism threats, familiar threats, and threats that may appear one day. In a world of limited resources, this is of course an impossible task.

Balancing Priorities

Of all the responsibilities of a prime minister, the most challenging one is actually the one that is not in the rulebook: the need to navigate constantly among contradicting interests based on a broad perspective of the national good. There is a clash of interests in almost every decision. When you pave a road in the south, you do not pave a road in the north. When you lower customs duties in order to lessen the cost of living, you harm local industry and people will be fired. If you improve relations with Russia, you pay a price in America. The easy solution, of course, is “both,” but in a world of limited resources and conflicting interests, the role of leadership is to hold thorough discussions, assess the advantages and disadvantages, and then make decisions that some people will not like. This is not a simple or rewarding process, but it is the essence of the role of leadership and the role of the prime minister.

This becomes especially critical when discussing the building blocks of integrated power. In the winter of 2013 for example, when I was a member of the cabinet, I demanded that a discussion be held in the cabinet on Israel-US relations and their effect on national security. To this very day, such a discussion – on one of the most critical issues for Israel’s security – has not taken place. Since then, there have been a number of dramatic events in Israel-US relations, foremost among them the signing of the US-led nuclear agreement with Iran, despite the vehement protests of Israel, the Prime Minister’s speech in Congress, an unprecedented crisis between

Israel and the Democratic Party, and the unexpected election of President Trump. Not even these events prompted the cabinet to meet in order to shape a coherent policy in light of the new reality.

In other words: over the past eight years, the world has undergone upheavals of epic proportions. The forces on the global chess board have rearranged themselves. For the first time since 1945, the US is considering what its next grand strategy will be.²³ During all these years, the cabinet – the State of Israel’s supreme defense body – has not held even one discussion on the question of how we should respond to the new reality and what we must do in order to maintain Israel’s special status in Washington.

Strategy spilling over into tactics is human and unavoidable. Most people prefer to deal with what is familiar and easily understood. Politically as well, dealing with tactics is more convenient and rewarding than dealing with strategy, whose benefits will only be reaped in the future, and possibly by someone else. Exactly for this reason, part of the prime minister’s role is to ensure that the political leadership deals with the foundations of integrated power, and not with operational matters. We have no shortage of talented commanders, but we have a shortage of leaders who act like leaders. When the leadership is immersed in the details instead of charting the course, it neglects its duty, and also interferes with the IDF’s work.

The discomfort that this causes the army resonates loudly in the *IDF Strategy* prepared by Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot, which, in an exceptional step, was published in August 2015. In this document, the Chief of Staff writes the following:

The Relation between National Goals and the Employment of Force

6. When the military needs to be deployed, it is recommended that the political level instruct the military, as follows:
 - a. The goals and the required strategic End States.
 - b. The military’s role and how it should integrate into the achievement of these goals.
 - c. The constraints involved in the use of military force.
 - d. Defining additional efforts (political, economic, media, social) and the IDF’s role in their context.
7. The political echelon’s guidelines require an ongoing discourse between the senior military echelon (the Chief of the General Staff) and the political echelon. Political guidance is the basis for the General Staff’s strategic thinking processes, but is also affected by these processes – the effect is mutual.²⁴

Lt. Gen. Eisenkot uses careful language, but the message is clear. This is in effect an unprecedented demand by the IDF of the political leadership to act like leadership; to define strategic goals and not tactics; not to interfere in operational decisions (elsewhere in the document, he emphasizes that during a campaign, the only one who can give orders to the army is the Chief of Staff),²⁵ but rather to fulfill the true role of the cabinet and especially the prime minister; to assess the use of force as “the continuation of politics by other means,” in the words of von Clausewitz, and to use it only when it matches the wider context of the state’s objectives, values, capabilities, and realistic limitations – political, economic, social, and legal.

The Wider Context

One of the problems with security policy and strategy is that often the wider context is not visible to the public. A country is an intricate web, in which each event sets off a series of other events. The public – and the media – is unable to see in real time how the map of interests changes. Here too, a micro event to a macro perspective is in order.

At first sight, there is no connection between national security issues and the argument over the Western Wall plan, which was meant to resolve the issue of prayer services by Reform and Conservative Jews at the Western Wall plaza. But a broader and more in-depth perspective reveals more than one connection. The Western Wall plan was meant to end the conflict that has continued for more than two decades regarding Reform and Conservative prayer services at the Western Wall plaza. The plan is the result of a compromise reached by a special team appointed by the prime minister, after negotiations of no less than three years. The team was composed of representatives of all streams, including ultra-Orthodox, and was led by Attorney General Avihai Mandelblit, who at the time served as cabinet secretary. According to the plan, a separate plaza was to be built for Reform and Conservative Jews, underneath Robinson’s Arch, where they could worship according to their customs. The central plaza was to remain in the hands of the Orthodox establishment.

Like all compromises, no one was fully satisfied with the plan, but it was clear to both sides that without an understanding, the Supreme Court would impose a solution. The plan was brought before the cabinet, and with the blessing of Prime Minister Netanyahu (who at the start of the cabinet meeting emphasized that the team had operated under his personal guidance, and said: “This is a fitting and creative solution, as is usually necessary in such

sensitive issues")²⁶ it was approved for implementation in a government decision. As expected, this caused an uproar on ultra-Orthodox websites, and the Prime Minister suspended the plan.

The suspension of the plan went unnoticed among most of the Israeli public, but created a crisis of unprecedented proportions between the State of Israel and the vast majority of Jewish congregations in the United States (53 percent of American Jews are Reform or Conservative, only 10 percent are ultra-Orthodox. The rest do not belong to any organized community).²⁷ A video of an angry ultra-Orthodox man tearing apart a Reform prayer book in the middle of the Western Wall plaza went viral in the US. The leaders of the Rabbinical Assembly, the umbrella organization for Conservative Jewish rabbis, co-authored a furious letter to the Prime Minister in which – for the first time – they raised serious question marks about “the vital relationship between the State of Israel and world Jewry.”²⁸ At a certain stage, they filed a petition to the Supreme Court to implement the plan. This too is unprecedented: world Jewry suing the State of Israel because there is no freedom of religion for Jews in Israel.

Why and how is the Western Wall plan connected to security policy? Because Reform and Conservative Jews are not just a demographic majority; they are also the wealthiest, most influential, and most politically well-connected communities in the United States. Their wealth and political power is a pillar of AIPAC, Washington’s pro-Israel lobby. It is they who helped Israel in its struggle against the nuclear agreement with Iran (and failed along with us). It is they who ensure that the military aid agreement with Israel is the largest of all American aid agreements (the total amount of aid since the establishment of Israel is over \$125 billion). It is they who pressure the American administration to ensure that Israel is the first to receive advanced weapons – from F-35 aircraft to JDAM smart bombs. It is they who know how to talk to members of the Senate and Congress in order to prevent anti-Israel decisions.

At the height of the struggle against the nuclear agreement, an influential Jewish member of Congress told me about his meeting with President Obama, in which he demanded that he “compensate Israel” for the emerging agreement. What he meant was not monetary compensation, but that America equip Israel with military and technological means that would enable it to defend itself against any future attack by Iran or its agents in the region. The President promised that he would do so, but the concerned member of Congress asked that the promise be made in writing. A few days

later, the President sent a public letter to another Jewish member of Congress, Jerry Nadler, which said: "This commitment to Israel's Qualitative Military Edge lies at the heart of our bilateral security cooperation relationship.... We will continue to consult with our Israeli partners on how to strengthen Israel's defensive capabilities in light of our shared concerns vis-à-vis Iran."²⁹ Later, the letter was substantiated by the military aid agreement signed in September 2016 and the series of strategic understandings between the Pentagon and the Ministry of Defense. The two Jewish members of Congress that initiated the process are members of Reform congregations.

When the Americans speak about the alliance with Israel as rooted in "shared values," they do so because that is the message they receive from American Jewry. (When I spoke at the 2012 AIPAC conference, at a certain point I started to count the signs that included the words "shared values" – after 300 signs I gave up.) Simply put, American Jewry is what stands behind the second most important component of Israeli security after the IDF – the military and political alliance with the United States.

A momentary crisis with the ultra-Orthodox parties is not comparable to the future harm to Israel's security caused by the distancing of these communities in the US. The job of the Prime Minister is to place macro security considerations front and center, and to act in accordance with them. This involves PR; it involves paying a price vis-à-vis the public; and it involves the discomfort of standing up to a public that doesn't have much patience for details. These are not easy prices to pay, but whoever wants integrated power has to be able to handle them.

Conclusion

The story of the Western Wall plan, like the story of the F-35 purchase, is one of many. The details change, but the basic principle remains the same: if the preservation and strengthening of integrated power is the Prime Minister's top priority, he must ensure that other interests – less important but more urgent – do not harm Israel's security. The test of leadership is not just the willingness to provide citizens with what they want, but also the ability to demand responsibility from them. In order for leadership to be able to demand this, it must itself demonstrate responsibility. A principled struggle that does not involve paying a price is not a struggle.

The security of the State of Israel five years from now will depend on an entire range of elements uniting as a single force. These factors – economic, social, international – can interfere with and contradict one another, or

become force multipliers that enhance our national strength and resilience. The role of the prime minister is to prevent the contradictions and to create the force multipliers. In order to be able to do this and to place Israel in a better situation, the following steps should be taken, which will place integrated power at the center of Israel’s national security policy (some of the following points appear in the “7-Point Plan for the State of Israel’s Future” published last September):

- a. To initiate comprehensive staff work that assesses the central threats Israel will face in the coming years, including economic and foreign policy aspects.
- b. To set up teams that will study how to face each threat and help the political leadership define what scenarios Israel is unwilling to permit under any circumstances.
- c. To initiate staff work on the security-economy interface and to assess how Israel’s economic connections can serve its security.
- d. To implement a national program that will base the Israeli economy on innovation industries.
- e. To carry out a comprehensive reform to strengthen the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to transfer the struggle against BDS to it, to cancel all of the overlaps in Israel’s public diplomacy system, and to concentrate all work on the issue within the Public Affairs department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- f. To rehabilitate the National Security Council, expand its powers, and make it responsible for the connection between the prime minister and the various defense forces.
- g. To formulate a new cabinet law that would enable ministers to better prepare for discussions, prevent leaks, and focus discussions on strategic affairs instead of tactical matters.³⁰
- h. To create a shared forum of the NSC, the National Economic Council, the National Cyber Bureau, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that will focus on future threats, especially in the cyber realm, the Internet of Things, and space warfare.
- i. To strengthen the Ministry of Justice’s International Law department.

Using the integrated power model, we can harness the power of the IDF, the Mossad, and the Israel Security Agency, along with Israel’s economic and political strength and the energy and vision of its citizens, so that Israel can fulfill the overarching goal that has accompanied it since its

establishment: to be so strong that its enemies know in advance that they will lose any war against it.

Notes

- 1 Isaac Ben-Israel, "Israel and the Palestinians: Basic Assumptions for Updating the Defense Doctrine after Operation Protective Edge," September 2014, p. 2, website of the Israel National Defense College Alumni Association, <http://www.amutatmabal.org.il>.
- 2 Yaakov Amidror, *Perfect Storm: The Implications of Middle East Chaos*, Memorandum No. 8 (Ramat Gan: Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, 2015), p. 35.
- 3 Isaac Ben-Israel and Nicki Kons, "Ben-Gurion's Approach to Risk Management," *Maarachot* No. 435, pp. 32-37.
- 4 Prof. Joseph Nye, head of Harvard's School of Government and former special assistant to the US Secretary of Defense, coined the term. See, for example, "Get Smart," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2009).
- 5 While the purchase was made using US aid money, at the end of the day it is the same acquisitions budget. Whoever buys planes in dollars will have to buy APCs in shekels. If Israel buys planes using aid money, it is because it is able to fund its basic acquisitions by itself.
- 6 Turkey is not defined as a "Middle Eastern country," but it is the second country in the region that has received the US administration's approval to purchase F-35 aircraft.
- 7 The US administration does not expect prior coordination, but expects to be informed in advance. Israel did not coordinate its attack on the Iraqi reactor in advance; it operated in Syria (according to foreign sources, including former President George W. Bush) without coordinating with the administration; and if necessary will attack Iran without American approval.
- 8 *The IDF Strategy*, 2015. An English translation is available at <https://www.idfblog.com/2015/11/23/idf-strategy/>.
- 9 Ofer Shelah, *The Courage to Win: Israeli Defense Policy* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Ahronot, 2016), p. 85.
- 10 Gabi Siboni, "Operations Cast Lead, Pillar of Defense, and Protective Edge: A Comparative Review," in *The Lessons of Operation Protective Edge*, eds. Anat Kurz and Shlomo Brom (Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, 2014), p. 33.
- 11 Prime Minister's speech, August 2, 2014, <http://www.mako.co.il/news-military/security-tzuk-eitan/Article-f21a0dbf9e79741004.htm>.
- 12 The description of the series of events according to Brig. Gen. Asaf Agmon, "The Secrets of Ben Gurion Airport during Operation Protective Edge," *Israel Defense*, October 2014.

- 13 The White House, "National Security Strategy," February 2015, p. 16, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy_2.pdf.
- 14 Alex Mintz & Shaul Shay, "Adaptation as a Component of Israel's National Security Doctrine," Policy paper, Herzliya Forum to Formulate Israel's National Security Doctrine, 2014.
- 15 Shelah, *The Courage to Win: Israeli Defense Policy*, pp. 86-89.
- 16 Henry Kissinger, *World Order* (New York: Penguin, 2015), p. 372.
- 17 Jonathan Tepperman, "The Envoy: A Conversation with John Kerry," *Foreign Affairs* (October 2016).
- 18 One of many examples: In July 2016, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jean-Marc Ayrault, met with representatives of Hezbollah in Beirut. When I angrily protested this to the French ambassador in Israel, he responded with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' official response: "The meeting was with people from the political arm of Hezbollah, not with people from the military arm." The fact is that there is no such separation between arms. In fact, even Hezbollah does not claim that there is such a separation.
- 19 Quoted by Niall Ferguson, "It Takes a Network to Defeat a Network," Belfer Center for International Affairs, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, March 2016.
- 20 Tamir Pardo to *Maariv*, January 2016; Moshe "Bogie" Ya'alon, speech at medical conference, January 2016; Lt. Gen. (ret.) Benny Ganz, meeting of Ascolot in Haifa, June 2016.
- 21 From the eulogy of Roi Rotberg, Ministry of Defense archive, April 1956.
- 22 *IDF Strategy*, from the staff work on developing a national security doctrine (Meridor document, 2007).
- 23 For further reading, see Hal Brands, Peter D. Feaver, John J. Mearsheimer, and Stephen M. Walt, "Should America Retrench?" *Foreign Affairs* (October 2016).
- 24 *IDF Strategy*.
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 Moshe Steinmetz, Yaki Adamker, and Omri Nahmias, "Kotel Outline Approved despite Objections by Ultra-Orthodox," *Walla*, January 31, 2016, <http://news.walla.co.il/item/2930318>.
- 27 "A Portrait of Jewish Americans," Pew Research Center, 2013.
- 28 "Letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu Expressing Disappointment Regarding Kotel Agreement," July 11, 2016, <http://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/story/letter-prime-minister-netanyahu-expressing-disappointment-regarding-kotel-agreement>.
- 29 "Obama's Letter to Congressman Nadler," August 20, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/08/20/world/middleeast/document-obamas-letter-to-congressman-nadler.html?_r=0.
- 30 Such a law was proposed at the Knesset by MK Ofer Shelah in June 2016.

The Israeli-Palestinian Political Process: Back to the Process Approach

Udi Dekel and Emma Petrack

Since the Oslo Accords were signed in September 1993, there have been three and a half serious rounds of talks over a permanent resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Camp David in 2000; President Clinton's parameters at the end of 2000; the Annapolis Process in 2007-2008; and the initiative led by US Secretary of State John Kerry in 2013-2014. All failed due to insurmountable gaps between the two sides on the core issues of the permanent status agreement and due to the asymmetry in the objectives of the talks. Attempts to bypass the problem by adopting different approaches to promote negotiations were fruitless, and instead of an agreement, the various efforts led to violent outbursts, deadlocked talks, and despair among both sides at ever achieving a resolution of the conflict.¹

This essay examines whether the possibility of a permanent status agreement is indeed (at least for now) off the table. It assesses the issue on two levels: (a) the core issues and their importance to the possibility of reaching a permanent agreement; and (b) the development of different approaches to bypass the core issues and progress in the political process along other channels. Based on an analysis of previous negotiations, the essay proposes a resolution that affirms two fundamental principles: the two-state solution is the best option regarding the Israeli-Palestinian issue; and to implement this solution, the Palestinian Authority must be strong, responsible, and functional. The proposal herein involves the launch of a transitional process that does not purport to offer a quick, uniform solution to every disagreement between the sides but does work toward a two-state reality.

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The Previous Rounds of Negotiations

The Oslo I Accord, also known as the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, was a milestone in Israeli-Palestinian relations, and in many respects the Oslo principles continue to drive the bilateral relations.² The major contribution of the Oslo Accords lay in the PLO's recognition of Israel's right to exist and its commitment to avoid any violent struggle, alongside Israel's recognition of the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and a partner for negotiations. The Oslo process and the rounds of talks held since, along with international resolutions, sketched out the model of the two-state solution with two sustainable states existing side by side in peace and security between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. Other theoretical options, such as one binational state or one state for both peoples, a three-state option (the West Bank, Israel, and the Gaza Strip as autonomous entities), a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation, or an Israeli-Palestinian confederation (two states in one space), have never been officially discussed by the sides.

The Gaps in the Core Issues

The gaps between the parties on the core issues have widened over the years, especially with the loss of trust and the changes in the strategic environment. These issues have an emotional, almost obsessive nature that makes progress well nigh impossible.

Borders and territory: In most of the rounds of talks, the Israeli position (in its interpretation of UN Resolutions 242 and 338) was that the 1967 borders were indefensible and that the situation created on the ground since 1967, i.e., the settlement blocs, must be taken into consideration when drawing the future border between the two states. By contrast, the Palestinians claim – after they abandoned their demand for a return to the partition plan borders of UN General Assembly Resolution 181 from 1947 – that the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (the borders on the eve of the Six Day War) represents a great and painful concession of most of the territory of their homeland, because their state would consist of only 22 percent of historic Palestine. Therefore, in their view, the 1967 borders are the minimal opening position in any talks, and any additional flexibility on the matter would be nearly impossible.³ By contrast, in the Israeli view, the 1967 borders are more than the maximum position on land to be given to a future Palestinian state. Although Israel agrees that the territory conquered in June 1967 is the basis for calculating

the area of a future Palestinian state, the sides find it difficult to agree to the scope and ratio, both qualitatively and quantitatively, of land swaps. The Palestinian position has been consistent throughout, mainly that land swaps of equal size and quality must not exceed 1.9 percent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip territories. By contrast, the Israeli position has changed, depending on the Prime Minister in office, and over the years, Israel's flexibility on territorial compromises has grown. Former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert presented the most far-reaching formula to the Palestinians: Israel's annexation of the settlement blocs, equivalent to 6.5 percent of the territory under Israeli control since 1967, in exchange for compensation to the Palestinians of 5.6 percent of land from within Israel's pre-1967 borders. The remaining 0.7 percent gap would be calculated as the passage connecting the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. This dynamic generated a powerful Palestinian incentive not to compromise in any negotiation and wait for a better Israeli offer. Nonetheless, considering the political orientation of Israel's leadership since then and the emerging public and political climate, it is unreasonable to think that in the near future an offer as far reaching as Olmert's will resurface.

Security: Israel's approach asserts that security is vital to the establishment and foundation of peaceful relations,⁴ and over the years Israel has demanded security arrangements that would ensure that Israel's security not be at greater risk. By contrast, the Palestinian approach sees peace as the main component of security.⁵ The Palestinians recognize Israel's security needs, but not at the expense of total Palestinian sovereignty – on land, in the air, and at sea. For example, while the Palestinians see aerial control above the West Bank as a sovereignty issue, Israel maintains that a unified airspace with increased Israeli security control is essential for security reasons.⁶ In light of developments in the Middle East and the Palestinian arena, the Israeli government has broadened its security demands for freedom of military action in the entire Palestinian sphere with no time limit, an approach that has been rejected by the Palestinians outright.⁷

The Palestinian refugees and the "right of return": The PLO represents both the population residing in the territories and the refugee diaspora. A commitment to the Palestinian refugees limits the PLO's flexibility in its demand for "the right of return" of Palestinian refugees to the 1948 areas. For the refugees, settling in a Palestinian state in the West Bank instead of the places where their families lived until 1948 means the loss of the dream of return – the heart of the Palestinian national narrative. It is not

happstance that this dream was nurtured over years, as in the preservation of the house-key as a symbol for the yearning to return home.⁸ Abbas, as president of the PA as well as the chairman of the PLO, claims that it is not within his authority to concede “the right of return” of others. He therefore cannot agree to a demand whereby Israel is the national homeland of the Jewish people and the Palestinian state will be the national homeland of the Palestinian people, a de facto concession of “the right of return.” He is willing to compromise on the scope of that return, but not on the right itself.⁹ Israel views an agreement as recognition of its unique identity as a Jewish and democratic state, and hence for Israel, acknowledgment and certainly the fulfillment of the Palestinian refugees’ dream of return means the loss of its identity as the national home of the Jewish people and a danger to the demographic majority – the foundation of the Jewish state. In addition, according to Israel, recognizing the right of return would mean not agreeing to an end of claims. Not only do these gaps have implications for reaching a permanent agreement, but they also erode the chances for a pragmatic solution that could answer the needs of both sides.

Jerusalem: Over the years, the Palestinians have demanded that Jerusalem serve as two capital cities, and have likewise demanded control of the sites holy to Islam and Christianity, especially the Temple Mount (Haram a-Sharif). Israel is hard pressed to recognize two capitals in Jerusalem. Prime Minister Olmert’s proposal, which was far reaching on this issue as well, included an outline whereby the Jewish neighborhoods would be included in Israel’s capital and the Arab neighborhoods in the Palestinian al-Quds, while special status would be accorded to the Historic Basin (the Old City, the Temple Mount, the City of David, and the Mount of Olives) where both sides claim sovereignty but would be prepared to cede management authority to a third party. However, the Palestinians rejected this proposal, and deep gaps remain.¹⁰

The core issues package: Beyond the difficulty of arriving at a compromise on each individual issue, the negotiations process is burdened by the reference to issues that must be resolved collectively at once. Every time that a round of talks arrived at the final stretch toward a permanent agreement, including a discussion of trade-offs in one area that offset concessions in another, the Palestinians chose to leave the negotiating table, whether by rejecting or not relating to the proposal without placing a counterproposal on the table. Abbas opted neither to accept nor to reject Prime Minister Olmert’s proposal of late 2008,¹¹ as Arafat had done in 2000 at Camp David

with Prime Minister Barak, and later rejected the parameters set out by President Clinton. President Abbas rejected the idea of the second stage of the Roadmap – the establishment of an independent Palestinian state within provisional borders – and refused to relate to Secretary of State Kerry’s proposal in early 2014 of framework principles for a permanent agreement.¹² Instead, he opted to invest in the struggle against Israel in the international arena, where he enjoys solid ground and is not required to make difficult decisions or face domestic charges of treason. This recurring phenomenon indicates that the Palestinians are not prepared for any flexibility in the parameters they have set for themselves for a resolution, and the leaders lack the ability to make difficult decisions that do not meet the expectations of the Palestinian public. For its part, the current Israeli leadership will likely find it hard to make decisions that involve security risks or painful concessions.

The Development of the Process Management Approach

Over the years, various approaches were attempted in order to promote a political process toward a permanent status agreement. The Oslo talks were based on the process approach, built on an attempt to construct a reality of two separate entities in a gradual process by implementing confidence building measures and establishing an independent Palestinian authority that would be in charge of the Palestinian population. The hope was that such an environment would strengthen understanding and trust between the sides and provide the Palestinians with strategic assets they would try to preserve, in part by raising the value of the “cost of defeat.” In practice, neither side fulfilled its obligations as stipulated in the interim agreement, and each conditioned the fulfillment of its obligations on the other’s side doing so first, while engaging in mutual bouts of recriminations for the failures and losing trust in one another.¹³

Given the failure of the process approach, the end-state approach was attempted. Developed during Prime Minister Barak’s term in office, this approach sought to define at the outset the parameters of a permanent status agreement with the Palestinians, while discussing the interim steps. This approach was the foundation for the Camp David summit in 2000, and later, for President Clinton’s parameters toward a permanent agreement.¹⁴ The second intifada, marked by years of terrorism and many fatalities on both sides, erupted following the failure of the Camp David talks and

Arafat's rejection of the Clinton parameters, and generated a crisis of trust and damage to understanding and cooperation.¹⁵

In an atmosphere of terrorism, eroded trust among the public and the leaderships, and political stalemate, proposals arose in unofficial negotiating channels or Track II discussions. One prominent example is the Geneva Initiative formulated by Israeli and Palestinian experts, which included agreements on every component of a permanent status agreement.¹⁶ On another track, the Arab League formulated the Arab Peace Initiative, which expressed willingness to normalize relations between the Arab League and Israel in exchange for a consensual, just, sustainable peace based on Israel's full withdrawal from all areas under Israeli occupation since 1967 – the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights.¹⁷ But no Track II initiative or channel resulted in a breakthrough, due to the profound mistrust and ongoing violence and terrorism.

In 2003, in an attempt to bring the sides back to the negotiating table, the Quartet, led by US President George W. Bush, formulated the Roadmap, a performance-based approach that established a timetable for creating the conditions for negotiations over a permanent status agreement. The document introduced the conditions the Quartet considered critical before discussion of the core issues of a permanent status agreement. The purpose was to sketch out a time frame, divided into three main stages, which would culminate with the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and normalization between Israel and the Arab states. The Roadmap stressed the need for security and stability as preconditions for negotiations, as well as an end to construction in the settlements and the need to build the appropriate base for the Palestinian state.¹⁸ The timetable called for a peace agreement to be attained by 2005, but from the first stage, neither side abided fully by its commitments.

Given the ongoing terrorism and the understanding that Arafat was not sincerely interested in reaching a peace agreement, Ariel Sharon's government opted for a unilateral approach.¹⁹ In 2002, the Israeli government approved the construction of the security barrier to protect Israel against terrorist incursions and suicide bombings within Israel proper and the settlement blocs near the Green Line.²⁰ The next unilateral move was the disengagement from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria in 2005. The rationale was similar, i.e., that Israel itself must shape an acceptable security reality,²¹ and was based on the understanding that Israeli control of the Gaza Strip was, in terms of security, more of a burden than an asset.²²

Sharon believed that Israeli relinquishment of control and responsibility for one and a half million Palestinians (today, the number is closer to two million) in the Gaza Strip would improve Israel's strategic position and force the Palestinians to assume responsibility and prove their state building capacity and their ability to establish functional self-rule. The hopes for the disengagement were dashed when Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip, first through elections and later, in 2007, by violence. Hamas's seizure of the Gaza Strip created a severe intra-Palestinian rift that has failed many reconciliation attempts between the PA's leadership and Fatah on the one hand, and Hamas's leadership in the Gaza Strip on the other, and generated profound Israeli concern for the implications of a similar disengagement from the West Bank.

The combined process and end-state approach: Given Hamas's seizure of the Gaza Strip and the changes in the Palestinian leadership after Arafat's death, an attempt was made to create a peace process that would bypass Hamas. The result was the 2007 Annapolis Peace Conference under US sponsorship with the participation of the Quartet states and several Arab states in the opening round of renewed talks.²³ The idea was to merge the gradual process approach of the Roadmap with the end-state approach of talks focused on issues in an overall permanent status agreement.²⁴ The sides held intensive talks over a permanent agreement (300 meetings in eight months), and on the implementation of the first stage of the Roadmap, which served as a precondition for the implementation of the permanent status agreement, and concurrently aimed to strengthen the PA's leadership and its governing foundations. The talks petered out in late 2008 without the Palestinian side responding to Olmert's proposal for a package of core issues to reach an agreement. Operation Cast Lead and Olmert's resignation gave the Palestinians a reason – if not an excuse – to avoid answering the Israeli offer, rendering the whole process meaningless.²⁵

In the summer of 2013, Secretary of State John Kerry launched a nine-month round of talks aimed at formulating the principles for a framework agreement for a permanent status agreement, while carrying out steps designed to create an atmosphere conducive to the process. This process was initiated despite difficult conditions of profound mistrust, a prolonged deadlock in the talks, and the widespread public sense of the pointlessness of an agreement.²⁶ The Kerry round failed too, as the Palestinian side, led by President Abbas, refused to respond to the principles presented by the US Secretary of State. By contrast, based on leaks from the US team, it

transpired that Prime Minister Netanyahu was prepared to accept several principles, such as agreeing to consider the 1967 lines as the reference point for calculating territories. Nonetheless, Prime Minister Netanyahu was not satisfied with the security arrangements the United States offered and was unwilling to consider the idea that Jerusalem would serve as the capital of two states.²⁷ The fact that the Netanyahu government continued to build in the settlements during the talks was viewed by the Palestinians and the international community as proof of the Israeli government's unwillingness to make the necessary concessions for effecting the two-state solution.²⁸ For their part, the Palestinians refused to make any concession before Israel would publicly draw the borders of the Palestinian state,²⁹ set a timetable for evacuating the settlements, and recognize East Jerusalem as the capital of the future Palestinian state; they also expressed their vehement refusal to recognize Israel as "the nation state of the Jewish people." Several weeks later, violence erupted again with Operation Protective Edge in the Gaza Strip,³⁰ and the end of the conflict seemed at best a remote prospect.

Deadlock

Although both sides declared they were committed to the two-state solution based on the 1967 lines, the wide gaps remain on "what," including preconditions for negotiations, and "how." It is hardly surprising that at the end of two decades of fruitless talks, each side is deeply skeptical of the other's desire and capacity to be flexible for the sake of a permanent agreement. The Palestinians see the Israelis' continued construction in the West Bank as proof that Israel has no intention of ceding large portions of the territory. In their assessment, the right wing Israeli government will not evacuate Israeli residents of the West Bank from their homes because it does not want and may not be able to remove tens of thousands of people, some of whom might employ physical resistance. Another assumption based on the same rationale is that at the moment of truth, the present government will not be prepared to make the painful concessions necessary to match the maximum Palestinian concessions. This doubt can explain the Palestinian insistence on receiving proof of the seriousness of Israel's intentions in the form of freezing settlement construction, delineating the borders of a future Palestinians state, and releasing prisoners as conditions for renewing talks. Concurrently, the Israeli government is doubtful of the PA's ability to abide by the agreement and implement it because of its weakness and the loss of the leadership's legitimacy in the eyes of the

Palestinian public, its relative weakness compared to Hamas, and the huge gaps between the PA in the West Bank and the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip. This gives rise to the worry that even after the establishment of a Palestinian state, a failing, impoverished entity would come into being, and the governing vacuum would be filled by radical Islamic forces. In addition, the confrontational policy the PA has taken against Israel in the international arena and the campaign against Israel's legitimacy strengthen the Israeli assessment that there is no partner for an agreement.

The distrust and inability to bridge the gaps are further underscored by the asymmetry between the sides. Israel is a stable, prosperous state with the strongest army in the region, and de facto in control of the everyday lives of the Palestinians, compared to the PA, which lacks full state capabilities, relies totally on international economic and political support, and whose very existence and functionality depend on Israeli government decisions. This asymmetry has led the Palestinians to focus on safeguarding Palestinian rights before discussing an implementable agreement, and to apply an all-or-nothing approach (relating to the notion that the absence of a state is preferable to a state that does not represent all the Palestinians' goals and aspirations).³¹

Given the gaps and obstacles, it seems that the sides do not believe it is possible to reach a resolution, and in the meantime, both sides benefit from the deadlock. The Palestinians are not required to make painful compromises and can adhere to their all-or-nothing mindset, wait for a better offer, and hope that a resolution will be imposed on Israel by the international community. By contrast, the Israeli government, led by the right wing coalition, asserts that as long as the Middle East upheavals continue and the Palestinian camp is divided, it is not the time to take unnecessary risks. According to this view, it is better for the Israeli government to wait for improved environmental conditions or perhaps even a regional arrangement that will ensure that the establishment of a sustainable Palestinian state will not adversely affect Israel's security. This wait-and-see attitude allows Israel to postpone decisions on dividing the land, compromising on Jerusalem, and evacuating the settlements – decisions sure to arouse difficult internal conflicts. The Palestinians have managed to brand continued construction in the Jewish West Bank settlements as Israel's major current injustice, and proof that Israel is uninterested in peace, thus casting all the blame for the political deadlock on Israel.

Back to the Process Approach

Under present conditions, the only possible way to conduct a political process, preserve the two-state option, and rebuild trust, is to return to the process approach. The ongoing deadlock means a growth in the Jewish population in the West Bank and greater evacuation problems in the future. At the same time, there are warning lights already flickering as to the PA's long term ability to rule effectively, maintain law and order, and fight terrorism and radicalism, without a fundamental change in the situation that would improve the fabric of life of the Palestinian population and economic and infrastructural development of the Palestinian state-to-be. The split between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank places yet another obstacle before the PA and Israel in terms of the possibility of a political settlement, as Hamas can undermine the entire process. Therefore, together with the Arab Quartet (Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE), it is necessary to promote programs for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip to prevent a humanitarian disaster as well as to rein in Hamas.

At present, the timing is propitious both internationally and regionally for finding some way out of the deadlock. The new Trump administration is an opportunity for presenting a new approach and replacing the paradigm of a permanent status agreement that resolves all problems. Transitional agreements are the only possible option for a gradual construction of the two-state reality, while setting short term objectives that can be implemented in practice, using an "anything that's agreed upon is implemented" formula, strengthening the coordination and cooperation mechanisms between Israel and the PA, and enlisting the support and involvement of the United States, the international community, and the Arab Quartet. To make this happen, the following elements are needed:

Economy and infrastructure: It is critical to jumpstart activity to reduce the profound gaps and economic woes of the Palestinians that cause them despair that often prompts violence. In this context, it is necessary to increase the number of permits for West Bank Palestinians to work in Israel, and issue permits to Gaza Strip Palestinians to work in the nearby Israeli communities; promote critical infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including water, electricity, sewage, transportation, and housing facilities; and encourage the establishment of employment and commercial zones in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with regional and international cooperation. In a second phase, there must be willingness

to develop and update the Paris Protocol, which regulates the economic relations between Israel and the PA.

Traffic and access: It is imperative to improve the arrangements regulating the transit of people and goods between Gaza and the West Bank, and between the West Bank and Jordan across the Allenby Bridge, in order to integrate the West Bank and Gaza in regional and global trade relations. Provided there is calm and stability, and with regional and international help, there must be subsequent willingness to allow the construction of a seaport that would be operated by a third party and meet all of Israel's security requirements.

Stabilizing the PA: In order to promote the conditions that would allow the future establishment of an accountable, stable, and functional Palestinian state, and concurrently create the conditions for negotiations, it is necessary to generate bottom-up processes to strengthen governing institutions and infrastructures for a Palestinian state-to-be. It is incumbent to improve the PA's security in the West Bank. Depending on the Palestinians' performance, expanding control of the security mechanisms to all of the Palestinian populated areas should be considered, with emphasis on law and order missions but also on the dismantling of terrorist infrastructures. As the Palestinians do more, the IDF will be able to do less.

Differential policy on settlement construction: So as not to exacerbate the problem, but rather in order to offset the international damage to Israel, it is imperative that a differential settlement policy be established. At first, it is necessary to freeze construction and investment in isolated settlements deep within the Palestinian territory, while continuing construction in the blocs adjacent to the Green Line and Jerusalem. Later, there must be an Israeli effort to remove unauthorized outposts and create alternate communal solutions, either in the settlement blocs or in Israel proper.

People-to-people connections: In order to reduce the vast gulfs of mistrust and hatred, it is necessary to foster people-to-people dialogue between educational, cultural, and religious figures. To this end, Arabs in Israel should be enlisted to foster bridges between Jews and Palestinians.

Foundation for the future: As the living conditions of the Palestinian population improve, the level of performance of the PA's institutions and its security mechanisms will rise as well. This will also lead to a dynamic of confidence building between leaders and population groups, and an emergence of more convenient conditions for holding talks to prepare for a two-state reality, even if the sides do not succeed in bridging all the gaps

on all permanent issues. Assuming better PA performance and improved coordination with the Palestinian government, Israel will be able to recognize a Palestinian state within provisional borders based on the Roadmap.

In conclusion, an accumulation of small successes in a gradual process approach is a more realistic approach than attaining the elusive full, final agreement in one fell swoop. Such an approach would provide both sides with a more acceptable environment, which in turn, step by step, would create a reality on the ground that slowly moves toward a two-state reality. Regional support by Sunni Arab states, which have an interest in an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, would help turn transitional arrangements into reality, as these regimes would provide the Palestinians with the guarantees they need to insure that temporary arrangements do not become permanent – the Palestinians' great fear – and would concurrently provide Israel with incentives to continue advancing the process.

Although both sides need internal motivation to approach this daunting but crucial task, at the end of the day they also need external direction, help, and perhaps even pressure. This is an opportunity for the new administration in the United States to prove it will not disengage from the Middle East, but rather remain committed to promote solutions and resolve disagreements. Withholding such support would mean abandoning the arena to the radical, uncompromising parties that will fail to be mindful of any long term implications.

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Who's Afraid of BDS? Economic and Academic Boycotts and the Threat to Israel

Amit Efrati

Background

The BDS campaign is not the first time Israel has encountered boycotts by international parties. Since its establishment, Israel faced both political and economic boycotts by Arab countries that did not recognize its right to exist. Arab states boycotted imports of Israeli goods and boycotted international companies that had trade ties with Israel. The peace agreements signed with Egypt and Jordan, as well as the Oslo Accords, however, caused a substantial decrease in the impact of this boycott.

While the Arab boycott emerged from a resolution by the Arab League and was the result of an official government policy shaped by national leaders, in 2002, at the height of the second intifada, Israel began to encounter a new type of boycott by international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) calling on their governments and other entities, such as universities, private companies, and artists, to boycott Israel. This type of boycott has gained momentum in recent years, led by the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaign, which draws its inspiration from the international sanctions against South Africa in the 1980s in response to apartheid. At the same time, not all attempts to boycott Israeli goods and companies, whether by individuals or official bodies, are necessarily linked to this campaign. For example, the decision by Brussels Airlines in August 2015 to remove halva produced in the West Bank from its flights resulted from an individual complaint by a passenger to the company offices, and had nothing whatsoever to do with any campaign.

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The BDS campaign was launched in 2004 by the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), led by Omar Barghouti, born in Qatar to Palestinian immigrants and educated at institutions of higher learning in the United States. A year after it was founded, PACBI, together with a coalition of 171 other pro-Palestinian NGOs, launched the global BDS movement calling for an economic, cultural, and academic boycott of Israel aimed at attaining three official goals: “Ending [Israel’s] occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall”; “recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality”; and “respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194.”¹

In its current form, the BDS coalition is not an organization or an institutionalized movement; it is a network without a hierarchy composed of NGOs and activists from countries around the world that at times coordinate their activity at various levels and operate under the same heading. In general, this network, which operates mainly in the US and Europe, comprises two main types of organizations: those aimed at promoting BDS activity, such as the International Solidarity Movement and Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), and those promoting worldwide human rights and dealing, *inter alia*, with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; examples include the British organization War on Want, and International Federation on Human Rights (FIDH), based in France. Likewise, among the organizations operating in the framework of the BDS network are Israeli social organizations such as the Who Profits organization, which maps companies operating

It appears that the economic consequences of product marking, if any, are inconsequential; the consequences are mainly in the political sphere.

beyond the Green Line, and Palestinian groups, such as the Badil organization, which promotes the Palestinian “right of return” through litigation in Israel.² It is important to note that neither Hamas nor the Palestinian Authority (PA) played any role in the founding and ongoing activity of the BDS campaign; at the same time, their indirect involvement is not an exceptional measure, since they are naturally interested in exerting international pressure on Israel.

The vast differences among the various organizations – their respective purposes, agendas, and degree of focus on the Israeli-Palestinian issue – make it difficult to generalize about the network. *Inter alia*, the anti-Semitic content used by some of the organizations, such as SJP, casts

doubt on their support for the delegitimization of Israel's policy only in the territories, rather than support for the undermining of Israel's existence in general, which cannot be said about global organizations such as War on Want.³ While the first type of organization is financed primarily by foundations, religious institutions, and private donations by Muslims all over the world, the second type, which promotes human rights in general, is financed mainly by foreign governments (similar to the financing of other NGOs promoting various agendas). Although no direct government financing of BDS activity by the second type of organization has yet been proven, many assertions have been made that the financing provided to these organizations for the promotion of general human rights projects is eventually allocated to BDS activity.⁴

These financing instruments enable the network's diverse activity in two main areas. In the economic sphere, the network seeks to use legal and public relations measures to attack companies, corporations, and investors doing business in Israel by distorting facts and figures, and allegedly linking investment in Israeli concerns to human rights violations. In addition, the network promotes a policy of marking, distinguishing, and boycotting products from the West Bank. In the academic sphere, the network calls for a boycott against Israeli academic institutions, including cooperation in research, claiming that Israeli institutions of higher learning cooperate with the Israeli government and contribute to the occupation of the territories. The BDS organizations customarily operate in various countries through four main frameworks: lobbies, i.e., with politicians and government agencies; churches, regarded as representing morals and ethics; academic institutions, with financial and training assistance to student activists; and the social networks, in an attempt to influence public opinion and the public discourse.

The Effect of the Boycott Attempts

The Economic Sphere

In June 2016, the *Bloomberg* website published the results of a study challenging the effect of the BDS campaign on the Israeli economy.⁵ The study points out that the balance of investments in Israel by foreigners set a record of \$285 billion in 2015, including foreign direct investments (FDI) and investments in government bonds. This figure is almost double the \$147 billion total investments in 2005, when the BDS campaign was launched. Israel Central Bureau of Statistics figures also show a consistent

and impressive rise in these balances over the past 12 years, highlighting the great attractiveness of the Israeli economy, despite the BDS efforts to convince foreign investors around the world to withdraw their investments (table 1).⁶

Table 1. Balances of Foreign Investments in Israel, 2004-2015 (in millions of dollars)

2004	2005 (BDS)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
130,956	147,426	170,144	198,594	180,498	214,782	235,463	222,726	223,749	250,315	270,606	284,869
	+11%	+14%	+15%	-10%	+16%	+9%	-4%	+0.5%	+11%	+8%	+5%

The most impressive rise in the volume of foreign investments in Israel in 2015 was in hi-tech. In the 708 transactions involving Israeli startups, these companies raised a record of \$4.43 billion (an increase of more than 30 percent over the preceding year, which was also a record year). For the sake of comparison, in 2005, Israeli startups raised an estimated \$600 million in foreign capital.⁷

Another figure cited by *Bloomberg* involves the BDS coalition's efforts toward a boycott of Israeli and international companies operating beyond the Green Line. Although a number of European and American funds have barred any cooperation in the past three years with companies operating in these areas, the *Bloomberg* website states that no decrease in the profits and proportions of foreign ownership took place in an absolute majority of these companies, such as Africa-Israel, Bank Hapoalim, and Elbit Systems, which did not alter their policy on doing business in the region. Nor was there any downturn in the high rating and stable/positive forecast that Israel received from the leading international credit rating companies (S&P, Moody's, and Fitch), which classify the investment risk in countries through the countries' ability to repay loans.⁸ This indicates that the Israeli economy is still regarded by authorized international agencies as highly reliable, despite the BDS attempts to upset this reliability. To a great extent the Israeli economy earned this rating due to its record over the past 13 years, in which growth rates were positive and continuously higher than the average for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. Note that even the relative slowdown over the past two years (3.43 and 4.44 percent, respectively) is a result of the general global recession and plummeting oil prices, not the various efforts to boycott the Israeli economy, as claimed. Table 2 charts World Bank figures showing

low growth in the past two years (in comparison with Israel and in general) in developed countries like Germany (1.6 and 1.7 percent) and the US (2.4 and 2.4 percent), and in OECD countries as a whole (2 and 1.8 percent).⁹

Table 2. GDP Growth in Israel, vs. the OECD Average, 2004-2015

	2004	2005 (BDS)	2006	2007	2008	2009 The Global Economic Crisis	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Israel	+5.1%	+4.4%	+5.8%	+6.1%	+3.1%	+1.3%	+5.5%	+5%	+2.9%	+3.4%	+4.44%	+3.43%
OECD average	+2%	+2.7%	+3%	+2.6%	+0.2%	-3.5%	+2.9%	+1.7%	+1.2%	+1.1%	+1.8%	+2%

In order to assess the damage caused by the attempts to boycott Israel economically, figures for Israeli exports to its two principal export targets – the US and Europe, which is also where the BDS campaign is most vigorous – were examined. Trade between Israel and the European Union (EU) is governed by a free trade agreement signed in 1995 that grants favorable terms and customs exemptions to a substantial proportion of Israeli exports to EU countries. Due to disputes that arose even before the boycott campaign began, however, the EU did not classify products manufactured beyond the Green Line as “Israeli” products, and these products were therefore not eligible for tax benefits. A review of Central Bureau of Statistics data shows that from 2005 until the present, only moderate fluctuations occurred, and the dollar value of these exports in 2015 was 45 percent greater than the corresponding value in 2005.¹⁰ The review of a longer period yields results that are even more surprising. Between 1995 and 2005, the average annual rate of growth in exports of Israeli goods to the EU was 6.2 percent, and between 2005, when the BDS campaign began, and 2014, the annual growth rate of Israeli exports to the EU averaged over 7.4 percent (table 3).¹¹

Table 3. Exports of Israeli Goods to the EU, 2004-2015 (millions of dollars)

2004	2005 (BDS)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
10887.3	12490.1	13046.2	16024.3	17795.0	12290.4	15370.2	18802.1	17159.0	18377.2	18787.5	16056.8
	+14%	+4%	+23%	+11%	-31%	+25%	+22%	-9%	+7%	+2%	-15%

The European Commission (EC) resolution in November 2015 to mark products from the settlements with the label “Product of the West Bank (Israeli settlement)” is significant in this context. However, it is important to note that the issue of marking the products was discussed already

early in the preceding decade, before the BDS campaign took shape, in direct continuation of EU policy on the settlements, as reflected in the free trade agreements. Perspective is also important when considering the EC resolution. First, total exports from the settlements to the EU account for only 1.47 percent of all Israeli exports to those countries. Second, marking products is not the same as boycotting them; it involves only their labeling. This differentiation is important since the average European consumer still buys according to considerations of quality and price; few, if any, examine the country of origin of the products they buy. This is shown by the fact that even though some of the private supermarkets in the UK and the Netherlands voluntarily marked dates exported from the Jordan Valley, the Ministry of Agriculture found that exports of dates to these countries were not affected, probably because of their high quality in comparison with dates from other places.¹² In addition, despite the theoretical potential of the EC resolution in convincing consumers not to buy Israeli products for reasons of conscience, this label is likely to increase the demand from certain consumers, mainly Jewish communities, seeking to support Israel. Furthermore, this same label can also give a “certificate of approval” for Israeli output produced outside the territories, and protect it from a future boycott. It therefore appears that the economic consequences of product marking, if any, are inconsequential; the consequences are mainly in the political sphere.

However, despite the absence of any actual effect, marking products from the territories contains an aspect of psychological pressure apt to make

Since the proportion of end consumer products in Israeli exports is insignificant, instituting a direct consumer boycott of goods does not pose a strategic challenge to Israel.

Israeli companies manufacturing over the Green Line transfer their facilities to other places in Israel and around the world in order to avoid potential economic damage. This measure was taken by SodaStream and the Barkan Winery when they moved their plants from Maale Adumim and Ariel to Rahat and Hulda, respectively. The main injured parties from similar future measures, however, will be tens of thousands of Palestinians from the West Bank employed by virtue of their geographical proximity to hundreds of enterprises located in eight industrial zones in

Area C. For example, SodaStream’s relocation of its factory from Maale Adumim to Rahat caused the layoff of approximately 1,000 Palestinians who were earning NIS 5,000-6,000 a month. In contrast to the Israelis working

at the plant, who were protected by Israeli labor laws when they were laid off, these Palestinians now have to look for employment in the West Bank, where the unemployment rate is high and the average monthly salary is approximately NIS 1,500.¹³

Trade between Israel and the United States takes place in the framework of a free trade agreement signed in 1985, which does not distinguish between products from Israel and those from the settlements. A review of Central Bureau of Statistics figures shows that in general, the trend of Israeli exports to the US has risen consistently over the past 12 years. The dollar value of these exports in 2015 was 25 percent higher than the corresponding dollar value in 2005 (table 4).¹⁴ Note that the figures here refer to the dollar value of Israeli exports, not the net volume of exports.

Table 4. Exports of Israeli Goods to the US, 2004-2015 (millions of dollars)

2004	2005 (BDS)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
14175.1	15500.1	17957.2	18906.8	19972.5	16720.2	18488.2	19432.4	17518.2	17500.8	18564.3	18116.3
	+9%	+15%	+5%	+5%	-17%	+11%	+5%	-10%	-0.2%	+6%	-2.5%

Despite these figures, BDS activists are wont to claim success by showing that 2015 was one of the less successful years for Israeli exports, which shrank by about 7 percent in dollar terms over 2014. While the dollar value of Israeli exports to the US declined by a moderate 2.5 percent, the dollar value of exports to the EU fell by about 15 percent. In addition, Israeli exports to Latin America and Africa also dropped substantially (-25 and -23 percent, respectively). The Israel Export and International Cooperation Institute, however, attributes this negative trend to low global demand resulting from the weak global economy in 2015, the steep drop in commodity prices, and the depreciation of many currencies around the world against the dollar, rather than efforts to boycott Israeli products. According to the Export Institute, excluding these exceptional effects, Israeli exports remained stable, especially to the EU, in comparison with the corresponding period in the preceding year.¹⁵ Furthermore, the steepest decline in Israeli exports in 2015 was in exports to Africa and Latin America, where there is almost no BDS activity. On the other hand, Israeli exports to Asian countries grew 15 percent, with Asia becoming a much larger and more significant market, and Israeli efforts to export goods there stepped up accordingly, sometimes at the expense of Europe. It is therefore possible that these

efforts will result in a drop in Israeli exports to Europe and an increase in exports to Asia, with no connection to BDS.

The main reason for the lack of success of the BDS campaign in damaging Israeli exports lies in the nature of those exports, which feature intermediate industrial products used to manufacture other products, such as parts of an Intel processor produced in Israel and sent to Malaysia. Since the proportion of end consumer products in Israeli exports is insignificant, instituting a direct consumer boycott of goods does not pose a strategic challenge to Israel. However, even though the figures presented in this section do not indicate any substantial damage to the Israeli economy as a result of BDS activity, it can certainly be argued that the figures displayed above might well have been even higher without the BDS campaign. Moreover, it is difficult to measure the psychological effect of the campaign on international companies that have considered, or are considering, entering the Israeli market, but refrain from doing so due to their wish to avoid complications and unknown future risks.

The Academic Sphere

The efforts of various parties, headed by the BDS coalition, to promote an academic boycott of Israel are based in part on the fact that most academics have liberal opinions and are sensitive to human rights, and that institutions of higher learning can provide fertile ground for influencing the younger generation of local decision makers and the views of young Jews.

Over the past decade, various associations, such as the UK National Union of Students and the American Anthropological Association, have – with much fanfare – endorsed the BDS call to sever their connections with universities in Israel. However, two months after the UK National Union of Students passed this resolution, the body incorporating 133 universities in the UK published a declaration opposing and rejecting any proposal to impose an embargo on the fruitful British cooperation with Israeli universities in recent years, which yields substantial benefits to both sides.¹⁶ The fate of the American Anthropological Association's resolution was the same. As in the attempts at an economic boycott, a large majority of the efforts to promote an academic boycott of Israel create a large stir in the media, but have little real effect.

As part of its efforts, the BDS campaign aims to attack the foreign sources of financing for the Israeli universities. Figures, however, indicate that total donations, grants, and research and development budget allocations

from overseas parties obtained by the Hebrew University and Ben Gurion University of the Negev grew significantly over the past year. Such financing has grown consistently during the years since the BDS campaign began (table 5).¹⁷

Table 5. Donations and Grants from Overseas Sources, 2005-2015 (thousands of dollars)

Academic Year	2005-2006	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Hebrew University of Jerusalem								
From the United States	43,347	34,503	39,239	38,113	53,072	68,551	49,499	60,581
		-21%	+13%	-3%	+39%	+29%	-38%	+22%
From Europe	5,942	6,163	13,983	11,293	22,625	9,820	11,848	15,405
		+3%	+126%	-19%	+100%	-57%	+20%	+30%
Total	73,485	66,735	84,759	74,895	97,632	106,352	90,862	100,280
		-9%	+27%	-12%	+30%	+9%	-15%	+10%
Ben Gurion University of the Negev								
Total	44,400	64,200	71,900	84,300	81,300	82,000	74,500	79,200
		+44%	+12%	+17%	-4%	+0.8%	-9%	+6%

Prof. Boaz Golany, Vice President of the Technion for external relations and resource development, backs up these figures. He states that despite a substantial increase in BDS activity over the past decade, mainly on the US West Coast, not only did this have no negative effect on the donations and grants received by the Technion from overseas parties, but a positive effect is discernible, with more and more foreign parties expressing a wish to donate to the university as a sign of identification with Israel against the efforts to boycott it. In addition, Prof. Golany asserts that the Technion's cooperative efforts with overseas universities and research institutes peaked (to more than 200 institutes) during the past decade, while in the past two years the great demand to cooperate with it has even forced the Technion to decline proposals for additional cooperation, due to a lack of personnel and money. Furthermore, the number of foreign post-doctoral students studying at the Technion, only a small minority of whom are Jews, has doubled in the past two years. Similar figures were reported by Tel Aviv University; over the past five years the number of foreign students studying there jumped from 780 to 1,380.¹⁸

Prof. Golany adds that not only has the BDS campaign failed thus far to have any negative impact on the Technion's external relations; it has

opened a window of opportunity for expanding overseas cooperation. Instead of adopting a defensive attitude, the Technion has developed a proactive approach aimed at building bridges of cooperation, based on shared benefits and interests, in places where the BDS campaign is very active. For example, the Technion saw that over the past decade, the activities and initiatives of the head of the Middle East research institute at the University of Sydney, known as a severe critic of Israel and an enthusiastic BDS supporter calling for an academic boycott against Israel, were receiving much media attention. In response, the Technion contacted the chancellor of the University of Sydney, and the two institutions designed academic cooperation between them in the life sciences and physics. The major success of this cooperation program attracted extensive media coverage, with the Australian government and local parties agreeing to invest large sums in the program. The Technion's good reputation and the attractiveness of cooperative efforts with it thus led to a crushing victory over the call for an academic boycott of Israel.

Despite the failure of the BDS campaign to harm Israeli higher education for the foreseeable future, it is important not to underestimate the latent consequences of its efforts. There is concern that Israeli researchers seeking to publish their articles in international publications, or alternatively, to obtain research grants from overseas entities, will be rejected by editors due to their origin and the editors' desire to pursue the BDS agenda. These editors can easily hide behind professional arguments. Yet despite this concern, recently published figures show that 24 of the 291 grant requests approved for European researchers in 2015 by the European Research Council (ERC) were granted to Israeli researchers, putting Israel in a respectable fifth place in research grants received, and in first place in per capita grants received, ahead of all 23 ERC member countries.¹⁹

A great majority of the efforts to promote an academic boycott of Israel create a large stir in the media, but have little real effect.

There is also concern that BDS ideas could penetrate the EU educational establishment, the main research partner of most Israeli institutions of higher learning in research financing. Signs of such penetration were ostensibly discernible last year, when the EU declared that as part of the Horizon 2020 framework research and development plan, in which 77 billion euros

are invested in Israeli universities over seven years,²⁰ it will not support research conducted in the "occupied territories," and asked for a list of the addresses of the researchers receiving financing in order to verify that they

do not live over the Green Line. However, this demand represents official EU policy, as reflected in the free trade agreement signed with Israel in 1995, before the BDS campaign began.

Threat or Manipulation?

In contrast to the Arab boycott imposed on Israel and the boycott against South Africa in the 1980s, all the efforts by the BDS campaign to gain support from prominent countries and leaders who are capable of making general de facto decisions and damaging institutional economic and academic relations with Israel have failed. Actually, until now, the opposite process has occurred, with prime ministers and presidents from around the world continuing to condemn the content and substance of the BDS campaign. This process peaked when 11 states in the US approved laws banning BDS activity on various levels. Similarly, despite the non-governmental character of the campaign, there have not yet been any significant cases of an important or influential labor union or NGO imposing a boycott of Israel. Yet in contrast to the findings presented in this paper, the BDS campaign has been portrayed in the past two years by local political groups and media as an existential threat to Israel. Why is this so?

First, the noise generated by the campaign presumably has a strong psychological effect on the Israeli public and media, which measures BDS success by its high media profile, not its actual ability to damage Israel. It is possible that this psychological bias is rooted in the growing fear concerning the increasing negative attitudes toward Israel and its policy around the world, and anxiety about a silent boycott in which foreigners refrain from ties with Israeli groups in various spheres due to concern about future consequences. Recent surveys, however, especially in the US, show that no substantial change has occurred in local public opinion toward Israel in the past 12 years (table 6).²¹

Table 6. Greater Sympathy with the Israelis or with the Palestinians, 2005-2016

Year	2005	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
With the Israelis	52%	59%	63%	63%	61%	64%	62%	62%	62%
With the Palestinians	18%	18%	15%	17%	19%	12%	18%	16%	15%

Second, the question is which local political groups currently benefit from the labeling of the BDS campaign as an existential threat to Israel,

and from it becoming a key issue on the public agenda. On the one hand, groups identified with the left of the political spectrum benefit by using it as a tool for criticizing the insufficient attention paid by the government to the campaign and its lack of success in overcoming it. This criticism also fits in with the fact that for over a year, Israel has had no full time foreign minister able to devote most of his/her efforts to combat the BDS campaign.²²

On the other hand, parties identified with the political right benefit from this labeling,²³ for reasons mentioned in *The Politics of Fear*, written by Prof. Ruth Wodak of Lancaster University. Wodak's book popularized the concept of the "politics of fear," a process increasingly common in international politics, in which political groups use the element of fear in order to make the public vote in a certain way, or alternatively, to accept a policy it would otherwise have rejected, and thereby to allow exceptional government spending.²⁴ This strategy results from the fact that the presence of an existential threat to the welfare and lives of the public causes a natural emotional response that diverts thoughts away from critical judgment of a certain policy and culminates in a "rally round the flag" effect. Wodak also argues that as a more substantial atmosphere of fear prevails, the public is increasingly inclined to vote for local political parties perceived as more nationalistic and aggressive, an attitude supposedly more suitable for dealing with aggression on the other side. Therefore, given the connection between government elements and the media in Israel, it can be asked whether labeling the BDS campaign as an existential threat to Israel is indeed producing political gains for certain groups.

Although the damage to Israel caused by the BDS campaign to date has proven insignificant, the potential damage it could cause should not be underestimated.

Although the damage to Israel caused by the BDS campaign to date has proven insignificant, the potential damage it could cause should not be underestimated, if its views penetrate important political circles in various countries. This potential requires different Israeli parties to monitor the various efforts to promote boycotts against Israel on a daily basis, and to identify opportunities to develop new ties in response to those efforts. As long as governments are not involved in these efforts, it

is important for Israel to officially refrain from involvement in the struggle against these boycotts, and to leave the stage to civil diplomacy groups, social organizations, and NGOs in order to prevent the struggle from drifting into the official state sphere. On the other hand, it is important

for Israel to persist in its official efforts to change the attitudes of various governments by exporting technological innovation, providing aid and support in times of need, and promoting joint ventures that will enable these governments to better the lives of their citizens.

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Israel's Warming Ties with Regional Powers: Is Turkey Next?

Ari Heistein

Wavering United States support and the deteriorating security situation in the Middle East have provided an impetus for Egypt and Saudi Arabia to seek unprecedented cooperation with Israel on issues of mutual interest. Over the past year, Turkey's normalization deal with Israel, growing security challenges, and strained ties with the US ostensibly put Ankara's relationship with Jerusalem on a similar track. Accordingly, the bases for Israel's increased collaboration with Egypt and Saudi Arabia warrant further study in order to determine whether Israeli-Turkish cooperation is similarly ripe for growth.

Egypt and Israel: Working Together to Defeat Hamas and the Islamic State

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt remains skeptical of US support for two main reasons. First, President Sisi witnessed Washington's demand that President Husni Mubarak step down in the face of the Arab Spring protests in 2011, despite close US ties with the Egyptian leader for three decades; from Cairo's perspective, this sent the message that the Egyptian government should not expect US support in a time of crisis. Second, the US response to the Egyptian military's 2013 overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood, which paved the way for Sisi's rise, was lukewarm. Though the US refrained from calling the military seizure of power from a repressive but democratically elected Muslim Brotherhood government a "coup" and cutting off all foreign aid, it showed its displeasure at the resurgence of the repressive military regime by placing a hold on the sale of sophisticated weapon systems to Egypt such as F-16s and Apache helicopters. Even when announcing the

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end of the hold on advanced weapon systems in 2015, President Obama did not repair relations fully, as he also announced 2018 as the end date for Egypt's cash-flow financing. Many Egypt analysts rightly predicted that the Obama administration's ambivalent support would not succeed at moderating Egypt's domestic policies toward political rights as much as pushing Cairo to diversify its alliances. To that end, President Sisi has signed deals to buy fighter jets from France and air defense and helicopters from Russia, and he was even willing to enhance cooperation with Israel.

Expanded cooperation between Cairo and Jerusalem is based on a shared strategic interest in fighting the de facto alliance of the Sinai-based Islamic State affiliate, Wilayat Sinai (Sinai Province) and the Gaza-based offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas. From Cairo's perspective, Wilayat Sinai threatens Egypt's stability by engaging it in an ongoing guerrilla campaign that has caused hundreds of fatalities within the Egyptian military, while according to current legislation in Egypt, Hamas's linkage to the Muslim Brotherhood marks it as a terrorist affiliate; the Brotherhood was outlawed as a terrorist group by Cairo in the aftermath of President Morsi's overthrow and poses the greatest political threat to the Sisi regime. In addition to ideological kinship between Hamas and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Egyptian government sources claim the groups collaborated in carrying out terrorist acts such as the 2015 assassination of Egypt's prosecutor general Hisham Barakat. From Israel's perspective, the threat posed by Hamas and Wilayat Sinai to Egypt also endangers Jerusalem's interests by potentially causing the collapse of one of the only two Arab governments that have signed a

In contrast to the tension between Washington and Riyadh on Middle East affairs, Israel and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are closely aligned in their prioritization of regional threats.

peace agreement with Israel; Egypt's descent into chaos would mean a failed state of around 90 million people on Israel's southern border. In addition, the fact that the majority of Israel's population is within range of the Hamas missiles stockpiled in Gaza as well as the group's demonstrated willingness to use them makes Hamas the second most dangerous non-state actor to Israel after Hezbollah (which has significantly larger and more advanced rocket and missile stockpiles in Lebanon). As for Wilayat Sinai, although it has not carried out notable attacks on

Israel since swearing allegiance to the Islamic State in 2014, it launched a mass casualty attack in Israel in 2011 under its previous name of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis. Israeli security officials noted in September 2016 that they were

expecting Wilayat Sinai to try to strike Israel again at some point in the near future.¹ In addition, Hamas and Wilayat Sinai cooperation has reinforced the capabilities of each organization, causing a noticeable improvement in Wilayat Sinai's ability to inflict casualties on the Egyptian military² and enabling Hamas to rearm in preparation for future conflicts with Israel.

Although much of the improved security cooperation between Jerusalem and Cairo has occurred behind closed doors, there is ample evidence that it has increased dramatically since President Sisi's 2013 rise to power. Coordination has become so close that in addition to intelligence sharing, Israel has even carried out drone strikes on Egyptian territory against Wilayat Sinai militants at Cairo's behest.³ Also, as part of its strategy to defeat jihadist groups in Sinai, Israel opted to allow Egypt's troop levels in the peninsula to substantially exceed the numbers mandated by the 1979 peace accord and any exceptions it had allowed prior to 2013. Meanwhile, Egypt is laboring hard to destroy the Gaza-Sinai tunnels (a major venue for Wilayat Sinai and Hamas cooperation), and President Sisi acknowledged publicly that he speaks with Prime Minister Netanyahu "a lot." Israeli support for Egypt's military even extended into the diplomatic arena as in 2013 and again in 2015, the pro-Israel lobbying group AIPAC came to Cairo's aid by fighting against and ultimately defeating several restrictions on US military aid to Egypt.⁴

Saudi Arabia's Unofficial Cooperation with Israel

Like Egypt, Saudi Arabia sought cooperation with Israel in a time of chilled relations with Washington. The Arab Spring brought the Saudi-US differences to the fore in numerous theaters, including Egypt and Syria. From Riyadh's perspective, the United States pushed President Husni Mubarak, a close Saudi ally, out of power after the death of a few hundred protesters demonstrating against his rule while doing relatively little to oust the Iran-allied Assad regime from power in Syria despite its relentless massacre of civilians. Since 2011 US ambivalence in both spheres has caused Riyadh concern about Washington's future dependability in the region. In addition, the nuclear negotiations with Iran and the signing of the JCPOA exacerbated Saudi fears of abandonment by Washington, and President Obama did little to reassure the Saudis of strong US support.⁵ At the same time, Saudi support for jihadist groups in the Syrian civil war, such as Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (formerly al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra),

to push Assad out of power was seen by US officials as putting United States national security at risk.

In contrast to the tension between Washington and Riyadh on Middle East affairs, Israel and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are closely aligned in their prioritization of regional threats. The foremost objective for both countries is thwarting Iranian ambitions in terms of regional interference and nuclear proliferation. Jerusalem and Riyadh also agree that degrading the capabilities of Hezbollah and other Iranian proxies is a critical component of any effort to foil Iran's aims to disrupt the regional order. A secondary priority that Israel and the Kingdom share is defeating Sunni extremist groups such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. While these groups pose limited threats to the modern armies of Israel and Saudi Arabia, they do pose serious threats to imperiled allies such as Egypt and Jordan.

Despite the fact that the two countries have no official relations, the convergence of interests between Israel and Saudi Arabia has led them to work toward similar ends on major regional issues. While little is publicly known about the Israeli-Saudi cooperation on the issue of Iran's nuclear program (beyond the "unofficial" campaign against it⁶), there is common cause between the two countries in weakening Iranian-backed forces in Syria, as Saudi Arabia arms and funds rebel groups fighting the Iran-Hezbollah-Syria axis while Israel remains a staunch rival of Hezbollah and has allegedly assassinated several of its senior military leaders.⁷ In addition, Israeli and Saudi efforts to preserve the existing order in countries such as Jordan are complementary: the Israelis generally provide security know-how and training, while the Saudis keep these countries' economies afloat with grants and aid projects.

Turkey-Israel Relations: Past, Present, and Future

Ankara's relations with the United States have endured particular strain due to differences surrounding Erdogan's growing authoritarian tendencies, the failed coup attempt in July 2016, and the civil war in Syria. While Erdogan thought that his allies in Washington should have called him immediately after the 2016 coup attempt to offer support (as did Russia and Iran), instead Secretary Kerry called Turkey's President and warned him against excessive repression.⁸ As in the case of past attempts to promote democracy in the Egyptian context, the US support for the human rights agenda was perceived by Ankara as an attempt to meddle in its domestic affairs. Moreover, the tension over "US interference in Turkish affairs"

is exacerbated by Ankara's unmet demand that Washington extradite Pennsylvania-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, the man Erdogan claims is responsible for orchestrating the attempted coup against him. In fact, some senior Turkish officials have even accused Washington of collaboration with Gulen in plotting against the Turkish government.⁹ In the Syrian theater, Ankara and Washington suspected each other of supporting terror groups that endangered each other's national security. Turkey was infuriated by the fact that the US partnered with the Kurdish YPG militia as part of its strategy for defeating the Islamic State. In response to the US policy of training and arming the Kurds, the Turkish President went so far as to question the US-Turkey alliance, saying, "Is it me who is your partner, or the [PKK/YPG] terrorists in Kobane?"¹⁰ From Washington's perspective, Erdogan's permissive attitude toward violent jihadist¹¹ groups was extremely worrisome.

In the golden age of Turkey-Israel relations in the 1990s, cooperation was based on mutual strategic interests that converged in Syria.¹² The primary Turkish concern was the Kurdish separatist insurgency, while Israel's focus was the threat posed by Lebanese Hezbollah and the Syrian Arab Army. From Turkey's perspective, Damascus endangered its security by supporting the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party),¹³ which launched a guerrilla campaign against Turkey and threatened to foment separatist sentiments amongst the country's millions of Kurds. For Israel, Syrian support for the Hezbollah paramilitary organization facilitated the group's acquisition of sophisticated weaponry and advanced training from Iran, and at the same time the Syrian Arab Army was the most threatening conventional military force on Israel's borders.

For as long as the Israeli-Palestinian peace process was underway, Turkey was free to cooperate closely and openly with Israel on the Syrian threat. The peace process of the 1990s had a profound impact on Turkey's policy toward Israel because even in the days when Turkey's government was militantly secular, before the rise of the Islamist AKP in 2002, Ankara's ties to Jerusalem were heavily influenced by the tempo of the Arab-Israeli conflict. For example, in 1980, when Israel passed the Jerusalem Act that established East and West Jerusalem as the country's unified capital

Turkey's removal of its more experienced military leaders and its diminishing of the remaining officers' independence from the political leadership weakens one past (and potential future) base of support for closer Israel-Turkey cooperation.

city, Turkey downgraded its representation at its embassy in Tel Aviv.¹⁴ In contrast, after the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991, Turkey restored full relations with Israel and tried to play a role in brokering an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

During this period of close ties, the Turkish-Israeli cooperation yielded much fruit. First, the countries shared intelligence and Turkey granted Israel access to its airspace bordering on Syria, Iraq, and Iran, which improved the IAF's ability to collect intelligence about its most serious enemies. Second, because the US and other Western governments were unwilling to supply Ankara with some of the sophisticated weaponry it needed to fight the PKK insurgency at the height of the violent struggle, Israel stepped in to supply the Turkish military with equipment and technology. The defense contracts between Israel and Turkey were valued at hundreds of millions of dollars and included agreements in which Israel upgraded the Turkish Air Force's F-4s and F-5s and sold Python 4 air-to-air missiles to Turkey. Third, Turkish-Israeli cooperation proved its worth for Ankara in its major area of concern: the Kurdish issue. In fact, Hafez al-Assad's 1998 expulsion of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan is attributed to the growing pressure Syria's President felt from the Israel-Turkey alliance. Fourth, within one decade, yearly trade between Jerusalem and Ankara increased ten-fold from \$100 million in 1990 to over \$1 billion by 2000.¹⁵

However, in the following decade, the Syrian threat declined on Turkey's list of priorities, and common interests between Ankara and Jerusalem followed suit. In some sense, the relationship may have been a victim of its own success. After Syria conceded to Turkey's demand that Damascus expel PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in 1998, which many attribute to Israeli-Turkish pressure on Assad, the "Turkish threat perception began to change."¹⁶ At the same time, Israel's concerns regarding the Iranian and Syrian backed Hezbollah only grew.

Moreover, the collapse of the peace process in 2000 left Turkey in an awkward position vis-à-vis Israel. The tension between Ankara and Jerusalem regarding the Palestinian issue escalated greatly in late 2008 when Israel launched Operation Cast Lead in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip (as well as during subsequent operations). On a personal level, Erdogan was infuriated by Operation Cast Lead because only days before he was busy conducting shuttle diplomacy toward a peace agreement between Israel and Syria, making him look complicit or clueless.¹⁷ Relations reached their nadir in 2010 after the Israeli military seized the Turkish ship *Mavi Marmara* as it

was trying to breach the military blockade of Gaza, which resulted in the deaths of eight Turkish citizens and one Turkish-American. After the Israeli raid, diplomatic relations were downgraded and often downright hostile for six years until the 2016 normalization agreement.

In addition, Turkey's faltering membership talks with the European Union had largely negative implications for its relations with Israel. First, the reforms demanded by the EU included steps toward democratization, which meant weakening the military's hold on Turkish policy. As such, the forces primarily responsible for propelling Turkish-Israeli relations into the "golden age" lost much of their influence on Turkish politics. Second, the mishaps in the efforts to achieve EU membership caused Turkey to turn away from the West and seek a greater leadership role in the Middle East. In doing so, Ankara saw championing the Palestinian cause as a move that would pay dividends by endearing it to the Arab world.

In the aftermath of the 2016 Turkish-Israeli normalization, cooperation between the two countries much beyond the chilled restoration of full diplomatic relations is unlikely because of numerous limiting factors. First of all, Israel and Turkey maintain different security priorities. The Iran-Syria-Hezbollah axis remains the greatest threat to Israel's security. In contrast, though Turkey originally worked toward defeat of the "axis of resistance" forces in the Syrian civil war by supporting Syrian rebels groups, this position seems to have softened due to overriding concerns about Kurdish expansionism.¹⁸ While Turkey sees Iran as a regional competitor, it prioritizes the Kurdish question (an interest largely shared with Iran and Syria, with perhaps the exception of strong Turkey-KRG relations; the Kurdish Regional Government is the ruling body of Iraqi Kurdistan). When it comes to the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates, Israel views them as major security threats while Ankara seems to view them as useful (if occasionally dangerous) conduits to extend its influence. For example, Israel has fought three major campaigns against Hamas over the last decade, while Turkey maintains close ties (as well as ideological kinship) with the Brotherhood offshoot, and as a concession in the 2016 agreement with Israel has only promised to stop it from using Turkish territory to plan and fundraise for terror attacks. Despite Turkey's commitment to exile members of Hamas's military wing, the tension between Israel and Turkey on this issue remains because Ankara has failed to uphold its end of the agreement and Hamas continues to operate freely in Turkey.¹⁹ Similarly,

Israel and Turkey are on different sides of the conflict between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Sisi regime in Egypt.

Moreover, the influence of the Turkish Armed Forces has declined dramatically in the months since the military's 2016 coup attempt. The purges that immediately followed the attempted overthrow of President Erdogan resulted in the sacking of almost 50 percent of the force's generals (149 out of the 325 were dismissed)²⁰ and decimated the military's senior leadership. In addition to the mass dismissals, the AKP has used the powers granted to it by the declared state of emergency to distribute many of the powers of the Turkish Armed Forces to civilian political appointees.²¹ For example, the commanders of the army, navy, and air force will now report directly to the Minister of Defense rather than the Chief of General Staff. Also, the gendarmerie command and coast guard command will be transferred from the military to the control of the Minister of Interior. As the military was one of the main driving forces behind the close ties with Israel's defense establishment, removing its more experienced leaders and diminishing the remaining officers' independence from the political leadership weakens one past (and potential future) base of support for closer Israel-Turkey cooperation.

Despite the fact that some point to Israel-Turkey economic ties²² as an incentive for improving cooperation, the two countries do not necessarily need strong security or political ties for trade between them to flourish. In the five years that followed the *Mavi Marmara* incident, during which time relations were downgraded, trade between the two countries doubled to \$5.6 billion.²³ To be sure, both countries were unwilling to sign any sort of gas deal for Israeli export to Turkey and then to Europe via Turkey before they reconciled, but even now the gas deal faces many challenges and has yet to materialize. Also, there are two limitations in promoting broader collaboration on gas. First, the gas deal will be signed and executed by private corporations, so it will not demand intensive government-to-government cooperation. Second, the gas deal with Israel is just one element of Turkey's broader attempt to diversify energy resources to prevent it from being overly dependent on any one source – therefore, Israel's leverage over Ankara as an energy supplier will be diluted by other non-Israeli suppliers of energy resources to Turkey.

The US retrenchment and the regional chaos of the Arab Spring created challenges and opportunities for Israel. When interests aligned, Israel seized the opportunity to build ties with Saudi Arabia and Egypt. However, due

to differing security priorities and the possibility of bolstering commercial cooperation without improving relations in other arenas, there is no clear impetus for Israel and Turkey to move their relationship beyond the recent cold restoration of full relations.

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Hezbollah as an Army

Yiftah S. Shapir

It is difficult to view Hezbollah through a single prism. Hezbollah is a political party. It is an entity that provides welfare, education, and health services. It is a terrorist organization operating in Lebanon and throughout the world. It is also a crime organization involved in drug and weapons trade in order to finance its activities.¹ In addition, however, it is an orderly and efficient military organization. This essay will address solely the military aspect of Hezbollah – the branch referred to by Hezbollah members as the “Islamic Resistance.”

This essay argues that the Islamic Resistance is a well-organized, well trained, and well equipped army that has learned from its conflicts with Israel and has built itself in a sophisticated way. It deploys advanced equipment and trained manpower, and is driven by motivation and operates a unique doctrine of warfare.

Hezbollah has operated in Syria in recent years alongside the Syrian army and members of the Iranian Quds force. Since September 2015, it has also fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the Russian army. These years of combat have given it both equipment and battle experience it never previously had. These factors are turning Hezbollah into the most severe threat currently facing the IDF in particular, and Israel in general.

Hezbollah’s Development until the Syrian Civil War

The IDF was familiar with Hezbollah as a terrorist organization that operated against IDF forces since it was founded in 1982. After the IDF withdrew from Lebanon in May 2000, however, Hezbollah changed substantially, and began intensive preparations for the possibility of another IDF incursion into Lebanese territory, while continuing to harass Israel with attacks along the border and attempts to kidnap Israeli soldiers.²

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The Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006 surprised Hezbollah, and its timing suited neither Hezbollah nor its supporters in Tehran. The organization quickly recovered, however, and over the 34 days of fighting succeeded in demonstrating impressive combat capabilities. Yet even though Hezbollah emerged from the Second Lebanon War with a sense of victory, the war created an uncomfortable situation. The war gave Israel a sharpened sense of Hezbollah's capabilities, equipment, organization, and combat doctrine, long before Hezbollah wanted them disclosed. The war also prematurely emptied Hezbollah's stores of munitions and equipment, and destroyed the extensive land infrastructure it had built over six years.³ UN Security Council Resolution 1701 likewise affected the organization's freedom of action in South Lebanon. Hezbollah therefore moved its deployment to other areas in Lebanon and began massive procurement of weapons, especially rockets.⁴

Hezbollah in the Syrian Civil War

The outbreak of violent events in Syria in March 2011 and their rapid escalation posed a difficult problem for Hezbollah.⁵ Syria is its strategic rear, through which weapons and ammunition flow from Iran, and through which its soldiers travel for training in Iran. Thus, when the upheaval in Syria began, the Hezbollah secretary general expressed unqualified support for Bashar al-Assad in his struggle against the rebels.

At the same time, there were good reasons for refraining from intervention in Syria. First, fighting in Syria was liable to detract Hezbollah from its primary purpose, namely, to fight against Israel. Second, there was no ideological common denominator between Hezbollah and the secular Ba'ath regime. Third, intervention in Syria meant fighting against Muslims, while Hezbollah wishes to portray itself as a pan-Islamic entity, and not necessarily a Shiite organization.

However, Syria is Iran's most important ally in the region, and the connection with Syria gives Iran a foothold in the region. From the beginning of the turmoil in Syria, Iran expressed unqualified support for the regime, and openly sent aid in the form of arms, equipment, and personnel. In turn, for Hezbollah, Iranian interests overcame Islamic ideology. In the fall of 2011, reports began to appear of involvement by Hezbollah operatives in the fighting in Syria, and of fatalities among Hezbollah members. In August 2012, more reliable reports of Hezbollah involvement in Syria began to surface.⁶ Only in April 2013, however, did Hezbollah secretary

general Hassan Nasrallah publicly admit that Hezbollah was militarily involved in Syria.⁷

Over time, Hezbollah became increasingly involved in the combat. In May 2013, Hezbollah's first major battle began in al-Qusayr, in which some 1,200-1,700 Hezbollah soldiers participated. These fighters were the vanguard, while the Syrian army provided assistance with firepower and logistics.⁸ Together with Shiite militias from Iraq, Hezbollah soldiers later took part in the battle for the neighborhoods bordering Damascus – an area known as Rif Dimashq or East Ghouta. At the same time, Hezbollah waged a campaign along the Syrian-Lebanese border in the mountainous Qalamoun area.⁹

Aside from the prominent battles, the information about Hezbollah involvement in other parts of Syria is less clear cut. The number of the organization's soldiers deployed in Syria at any given time is estimated at 4,000-5,000.¹⁰ They apparently operate all over Syria, primarily in training and consulting roles. Early in the war, these soldiers served in Syria for one week at a time, but these periods became longer as the war continued.

In September 2015, Russia entered the campaign on the side of the Assad regime, and Hezbollah continued its activity alongside the Russian army. The Russians equipped the organization, and it was reported that they relied on Hezbollah more than on the Syrian army in carrying out missions. Fighting together with the Russians exposed Hezbollah to the advanced weapon systems and organizational methods of a veteran army trained in operating large scale echelons and in cooperation between different military branches. Hezbollah thus took another significant step toward becoming a modern army.

On November 11, 2016, Hezbollah staged a military parade in the Syrian city of al-Qusayr, in which it exhibited armored, artillery, and air defense units. Hezbollah deputy secretary general Naim Qassem emphasized that the parade reflected the fact that Hezbollah had established a regular army, and was no longer a guerilla force.¹¹

Hezbollah: Structure and Organization

Recruitment and Training

Early in its history, Hezbollah recruited individuals with deep religious motivation and commitment to fight Israel. While as it expanded the organization had to turn to broader sections of the Shiite population, it continued to stress indoctrination, starting in childhood.¹² Until the

outbreak of the war in Syria, Hezbollah conducted rigorous checks of those volunteering to serve in its ranks, but its growing need for manpower as a result of the war in Syria required it to relax the requirements in character and ideology that it demanded of candidates, and to lower the minimum age for recruits from 18 to 16.¹³

Military training begins with one month of basic training designed to give soldiers physical strength and endurance. They learn to use all the types of light weapons possessed by the organization, including AK-47 rifles and RPG launchers. They learn to prepare roadside bombs, lay mines, and administer first aid on the battlefield. They study the IDF, its battle vehicles, and the weak points of each vehicle.¹⁴ After the training stage, a wide range of specialized military courses is offered to soldiers. More advanced training takes place in Iran.

During the period when the IDF was in Lebanon, Hezbollah kept its training secret, but since 2006, the organization has been less concerned about exposure of its actions. Today, there are several publicly known training facilities that can be seen in online satellite photographs.¹⁵

Until the war in Syria, most of Hezbollah's forces were part-time soldiers. They were not paid, and earned a living from civilian jobs. The organization helped them with housing, health services, and education for their children. These individuals also knew that if they were wounded on the battlefield, the organization would take care of their families. Soldiers who were invited to join special units underwent intensive courses and served as full-time soldiers, earning relatively low wages. It is unclear whether Hezbollah succeeded in retaining this method of force operation during the years of tough fighting in Syria.

Units

Hezbollah soldiers fall into two categories: full-time and part-time soldiers. In 2006, the number of regular Hezbollah soldiers was estimated at only 1,000, but the number is now believed to be about 20,000, 5,000 of whom have undergone advanced training in Iran.¹⁶ They wear uniforms and unit tags, but it is not known whether they have ranks or symbols on their uniforms, which makes it difficult to understand their organizational structure.

In addition to the regular soldiers, there is a reserve force of an unknown size; estimates range from 15,000 to 70,000 men. The estimates vary greatly probably because not every man who has undergone military training, and is therefore regarded as a reserve soldier, is fit for combat.¹⁷

Organization

Until the war in Syria, Hezbollah assumed a flat organization structure, with only three command levels.¹⁸

The Mejlis Jihadi (Jihad Council), which is responsible for military activity, is subordinate to the Shura Council. The Shura Council also appoints and approves the Mejlis Jihadi. A number of units (*wahidah*, plural: *wahidat*) operate under the Mejlis Jihadi. Such a unit is comparable to a division; a *wahidah* may consist up to 3,000 men, or be much smaller. The second level is a *qism* (plural: *qusum*). Most *qusum* consist no more than 200 men, and these are professional units: battle engineers, anti-tank warfare personnel, and so on. The third level is a *fara'* (plural: *furu'*). These units are very small, comprising of six to twelve men. It is rare to see a *fara'* with more than 15 men. Each *fara'* is headed by a commander – *haj al-sejid*.

Several sources note that Hezbollah is organized in five or six brigades. This probably refers to the *wahidat*, and these are presumably territorial units, with each responsible for an area within Lebanon.

Special Units¹⁹

Short Range Rockets

Short range rockets units constitute the principal force designed to attack Israel. Hezbollah currently has an estimated 100,000 short range rockets. This array consists mainly of 107-mm standard rockets with a range of up to eight kilometers, and 122-mm rockets with ranges of 20-40 kilometers. The launchers for these arrays are diverse, varying from standard launchers, such as BM-21 vehicles carrying 40 rockets, to improvised launchers carried on jeeps and trucks and in stationary installations.

Insofar as is known, the rocket units operated independently of the infantry units during the Second Lebanon War. Rocket fire was not used to assist infantry operations directly, which were in any case defensive. In the war in Syria, however, at least in the offensives supported by Hezbollah in al-Qusayr and Qalamoun, rockets were also fired as artillery support for infantry operations. Special use was made in Syria of improvised rocket-assisted munitions (IRAMs) – heavy loads of high explosives fired to short range using standard rocket engines.

Long Range Rockets and Missiles

Hezbollah has one or more units that operate long range rockets designed to attack Israel from deep within Lebanon. These arrays include Iranian-

made Fajr-3 and Fajr-5 rocket launchers, 220-mm rockets, and 302-mm Syrian-made rockets, as well as Zelzal rockets and Fateh-110 missiles (known as M-600 or Tishreen in the Syrian version).²⁰ If Hezbollah has received Scud C/D missiles from Syria, there is presumably a special unit for these missiles.

Anti-tank Missiles

Hezbollah uses anti-tank missiles on a large scale, not only against armored fighting vehicles (AFVs), but also against buildings. Its equipment currently consists of both advanced Kornet 9M133 missiles and non-guided rockets such as the RPG-7 and the more modern RPG-29. The organizational category of the missile operators and the organizational connection between them and the infantry units is unknown.

Air Defense

After 2006, Hezbollah saw air defense as its weak point. Immediately following the war, air defense units were founded, and personnel was sent for training in Iran on medium range missile systems. It is not known whether these systems were transferred to Hezbollah. Hezbollah's procurement of various types of man portable (MANPADS) missiles is known, however – mainly Igla and Igla-S (SA-18 and SA-24). In 2011, after the outbreak of the war in Syria, Russia began supplying advanced weapon systems to the Syrian army, including Buk-2 (SA-17) and Pantsyr (SA-22) surface-to-air systems. It appears that Hezbollah personnel has received access to these systems, and has been trained to operate them. It is also possible that attempts were made to transfer these systems to Lebanese territory – transfers that the Israeli Air Force apparently attempted to thwart via bombing attacks.²¹

Coastal Anti-ship Missiles and Naval Forces

Hezbollah procured Iranian-made coastal anti-ship missiles as early as 2006. These included an Iranian version of the Chinese-made C-701 and C-802 missile systems.²² After 2006, Hezbollah tried to obtain additional quantities of these missiles. Another system supplied to Syria by Russia, which may have reached Hezbollah's coastal anti-ship missile unit, is the K-300P Bastion – a land-based launching system for the P-800 Yakhont supersonic missiles.²³ In addition, Hezbollah's naval forces include naval commando units trained in attack missions and in gathering intelligence by sea using high speed inflatable rubber boats.

Air

Hezbollah has no force operating manned aircraft, but it has a unit that operates Iranian-made Misrad-1 and Ayoub remotely piloted vehicles. These are used for both intelligence gathering missions and for attack missions as “suicide” airplanes. In recent years, Hezbollah has penetrated Israeli territory a number of times using these aircraft.²⁴ The organization also recently began operating commercially acquired drones. These drones have been adapted to carry munitions.²⁵

Armored Corps

In the military parade at al-Qusayr, Hezbollah showed its armored unit for the first time. T-72 tanks equipped with reactive armor, T-55 tanks, and armored personnel carriers, both Russian-made BMP-3 and US-made M-113s, appeared in the parade. There were also self-propelled artillery, including howitzers (inter alia, 155-mm American M198 howitzers and 85-mm anti-aircraft guns from WWII) installed on trucks or on APCs. Also shown in the parade was the unit’s flag, which bore the insignia “Fawj al-Mudara’at” (= armored regiment); the insignia was likewise painted on the tanks.

Many vehicles carrying anti-aircraft artillery were paraded as well: 14.5-mm machine guns, 23-mm cannon installed on APCs and trucks, and old ZSU-57-2 mobile anti-aircraft cannon, as well as units equipped with light vehicles: motorcycles and small all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) carrying Kornet anti-tank missiles, machine guns, grenade launchers, or rocket launchers. These units flew different unit insignias than the armored unit, and it is unclear whether they are completely separate units or sub-units of the armored unit.

Intelligence and Counterintelligence

Hezbollah has intelligence units that gather various types of intelligence mainly about Israel, but presumably these units were also used in Syria to gather intelligence about the rebel groups Hezbollah was fighting. Hezbollah takes pride in its “bank of targets” with respect to facilities in Israel. It gathers technical information about the weapon systems used by the IDF for the purpose of finding Israeli weak points. Hezbollah has units that operate agents and units gathering technical intelligence: SIGINT as well as IMINT obtained both from open sources, and from its UAVs.

Hezbollah also has counterintelligence that attempts to thwart efforts to gather intelligence about the organization. As early as the 1990s, Hezbollah succeeded in intercepting communications from Israeli UAVs, and this may have enabled it to thwart a 1997 Israeli naval commando operation. Hezbollah also succeeded in breaking the code used for UAV broadcasts after Israel began encoding them.²⁶ The counterintelligence units succeeded in locating and destroying the Israeli electronic eavesdropping and observation devices buried in Lebanese territory. They traced an eavesdropping device on their fiber optics in 2009, and in 2011 exposed cameras camouflaged as boulders that photographed Hezbollah activity. The unit likewise managed to track networks of agents among Hezbollah members, and in 2009-2011 arrested approximately 100 people suspected of espionage on behalf of Israel.²⁷

Welfare Services

Hezbollah provides personal and welfare services to help soldiers obtain housing and jobs and educate their children, and provides health services. A Hezbollah soldier knows that if he is killed in battle, his family will be taken care of. These services are also a means of pressure on part-time soldiers. The soldier knows that if he refuses missions, he is liable to lose all these benefits. With the expansion of Hezbollah's involvement in Syria, this lever became an important means for the organization to retain its manpower.

Doctrine of Warfare

Hezbollah does not want its soldiers to act like robots and obey every order. The contrary is true. In contrast to most regular Arab armies, which tend to observe a rigid hierarchy, Hezbollah has taught its soldiers to operate on their own initiative, and has given its field commanders great freedom of action.

From its earliest stages, Hezbollah performed excellently in the fighting in Syria. Whether this was a result of its orderly recruitment and educational methods, or a result of its experience in the prolonged struggle against Israel, the fact is that already from the early stages of its publicly acknowledged operations in 2013, Hezbollah was entrusted with leading missions, while the Syrian army gave it fire support and logistical backing. This outstanding record continued when the Russians entered the war.

Until the civil war in Syria, Hezbollah's organizational structure was very simple. As early as the Second Lebanon War, and also in the first battles in Syria, Hezbollah operated in small unit frameworks – squads

of five to ten men operating relatively independently under a command that controlled a large number of such units. The fighting in Syria brought about a gradual change. The existence of the armored unit displayed in November 2016 proves that Hezbollah is gradually establishing larger units.

Large combat frameworks necessarily require a change in combat doctrine. A flat organizational structure of only three levels is clearly inadequate, and it is much more difficult to give commanders in the field full autonomy, as Hezbollah did in 2006 and even early in the war in Syria. Furthermore, the quality of recruits necessarily declined, which makes it more difficult to allow autonomy.

Consequently, Hezbollah today will be much more similar to a modern army than it was five years ago. At the same time, the organizational culture and unit spirit are not features that vanish overnight, and it can therefore be expected that even as a large army, the independence of commanders in the field, their ideological dedication to the goal, and their morale will persist. Even as a large army operating in large frameworks, Hezbollah should not be expected to operate according to an inflexible hierarchy.

In a future war against Israel, the organization will return to its original goals, and it can expect full support from both its men and host society. Israel will have to deal with an organized, trained, and determined army. The fact that Hezbollah has acquired experience in operating in large frameworks, including the use of armored forces and coordinated air support, does not mean that it will act in the same way against Israel. Its armored force is far from being able to stand up to the IDF in a frontal war of armor against armor. It is therefore likely that it will prefer to focus again on operating its rocket and missile arrays and extensive use of anti-tank arrays – all of them larger and better equipped than in the past. In addition, the organization can use part of the new capabilities it has acquired, specifically its anti-tank forces mounted on light vehicles, and especially its UAV deployments, which it will use to both gather intelligence and conduct attacks deep inside Israeli territory.

Conclusion

Hezbollah may not be the largest military force threatening Israel, but it is definitely the most determined and best trained. Its years of fighting in Syria have pushed it in two opposite directions. On the one hand, the organization has gained in strength, acquired weapon systems it did not previously possess, for example in the realms of armor and air defense, and has acquired

experience in using them. It has also acquired considerable experience in managing campaigns and has been able to learn from professional armies. On the other hand, the fighting in Syria has sapped its forces, particularly the morale of its men, who found themselves fighting for prolonged periods not against the enemy they were taught to fight, but against other Muslims. This situation has also seriously eroded the organization's image in Lebanon and in the Arab world in general.

Still, a future war against Israel will no doubt bring Hezbollah back to its original ideological goals. Such a war will restore to its men the determination to act as they did in the past, and will also regain extensive support in the Arab world that it enjoyed before the war in Syria. Hezbollah is therefore currently the gravest military threat to Israel.

Notes

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The Modi Government's Policy on Israel: The Rhetoric and Reality of De-hyphenation

Vinay Kaura

Background

In January 1992 India's Congress-led government under Prime Minister Narasimha Rao established full diplomatic relations with Israel. This milestone, which constituted a revolution in the diplomatic history of both the countries, came shortly after India's vote to overturn the 1975 United Nations resolution equating Zionism with racism.

A number of factors helped Rao abandon India's hesitation toward Israel of the previous four decades. With the onset of the process of economic liberalization at the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Rao looked to the West as India's principal partner. Full diplomatic relations with Israel was a clear signal to the West that New Delhi was formally giving up the ideological rigidity that was the hallmark of India's foreign policy during much of the Cold War when the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was at its height.

Fast-changing developments in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process also contributed to a change in Indian attitude. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) incorporated the idea of political engagement into its traditional strategy of armed struggle against Israel. It not only recognized the existence of Israel, but also endorsed the process that launched the United States-Soviet sponsored peace talks in October 1991 at Madrid, attended by all of Israel's immediate neighbors – Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. Though the conference did not result in any major achievement, it

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symbolized the commitment of all parties to the conflict to seek a political solution.

India had tried hard to secure Arab friendship by avoiding rapprochement with Israel, yet when Israel's Arab neighbors engaged in negotiations, New Delhi could seemingly hardly be criticized for pursuing normal relations with Israel. Nonetheless, India was met with resolutions by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in support of Pakistan, the instigator of armed conflict in Kashmir. Within India, voices demanding policy correction became louder. The fact that China had recently established full diplomatic relations with Israel also made it easier for the Indian government to follow suit. Israel was a great source of advanced military technology and hardware, and India could benefit from Israel's experience in counterterrorism in its own struggles in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Thus, India's security and strategic imperatives drove New Delhi to adopt a pragmatic policy toward Israel.

Yet even after the normalization of relations with Israel in 1992, the Indian government was not eager to be seen as courting Israel. When then-Defense Minister Sharad Pawar talked about cooperating with Israel on counterterrorism, he was criticized by some Muslim politicians.¹ Visits to India in December 1996 by Israeli President Ezer Weizman hinted at a new degree of warmth in relations. However, there was a noticeable shift in Indian policy with the formation of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Due to the pro-Israeli stance of the Hindutva leaning Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the government leaders

The Indian leadership has recognized that while it is necessary to maintain closer ties with both Israel and the Arabs, it is self-defeating to hide the burgeoning friendship with Israel.

were more willing to publicize India's friendship with Israel. Even the onset of the second intifada and the international criticism over the Jewish state's policy toward the Palestinians did not prevent the Vajpayee government from forging closer ties with Israel. There was a huge increase in defense cooperation with Israel, particularly in the exchange of intelligence. By the time Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon made his historic trip to India in 2003, both countries had become major trading partners.

Following the 2004 general elections in India, which resulted in the formation of the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, there were some apprehensions whether cordial relations with Israel forged during the previous BJP-led NDA government

would continue. Yet though the Manmohan Singh-led UPA government was dependent on the support of left wing parties, there was no moving away from the policies set out by the previous government. Therefore, Indo-Israeli relations progressed considerably during the two tenures of the UPA government between 2004 and 2014. However, there were not many high profile visits – especially from India to Israel. A trip planned in 2006 by then-Defense Minister Pranab Mukherjee was reportedly cancelled due to Israel's military operations in the Gaza Strip and the Second Lebanon War.² There was a symbolic visit in January 2012 by then-External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna, the first by an Indian foreign minister in more than a decade, to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.³

A New Phase

The recent change in government in India has brought about a fundamental reappraisal of India's foreign and security policy. Over the last two and a half years, India's changing policy postures are clearly evident in several areas, including a significant transformation in Indo-US relations; an impressive warming of relations with Israel; a cautious attempt to alter the nature of Indo-China relations; and a systematic effort to make inroads into Southeast Asia. Ever since Narendra Modi's rise to power in 2014, Israel seems to have acquired greater priority over other West Asian countries on India's diplomatic agenda. Modi can be credited with elevating the strategic dimension of Indo-Israeli partnership by bringing the bilateral relationship out from "under the carpet."⁴ Consequently, India-Israel strategic relations are poised at a historic plateau, but at the same time, the relationship will need to be nurtured for some years before it matures.

The visit to Israel by Pranab Mukherjee in October 2015 was the first visit by an Indian President to Israel and was another milestone in the bilateral relations. Traditionally, Indian presidential foreign trips do not attract much attention, but Mukherjee's six-day tour of Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, and Israel was seen as a prelude to the much-anticipated visit of Prime Minister Modi to Israel. In an extraordinary gesture reflecting the warmth of Indo-Israeli ties between the two countries, President Mukherjee addressed a special session of the Knesset and asserted that his "visit to Israel is taking place at a time when relations between our two governments are taking a very positive trajectory." Underlining the growing convergence between the two countries, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

said: "I speak to my dear friend Modi quite often. When we met once, he told me 'India wants Israel' and that I see a paragon of fraternity between our two countries."⁵ India's Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj visited Israel in January 2016. Her visit was part of the ongoing effort by New Delhi not only to broaden India's relationship with Israel, but also to make it more public.⁶

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin's week-long visit to India in November 2016 was another positive development in the bilateral relations, reflecting India's unapologetic position over its growing relations with Israel. Rivlin is the first Israeli head of state to visit India in two decades, following President Weizman's visit. Terming India's engagement with Israel as "multi-dimensional and wide-ranging," Indian Prime Minister Modi, during his meeting with the Israeli President, stressed the need to "build on convergences and commonalities" in agriculture, science, and technology, research and innovation, defense, tourism, education, and culture. President Rivlin also remarked that theirs "is not just a partnership that we talk about. This is a partnership which is making a difference for Israelis and Indians in the water we drink, in the food we eat, in the technology we use, and many important areas of our lives."⁷ Speaking at Agro Tech 2016 in Chandigarh, Rivlin sought to connect the Hindi term *jugaad* to the Jewish State of Israel and its style of inventing and working, and said that "*jugaad* is the way we think, the way we invent, the way we work."⁸

Gradual De-hyphenation

Apart from the anti-colonial component of the NAM posture, India's uncritical support for the Palestinian cause was driven primarily by the need to alleviate the sentiments of considerable segments of India's Muslim minority. In this vein, India traditionally conditioned rapprochement with Israel on progress in the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Now, at a time when the Modi government has decided to showcase what were behind-the-door ties with Israel, there is a growing demand that India disconnect Israel from the Palestinian issue. Nonetheless, first steps toward de-hyphenation were initiated only in 1992 under the leadership of Narasimha Rao, when his government established full diplomatic relations with Israel. Since then, India's relations with Israel have blossomed gradually, albeit not completely free of ideological constraints and domestic political concerns.

Prominent visits by top Indian leaders have combined Israel and the Palestinian Authority in a single tour. Visits by Union Home Minister L. K.

Advani and External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh in 2000, and External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna in 2012 were termed as regional since they included meetings with both Israeli and Palestinian leaders. The visit to Israel by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in November 2014, however, was a landmark in that it was confined to Israel. The fact that the Palestinian Authority was not part of Rajnath's tour was interpreted as the Modi government's intent to break with the tradition of packaging high level official visits to Israel with the Palestinian Authority and Jordan. This also implied a degree of loosening the existing ties between India and the PA. However, the need to balance competing domestic political demands was evident when the traditional policy staged a comeback. President Pranab Mukherjee visited Jordan and the PA along with Israel in October 2015, and was in fact the first foreign head of state to stay in Ramallah overnight. In January 2016 External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj likewise visited the PA and Jordan, as well as Israel. While in Ramallah, she emphasized that India remained "steadfastly committed" to "the Palestinian cause" and "to Palestine's nation-building and capacity-building efforts."⁹

Prime Minister Modi has been quite open about wanting to develop a strong relationship with Israel. As a reflection of the new dynamism in the bilateral relations, India bought more arms from Israel in the Modi government's first nine months in power than the Manmohan Singh government did in the preceding three years.¹⁰ As underlined by C. Raja Mohan, in contrast to the UPA government leaders' unwillingness to be seen with Israeli leaders in public, Prime Minister Modi's "immediate instinct" has been "to flaunt India's special relationship with Israel and his own personal bonhomie" with his Israeli counterpart.¹¹ Modi was officially invited to Israel by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during their much publicized meeting at the UN General Assembly in September 2014. During this encounter, the first between Prime Ministers of Israel and India in over a decade, Netanyahu remarked that "We are very excited by the prospects of greater and greater ties with India. We think the sky's the limit." Modi replied that India is "the only country where anti-Semitism has never been allowed to come up and Jews have never suffered."¹²

Moshe Ya'alon's visit to India in February 2015 was the first by an Israeli Defense Minister since full diplomatic ties were established in 1992.¹³ The following month, when Modi met Israeli President Reuven Rivlin at the funeral of Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore, he confirmed his desire to visit Israel.¹⁴ When President Rivlin met Modi November 2016 during his visit

to India, Rivlin said, "It will be our privilege to welcome you at Jerusalem, the capital of Israel."¹⁵

The overall climate in West Asia is relatively favorable toward Israel, which is not seen as the root cause of regional instability. The current havoc created by the Islamic State has shifted attention away from the Israel-Palestinian dispute and left India with an excellent maneuvering space, as most of the regional players are too busy with infighting and the jihadist juggernaut to be preoccupied with the first visit to Israel by an Indian Prime Minister. While he has not disclosed a specific timetable, Modi's visit to Israel is a foregone conclusion, even though a solo prime ministerial visit to Israel may not be possible due to a host of constraints.

Indeed, despite some favorable domestic and regional conditions, there are some factors that the Modi government cannot ignore before completely de-hyphenating India's Israel-Palestinian policy. Given India's historical support for an independent Palestinian state, some have argued that Modi's solo visit to Israel could seriously weaken India's traditional stance. India has managed to preserve a pragmatic balancing act between regional players in West Asia. Beyond strategic relations with Israel, India cannot afford to ignore its crucial energy ties with Iran and the Gulf states. Furthermore, given the already strong nature of the bilateral ties, it is questionable what new tangible results Modi's solo visit would be able to achieve. There is always the risk that this move could be used against the Modi government during high stake state assembly elections of Uttar Pradesh, home to the majority of India's Muslim population. Elections in Uttar Pradesh in early 2017 can prove to be a serious spoiler in which the opposition parties, both regional and national, would feel tempted to indulge in ideological rhetoric against the Modi government. The government would not like to listen to the accusation that as part of the anti-Muslim agenda of the BJP, the Palestinian cause has been totally abandoned.

Another challenge emerging from India's tilt towards Israel is New Delhi's bid toward permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). India requires firm endorsement of its candidacy from the Arab countries that form a large group in the General Assembly. If angered, an angry Palestinian contingent might try to sabotage India's efforts. In July 2015 during a United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) vote criticizing Israel's "alleged war crimes" in Gaza, India was among the five countries that abstained from voting.¹⁶ This was the first time India decided to abstain at the vote on a UN resolution condemning Israel. It was also reported that

Prime Minister Netanyahu had spoken to his Indian counterpart, asking India to abstain.¹⁷ Criticizing India's decision, Palestinian Ambassador to India Adnan Abu Alhaja said that New Delhi's changed "posture on Palestine will send a confusing signal to other UN members as to what India's role would be if and when it becomes a permanent member."¹⁸ So far, maintaining a strong pro-Palestinian posture has not been an impediment for India to develop a mutually advantageous partnership with Israel. But diluting or changing the terms of support for the Palestinians has some obvious implications for India.

In all probability, the Modi government would act cautiously in order to preserve important strategic, economic, and energy interests while simultaneously enhancing India's engagement with Israel. The government may publicly claim to remain wedded to the status quo in India's Israeli-Palestinian policy, tenuous and fragile though it has become. India's voting pattern at important international forums, from its prior anti-Israel stance to one where it has now begun to abstain on Israel-related issues, is indicative of the government's resolve to bring about a seminal shift in India's Israel policy. In April 2016, India, along with more than 30 countries on the United National Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) general board, condemned Israel for its excavation and exclusion policies around the al-Aqsa mosque and al-Haram a-Sharif/Temple Mount.¹⁹ But when a similar resolution was put to a vote in October 2016, India decided to abstain. Since the text of the UNESCO resolution was almost identical, India's refusal to back the Palestinian draft may have surprised Israeli officials,²⁰ and the only explanation for the change is Modi government's subtle shift in policy. What happens in the UN forums over the next few years will likely prove to be very relevant to India's Israel-Palestinian policy. While nothing is certain in international politics, India under Modi's stewardship has already shown its ability to deviate from the familiar path.

Likewise in October 2016, speaking at a public function in Himachal Pradesh, Modi compared the Indian army's targeted action against terrorist launching pads across the Line of Control (LoC) in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, dubbed as "surgical strikes," to Israel's policy of targeted assassinations and military action. He was quoted as saying: "Our army's valor is being discussed across the country these days. We used to hear earlier that Israel has done this. The nation has seen that the Indian Army is no less than anybody."²¹ Generally, prime ministerial speeches are replete with metaphors and symbols that are used at national and international

events to construct national identity and help mold strategic culture. Pointing to an Israeli military action as a model and positioning it within the broader narrative of Indian military strategy suggests an ideological affinity that plays a significant, if subtle, role and justifies certain policy options over others. This reinforces how geopolitical as well as geo-psychological considerations weigh heavily in the Modi government's foreign and security policies, which are on the cusp of a major change. The favorable public reference to Israel makes Modi different from his predecessors in their attitudes toward the Jewish state. There appears to be a link between these developments and a discernible shift in India's Israel policy.

Counterterrorism Cooperation

During the Cold War period, India's close ties with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its reluctance to denounce the acts of terrorism committed by the PLO made India suspicious in Western and Israeli eyes. New Delhi was viewed "as following a double standard owing to its readiness to condemn terrorism when the victims were its own people and its reluctance to do so when the victims were citizens of Israel."²² Nonetheless, India and Israel have managed to come together on a range of issues. Israeli leaders demonstrated considerable understanding of the constraints behind India's vocal political-diplomatic support for the Palestinians against the backdrop of New Delhi's concerns over Pakistani efforts to mobilize the Arab states against India on the issue of Kashmir. Since 1992, the dynamic has improved, reflected in a significant upward trend in the bilateral relationship in the form of defense cooperation, intelligence sharing, and counterterrorism.

Israel is India's second largest source of defense equipment.²³ Israeli Ambassador to India Daniel Carmon rightly termed defense cooperation between the two nations as "central pillars" of the relationship.²⁴ India has entered on significant defense collaborations with Israel, which also include developing the Barak-8 surface-to-air missile defense systems with India's DRDO²⁵ and Spike anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM).²⁶ In October 2016, India cleared procurement of Israeli combat radio sets for the Indian army, one of the latest defense procurements from Israel.²⁷

Despite the fact that the roots and nature of the terrorism they face are different, countering jihadist terrorism is a challenge for both India and Israel. The terrorism directed against both countries is sponsored by neighbors. India has found it advantageous to learn from the Israeli experience in dealing

with terrorism, because Israel has developed remarkable technological and operational capabilities in its fight against cross-border terrorism.²⁸ Recurring cross-border attacks on Jammu and Kashmir as well as growing threat perception from the neighborhood have pushed Indian policymakers to deepen security cooperation with Israel. India's internal conflict theater presently covers diverse categories, including sub-conventional war, low intensity conflict, proxy war, insurgency, and non-combat operations, which require enhanced counterterrorism cooperation with the Israeli defense forces.

The 2008 Mumbai terror attacks again exposed the glaring inability of the Indian state to control its borders, process actionable intelligence, and preempt and counter terrorist attacks. The urgent need to address the grossly inadequate, fractured nature of the Indian security apparatus aroused a growing interest in Israeli counterterrorism methods.²⁹ Israel has provided India with satellite photo imagery, unarmed vehicles (UAV), hand-held thermal imagers, night vision devices, long range reconnaissance and observation systems (LORROS), and detection equipment for counterterrorism purposes.³⁰ India has already adapted some of the Israeli techniques and methods in countering terrorist threats emanating from Pakistan. New Delhi has held regular talks with Tel Aviv on counterterrorism within the framework of a Joint Working Group, which was set up in 2000. Even during President Rivlin's meeting with Prime Minister Modi in New Delhi in November 2016, countering terrorism was one of the priority areas of cooperation.

India's ruling BJP has always been an ardent supporter of stronger ties between India and Israel. Its leaders, be they in the government or in the opposition, have continued to express admiration for Israel's counterterrorism and national security policies. With recent surgical strikes across Pakistan-occupied territory, the Modi government has underscored India's intention of focusing on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir. In the spirit of Modi's comparison of India's anti-terror surgical strikes to Israel's exploits, India is likely to give priority to the development of elite special forces similar to Israel's Sayeret Matkal. These dynamics are likely to translate into greater counterterrorism cooperation with Israel. According to P. R. Kumaraswamy, "India's search for technological modernization and Israel's needs for economizing defense research are complementary and should lay the foundation for sustained long-term partnership."³¹ David Malone also believes that while the security partnership is not the sole factor that binds

India and Israel, "it is the most salient one, and likely to remain so as long as terrorist violence threatens both nations."³²

Although the Modi government is steadily expanding the scope and dimensions of its counterterrorism and intelligence-sharing cooperation with Israel, it has some obvious limitations, as India and Israel are not directly fighting the same adversary. India cannot afford to identify entirely with Israel's definition of terrorism. Similarly, the Indian government cannot use the same kind of coercive counterterrorism tactics that Israel has practiced.³³ While counterterrorism is usually the province of government, expanded efforts involving think tanks and academic institutions might make a unique contribution to fostering candid exchanges on the lessons of past counterterrorism and counterinsurgency campaigns waged by both sides, and bridging between Indian and Israeli perspectives on terrorism.³⁴

Conclusion

Clearly, the India-Israel relationship has evolved in the last 25 years. India officially recognized Israel in 1950, but established full diplomatic relations in 1992, which finally freed New Delhi's West Asia policy from the clutches of ideological rigidity, moral sentimentalism, and self-doubt. Almost 25 years after normalization, relations with Israel continue to draw significant attention within India. Israel's policies vis-à-vis the Palestinians still arouse much domestic debate inside India, but they do not hinder opponents from recognizing the benefits of Israeli friendship. Issues like agricultural cooperation, technology transfer, foreign investment, and security cooperation have helped generate positive sentiment about Israel. India and Israel have faced cross-border terrorism and jihadist extremism in their neighborhood, and this factor has brought them closer to each other. While progress may have been slower than expected, ties have blossomed.

At the same time, increasing ties with Israel comes with a substantive hindrance: India's traditional relationship with the Palestinians and the Arab world. The Modi government has reiterated the value of relations with Israel while maintaining that India would remain unswerving in its support of the Palestine cause. However, India's voting pattern at the UN on issues relating to Israel and the Palestinians has registered a perceptible change since 2015. New Delhi's decision to abstain from voting on resolutions condemning Israel in some UN agencies has been interpreted as a departure from India's historical support of the Palestinians. India's tilt toward Israel reflects the fact that New Delhi has not received any meaningful backing

from Arab countries on its stance on Kashmir. Moreover, there have been no sincere attempts by the Arab countries to pressure Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism in Kashmir.

The Indian leadership has recognized that while it is necessary to maintain closer ties with both Israel and the Arabs, it is self-defeating to hide the burgeoning friendship with Israel. In fact, at a time when a violently anarchic political climate in West Asia caused by jihadist radicalization is adversely affecting regional security, there is an urgent need for India to strengthen its ties with Israel. Although it is difficult to envision the impact of future regional events on the evolution of Indo-Israeli relations, it seems inconceivable that it could put an end to a very fruitful and fertile partnership between the two countries. With Narendra Modi at the helm of affairs, it is clear that a phase in Indian foreign policy is coming to an end. The combination of diplomatic energy, strategic ingenuity, and political boldness channeled by Modi government into building a new relationship with Israel is indicative of a transformative shift in India's foreign policy.

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India-Israel Relations: Perceptions and Prospects

Manoj Kumar

For 45 years following independence in 1947, India's official Middle East policy was marked by the pursuit of close ties with Arab countries and support for the Palestinians, coupled with indifference bordering on hostility to Israel. In addition to the "anti-colonial" disposition of the Congress Party, there were powerful pragmatic considerations behind this approach, many of which persist today. The most obvious is India's need for hydrocarbon-based energy, and ever-growing energy demands pushed India to maintain cordial relations with Gulf states. Current projections suggest that India's hydrocarbon-based energy consumption will increase significantly over the coming decades, barring unforeseeable changes in the country itself, energy technologies, or the oil market.¹ Dependence on energy suppliers from the Gulf region and the limited availability of alternative sources of energy will continue to be a major factor in Indian policy.

A second element relates to migrant workers. In the year 2001, there were an estimated 6-7 million Indian workers in the Middle East, who sent home almost \$30 billion a year² (table 1). Thus, India has a strong interest in good economic relations with the Gulf region, and some Indian states are exceedingly dependent on these ties. Kerala, for example, sends very large numbers of workers to the Gulf, and those workers send back an estimated \$6 billion annually to the state.³ Consequently, India must consider carefully every policy move that might jeopardize the safety and security of its citizens in the Gulf region and the remittances that help sustain its economy.

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Table 1. Remittances to India from the Gulf Region, 2012

Remittances source country	Remittance amount (\$ billions)
UAE	15.69
Saudi Arabia	8.38
Kuwait	2.95
Oman	2.61
Qatar	2.29
Bahrain	0.76

Source: *Forbes*, see note 2

Third, the large sums of money India invests in the Gulf area are important to India's overall foreign trade. The viability of this trade depends upon the security of sea lanes through which almost all the hydrocarbon imports are transported. India has also entered into various investment agreements with Gulf countries relating to petrochemicals, communications, biotechnology, and tourism. In 2008-2009, as per the United Nations Security Council mandate, India played an active role in policing the Gulf of Aden (alongside several Western powers and the Chinese navy) in an effort to discourage the rampant piracy emanating from Somalia.⁴ The emergence of geo-economics as the main determinant of interstate relations requires adequate naval power to secure sea lines of communication against interference or interdiction by hostile navies. For India, which is expected to encounter enormous energy shortages in the coming years, this is especially relevant; India cannot afford to have its maritime link with the Gulf tampered with or obstructed.⁵

Changes in the Attitude toward Israel

Notwithstanding ongoing constraints, India's policy and attitude toward Israel began to change in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In part this was due to changes in domestic Indian politics, i.e., the beginning of an era of coalition politics, which signified the end of a particular ideological hegemony and introduction of greater flexibility in foreign policy. In part, however, it stemmed from the outbreak of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in Kashmir. On June 27, 1991, there was an attempted kidnapping of Israeli tourists in a houseboat in Kashmir, which resulted in the death of one of the tourists. The incident underscored to Israel that it is a target of Muslim militants even in Kashmir, and also marked "a new phase in the worsening

conflict in predominantly Muslim Kashmir," where Indian troops and paramilitary police sought to quell an armed independence movement.⁶

The incident likewise prompted a notable intensification of Indo-Israeli security cooperation, which existed even during the years of diplomatic distance. After the Indo-Pakistani wars in 1962, 1965, and 1971, India purchased arms and ammunitions from Israel, and India appreciated that Israel was willing to help with military equipment when the UK, US, France, and others held back. In the field of counterterrorism, after the assassination of Indira Gandhi, there were reports that Israel assisted in training counterterrorist forces such as the National Security Guards. Moreover, a relationship between Indian security agencies like the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad is reported to have existed as far back as the 1960s.⁷ However, the change in domestic politics coupled with the interest in deeper defense cooperation led to a breakthrough in the early 1990s that was manifested in the establishment of full diplomatic relations in January 1992 and in a broad range of areas.

Beyond the 1990s

The opening of the Indian Embassy in Israel in May 1992 facilitated a variety of talks and exchanges on various levels and a quantum leap in the breadth of ties. This is reflected in numerous bilateral cooperation agreements, among them:⁸

- a. Agreement for the Promotion and Protection of Investments, January 29, 1996
- b. Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and for the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and on Capital, January 29, 1996
- c. Bilateral Agreement regarding Mutual Assistance and Cooperation in Customs Matters, January 29, 1996
- d. Agreement on Cooperation in Peace Uses of Outer Space, October 28, 2002
- e. Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Health and Medicine, September 9, 2003
- f. Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Illicit Trafficking and Abuse of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, September 9, 2003
- g. Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Protection of the Environment, September 9, 2003

- h. Agreement on Exemption of Visa Requirement for Holders of Diplomatic, Official, and Service Passports, September 9, 2003
- i. Memorandum of Understanding on India-Israeli Research and Development Fund Initiative, May 30, 2005
- j. Inter-Governmental Work Plan on Agriculture Cooperation, May 10, 2006

In addition to the treaties covering the period from 1992 to 2006, India and Israel have worked to establish a joint Intellectual Property Regime (IPR). There is also informal cooperation between different law enforcement agencies on criminal matters, and an extradition treaty was signed in January 2012 during the visit of External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna to Tel Aviv.⁹ In all, there are very few other countries with which India has drafted and ratified so many treaties. Not surprisingly, however, the most dramatic deepening of ties has been in the area of security and defense.

Cooperation in Security and Defense

Despite the preexisting foundation and the building momentum of connections between governments and officials, India was initially reluctant to publicize arms purchases from Israel. It was only during the 1999 Kargil crisis, when Israel responded promptly to Indian requests for military equipment and ammunition in spite of US pressure to implement an arms embargo on India, that this hesitation came to an end. That episode opened a new chapter in the bilateral arms trade, though some scholars contend that it was actually the Mumbai terror attack in 2008 that was the major turning point. Despite undisputed evidence pointing to Pakistan as the source of the attack (which also targeted a Jewish site), India was unable to retaliate for the 150 people killed. This highlighted India's weakness in air and naval surveillance. Turning to Israel to rectify the situation, India bought the state-owned Israel Aerospace Industries EL/M-2083 radar system, valued at \$600 million, and signaled that it would "be deployed along the Pakistani border."¹⁰

The Mumbai attack also made it clear that contemporary India has far more in common with Israel than with Russia. Israel and India have now moved beyond the earlier stage of one-way military trade to joint projects in developing both offensive and defensive weapons.¹¹ During the 2005-2009 period, when India was the world's second-largest arms buyer (second only to China), India imported nearly half a billion dollars worth of arms from Israel (compared to only \$147 million from the United States).¹² A separate study gauges Israeli sales to India in 2002-2005 as amounting to

over \$5 billion.¹³ The extensive transfer of military hardware affirmed the prospect of India as a promising customer for the Israeli defense industry:

The sensitivity of these transfers increased over time, and defense ties came to be seen as the vanguard of the broader relationship. This was exemplified by the sale of Israeli Phalcon AWACs (airborne radar systems) to India in 2004. This contrasted sharply with the US attitude towards Israel's desired sale of the same to China in 1999. Since the system constituted a joint venture production owing to financial support from the US, Washington was able to veto the sale to China, reportedly costing Israel a quarter of a million dollars in losses. The first system landed in India in May 2009. India has acquired three, and plans to purchase two to three more. According to one report, this would comprise the largest defense agreement in the history of Israel's existence.¹⁴

Thus by 2014, India became Israel's largest arms market, while Israel was one of India's biggest suppliers.

Counterterrorism

Acts of terrorism provided the major stimulus for Indo-Israeli security cooperation. Both countries are victims of international terrorism, have hostile neighbors that support such actions, and must be constantly alert against such threats. As Brajesh Mishra, National Security Advisor under the Vajpayee government and a chief architect of its security policy stated in an address to the American Jewish Committee in 2003, the United States, Israel, and India "have to jointly face the same ugly face of modern day terrorism."¹⁵

Yet while counterterrorism is a major focus of the Indo-Israel security relationship, there are differences of perception toward terrorism. As Rajendra Abhyankar argues, "While Israel believes in giving no quarter to terror as an instrument of political negotiation, India has always believed in keeping a door open for dialogue. Israel sees concentric circles of threat which includes Iran, Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas, while India sees its threats emanating from radical Islamic groups sponsored by Pakistan like the Taliban and Lashkar-e-Toiba, Jaish-i-Mohammad, who were responsible for the Mumbai terror attack."¹⁶ Moreover, "neither country wants to get involved directly in the other party's wars."¹⁷

In spite of these differences of perception and geostrategic requirements, the two countries have constituted a Joint Working Group and exchange

practical experiences in border security, suicide terrorism, aviation security, financing of terrorism, information security, and digital and cyber warfare. In addition, India's formation of a new national investigative agency following the 2008 Mumbai attacks could provide countries like Israel with a new focal point through which to form closer ties in the intelligence and security field.¹⁸

Space Cooperation

Israel's main area of interest in space technology is for imaging capabilities, which can be used further in military surveillance and border security. In the past decades India has developed indigenous satellites with remote sensing, meteorological data, and communication capabilities, and it launches these satellites with its own rockets. In 2005, Israel decided to launch TecSAR, its first synthetic aperture radar imaging satellite, on India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle.¹⁹ India's PSLV was chosen to launch TecSAR because of Israel's concerns about the reliability and technical limitations of its own Shavit space launch vehicle, economic considerations, and Israel's desire to increase strategic cooperation with India.²⁰ In addition, India's RISAT-2 satellite, which will provide enhanced capability for earth surface observation, disaster management, and surveillance purposes, was developed in collaboration with Israel Aerospace Industry (IAI). The acquisition and subsequent launch of the RISAT-2 satellite was accelerated after the 2008 Mumbai attacks, to boost India's future surveillance capabilities.²¹

Creating Economic Interdependence

As in the case of defense and security, business links between India and Israel existed long before the establishment of formal diplomatic relations. A major example is the diamond industry, which currently accounts for 50 percent of India-Israel non-defense trade:

India's prolific diamond industry is remarkable in that its prime movers come from Palanpur, a small village in Gujarat. In the inter-War years this community, who follow the Jain religion, set up trading companies in Antwerp, where they came in touch with Jewish diamond traders who dominated the business then. The good relations between the Indian and Jewish communities in Antwerp and New York over the decades, as well as the facilities for cutting of and trading in diamonds, have led the former to establish companies in Tel Aviv.²²

However, business ties have gone far beyond the diamond nexus. The two countries are continuously exploring new possibilities to increase trade and investment opportunities. According to the Confederation of Indian Industry, the bilateral trade volume had reached \$4.7 billion by 2010, not including defense sales.²³

The bilateral trade partnership would gain further impetus from robust research and development in Israel that could be effectively commercialized in India and extended to other trading countries as well. For example, India could benefit from technology transfers in areas of Israeli expertise such as life sciences, medical devices, biotechnology, nanotechnology, clean tech, alternative energy, water management, and arid agriculture, and Israel is willing to cooperate in these fields. A sense of the potential can be gleaned from existing realities.

In agriculture, for example, the Central Arid Zone Research Institute works with Israel on various scientific projects such as dry farming and has established various experimental centers in the states of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Israeli agricultural experts regularly conduct workshops to share knowledge, technologies, and expertise in the field of agriculture and horticulture, besides training the officials of the 26 Centers of Excellence that have been set up under the project. Indian farmers are now growing high quality vegetable and fruit crops with the help of Israeli agriculture. These crops earn farmers more profit, while saving water and expenses on pesticides. The project is carried out by MASHAV, Israel's agency for International Development Co-operation, with the support of the Union Ministry of Agriculture, the Embassy of Israel, and state governments in India.²⁴ The atmospheric and soil conditions in large parts of Rajasthan and Northern Gujarat are very similar to Israel, and their expertise can be used in growing crops like barley, mustard, grapes, and dates in these regions. Also active in India are Israeli private agricultural companies, including Naan Dan Jain, Netafim, Agrotop, Plasson, Hazera Genetics, Maximilk, Plastro Gvat, Agrexco, Zeraim, ICL fertilizers, Sion, and the Avshalom Group. These companies work not only in production but also in preservation and marketing.

Similarly, in the biomedical and pharmaceuticals fields, Israelis are investing and establishing R&D facilities in India. Some of the largest pharmaceuticals firms, like Teva and Taro, have been active in India for some years; the companies have established R&D centers at Noida and

Gajraula, respectively. As far as Biomed is concerned, companies like Bioline are conducting clinical research for treatment of schizophrenia in India.

Israel also has expertise in non-conventional energy generation and resource conservation. Leviathan Company has created wind, hydro, and wave-powered products and is in touch with various Indian companies for manufacturing purposes, and Focal Energy of Israel is developing 30-megawatt biomass power plants in Rajasthan and a 12-megawatt hydro-electric plant in Himachal Pradesh. There is also Israeli investment in water treatment; Amiad Water Filtration Systems, which has a presence in over 66 countries, has established its regional office in Mumbai.

Conclusion

India and Israel share a special multidimensional, multidisciplinary, and comprehensive relationship, characterized by pragmatic diplomacy and trust. Differences on some issues still exist, but they are not unbridgeable. India and Israel have strong joint international cooperation schemes and can explore and undertake joint ventures in different fields in countries like Maldives, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Afghanistan, where both the countries have interests. There is also a potential for cooperation in civil nuclear matters. The India-US Agreement on Civil Nuclear Cooperation is of great interest to Israel as a possible precedent for its own efforts in the context of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and Israel too has a vital strategic interest in preventing the transfer of nuclear technology from Pakistan to countries in the Middle East.

During his visit to New Delhi on November 15, 2016, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin stated the basis for a bilateral understanding on terrorism: "Terror is terror is terror... nothing can justify terror."²⁵ And on cooperation in other fields, the President said, "Israel and India have changed history before, and it is time to do it again...this is not just a partnership, it is a partnership which is making a difference, in the water we drink, the food we eat, the technology we use."²⁶

There are many more fields in which bilateral cooperation will benefit both countries. A widespread perception exists that Indo-Israel relations are based on the military and security perspective, but the base is much broader and it will expand into more sectors in the future. The full potential of the India-Israel relationship has yet to be realized, and there are many more areas in which India and Israel can work together in the coming years.

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The Trump Effect in Eastern Europe: Heightened Risks of NATO-Russia Miscalculations

Sarah Fainberg

Eastern Europe's frontline with Russia now grapples with the unanticipated effects of the Brexit referendum and the election of Donald Trump. The sudden withdrawal from the EU of one of Europe's firmest supporters of a containment policy vis-à-vis Russia, and the stunning electoral victory of an American presidential candidate apparently committed to an isolationist or at least conciliatory approach to Russian President Vladimir Putin, have revived Central and Eastern Europe's traumatic memories of imminent security threats from Moscow.

Such anxieties are seemingly corroborated by the increased number and heightened gravity of hazardous military-military and military-civilian incidents involving Russia, NATO's "eastern flank" (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria), and NATO's non-aligned "partners in security" (Sweden and Finland) since the Ukrainian crisis began in 2014.¹ Eastern Europe's feelings of vulnerability are similarly reinforced by the expected rise of pro-Russian populist parties and conservative candidates in elections across EU member states in 2017 (pro-Russian candidates already won Bulgaria's and Moldova's presidential elections in November 2016). The EU's political shift to the right and far right may ultimately facilitate a Western-Russia rapprochement regardless of the enduring conflict in Ukraine. Furthermore, candidate Trump's public identification of the Islamic State as the main enemy in Syria and the reduced likelihood of Assad being ousted following the Russian and Iranian supported regime victory in Aleppo and the Russian-Iranian-Turkish "Moscow Declaration" on a Syrian settlement in December 2016 may

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increase the West's propensity to engage with Russia against the Islamic State and other extremist groups in Syria.

Eastern Europe's anxious pursuit of a NATO military buildup is mirrored by Russia's existential worries about NATO's encroachment in its "near abroad" and Russia's swift militarization of its Western borderlands. After periods of high alert following the 2008 Georgian War and the 2014 Ukrainian war, the winds of war are again blowing across the Baltic Sea. They threaten military escalation due to strategic miscalculations between a nuclear-armed NATO alliance and a nuclear-armed Russia, and reinforce the risk of a Western-Russian confrontation on the European continent.

Drumbeats of WWII in the Baltics

In 1990-1991, the shift by the former Warsaw Pact countries to NATO and the EU planted the seeds of conflict between Russia and the West. Rooted in the deep traumas of vulnerability based on the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact, half a century of Soviet occupation after 1940, and the violent crackdown on pro-independence demonstrations in 1990-1991, the Baltic states, Poland, and their East European neighbors joined NATO and the EU in a single year (2004), decisively separating from Russia's sphere of influence. Furthermore, the EU's new eastern members favored expanding both NATO and the EU eastwards, with Poland and Sweden initiating the Eastern Partnership Program (EaP) in 2009, a move that precipitated the Ukrainian crisis in the fall 2013.²

In the Polish and Baltic narrative, articulated vividly by Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linkevičius' reaction to Trump's election, Russia is not a "super power"; it is a "super problem" that threatens the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security of East European states. The 2008 Georgian war and the ongoing war in Ukraine since 2014, along with Russia's alleged violations of the Baltic states' air and maritime spaces, are presented as proof of Russia's subversive strategy and serve as justification for the strengthening of NATO's "purely defensive" capabilities in the vicinity of Russia.

With the War in Donbass and Russia's annexation of Crimea, NATO incorporated the Polish and Baltic states' narrative of an aggressive Russia into its own core doctrine, leading NATO to reframe the "challenges posed by Russia and their strategic implications" as its top priority concern.³ In 2014, therefore, NATO shifted from a defensive doctrine designed to confront a variety of threats (with Iran and its nuclear program heading

the list) to a proactive engagement aimed at reinforcing its capabilities against Russia per se. NATO's reassessment of strategic threats (replacing Iran with Russia as its first strategic threat) also derives from the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in July 2015, which was seen as bringing some breathing space on the Iranian front.

While the Baltic states and Poland cast Russia as a potential instigator of a Third World War in the heart of Europe, Russia dismisses these concerns as false, politically driven allegations designed to reap political dividends inside the EU and attract US and German financial and military support. In Russia's narrative, NATO's expansion eastwards reflects a covert US strategy to contain Russia on the global stage, dismiss its core national interests, curb its regional influence, and breed regime change. For Moscow, NATO's enlargement eastwards is anything but trivial: it poses an existential threat to its revival as a power of regional, if not global, significance as well as its political stability. Moscow has already castigated NATO's "aggressive" stance, insisting that Russia had sought NATO membership but was rejected.⁴

In the 2010 and 2014 versions of Russia's "Military Doctrine," NATO's expansion (in particular via NATO's Membership Action Plan offered to Georgia and Ukraine), its desire to "move infrastructure closer to Russia's borders," and the "deployment of military contingents of foreign states" into Russia's neighboring states represent Moscow's top strategic threat. These mutually contradictory narratives have triggered an intense military buildup on both sides of the East European frontline, with each side's military and power projection accompanied by aggressive nuclear rhetoric, thereby reinforcing the other's readiness for military confrontation.

At the very heart of NATO's power projection on its eastern flank is its long and carefully designed US ballistic missile defense system, whose implementation was accelerated by the Ukrainian crisis. In May 2016, the system was declared operational during its inauguration in Romania and Poland. Meanwhile, NATO established a Readiness Action Plan (RAP) in September 2014 that includes "increased military activity in the eastern part of the Alliance" and "longer-term changes to NATO's force posture."⁵

Brexit and the lingering uncertainties regarding Trump's loyalty to previous commitments to European defense deepened fears across Central and Eastern Europe about an imminent Russian threat, while further bolstering Russia's image of a doomed and disintegrating European Union and transatlantic alliance.

During the 2016 Warsaw Summit, NATO further upgraded its capability. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, NATO announced the deployment of multinational troops in Eastern Europe (starting in early 2017) and their continuous rotation in four countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland), thereby reviving the early Cold War logic of a “tripwire” consisting of a small number of troops and equipment positioned in a specific zone to showcase its strategic importance to a state’s enemies and its allies. Under the concept of a “framework nation,” NATO is to deploy about 4,000 troops to the designated battalions, signaling its readiness to enter into a full-blown conflict with Russia in case of an attack on one of the Baltic states or Poland (those strengthened battalions are to face the nearly 330,000 Russian soldiers stationed on Moscow’s western border).⁶ The “framework nation” model is also supposed to bolster NATO’s deterrence in light of the potentially devastating effects of Russian troops killing soldiers of Canadian, American, or British nationality. The deployment of NATO’s additional multinational troops is to be expanded to the Black Sea area at a later stage (in late 2016 Romania and Bulgaria agreed to host an increased air force presence that will conduct surveillance missions over the Black

Sea).⁷ In addition, NATO’s Air Policing Mission over the Baltics was quadrupled in size. In February 2016, the US Defense Department announced that it would allocate \$3.4 billion for the European Reassurance Initiative in 2017 (up from \$789 million in 2016 and \$985 million in 2015), aimed at deterring “Russian aggression” against NATO allies and including the positioning of military equipment in the Baltic states, Poland, and Central Europe. The question remains whether this increase will be affirmed by the Trump administration.⁸

Moscow may well overestimate Europe's disunity on the Ukrainian question, NATO's weakening, and US hesitations in case of a collision between NATO and Russia, a miscalculation that could lead Moscow to initiate bold moves in Europe and create an unintended confrontation.

Furthermore, US-NATO military training and exercises in the area reached unprecedented levels since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In June 2016, NATO conducted Anaconda-16, the largest training exercise in Poland since the end of the Cold War.⁹ In November 2016, eleven NATO countries sent 4,000

troops to Lithuania to participate in the Iron Sword exercises to test the country’s ability to mobilize troops in case of a Russian invasion. Yet again this war game was the largest Iron Sword maneuver since 2014.¹⁰ NATO

also considers the possibility of significantly shortening its reaction time (currently NATO enjoys a 30-day span to mobilize and deploy its troops in case of a military conflict).

In the meantime, Russia strengthened its deterrence capacity and conventional capabilities on its western front, which currently represent the main focus of its military buildup (along with the Black Sea and Crimea). First, Russia has long endorsed the need for a powerful air defense system in the Kaliningrad enclave (a Russian territory between Lithuania and Poland) and in the southeast corner of the Baltic Sea, both aimed at limiting NATO's capabilities in the area. This Russian missile deterrence shield would make any US-NATO move in the area dangerous in case of crisis or war. In addition, Moscow would be able to deploy its combat aircraft and anti-ship missile systems quickly to constrain US-NATO action in the region. Since the Ukrainian crisis, Russia has also resorted to nuclear rhetoric (whether explicitly or implicitly) when confronting NATO and denouncing the "aggressiveness" and "hypocrisy" of the missile defense project in Europe. In particular, Russia has introduced training exercises on the use of nuclear warheads in Europe and practiced simulated nuclear strikes against NATO and EU members (including Sweden). Russia's nuclear threats were amplified yet again before Trump's entry into the White House. In December 2016, President Putin vowed to strengthen Russia's nuclear arsenal, a statement that was matched by President-elect Trump's Tweet calling for a massive strengthening of US nuclear capabilities. And yet, beyond the clear psychological impact of the military buildup and escalating rhetoric on both sides, what is the actual operational significance of NATO's strengthened troops and equipment on the one hand and of Russia's demonstrations of force on the other?

NATO's involvement has dramatically intensified due to the Ukrainian crisis, and its military budget and manpower surpass Russia's by far (NATO's military budget in 2016 was \$846 billion compared to Russia's \$46 billion). Yet NATO's capacities remain insufficient, considering the larger mobilization capacity and general military potential of the Russian Federation. A 2016 RAND Corporation study documented that in its current architecture, NATO would be unable to defend any Baltic state against a Russian invasion. Assuming the validity of the RAND study, this document shows that NATO, outgunned and outnumbered by Russian tanks and troops, would lose a war against Russia in three days.¹¹ Furthermore, NATO's long term cohesion and credibility may be undermined by its

28 members' internal differences, divergent perceptions, and respective assessments of security threats stemming from Russia on each side of the former Berlin Wall, (Western) members' stagnating defense budgets, and a potential Trump-led US disengagement.

On the Russian side, Moscow efficiently deployed nuclear-capable forces in Kaliningrad in 2014 and moved Iskander-M short-range ballistic missiles (with a 500 km range within reach of Berlin) in 2015. However, little data is available about the extent to which the S-400 and Iskander missiles were actually positioned in Kaliningrad and in what quantity. Many additional questions remain about the actual production and deployment of Russia's inter-continental ballistic missiles – ICBMs – which have encountered technical difficulties related to Ukraine's separation from Russia's military-industrial complex (Russia previously co-produced ICBMs and some of its components in the Ukrainian town of Dnepropetrovsk).

Mistrust and tensions have not only contributed to a military race between NATO and Russia, but also to a swift militarization of the Baltic states and Poland. Lithuania in particular has reintroduced military conscription and issued a pamphlet that guides its population on what to do in the event of a Russian invasion. Moreover, the historically low Baltic state defense budgets increased dramatically after the Ukrainian crisis, to the point where Latvia and Lithuania have had the fastest growing defense budgets in the world since 2014.¹² Lithuania alone has increased its defense budget by about a third each year since 2014. In addition, the Baltic states have invested massively in new military equipment. For example, in August 2016, Lithuania signed its biggest-ever arms purchase, for 88 German-made Boxer armored fighting vehicles fitted with Israeli-made turrets. Finally, the self-defense militias that were established in the three Baltic states shortly after their independence received a major boost after the Ukrainian crisis. In Estonia, which borders Russia and is home to a 25 percent Russian minority, the number of volunteers to the Estonian Defence League surpasses by far that of the regular army: with affiliated organizations Women's Home Defence, Young Eagles, and Home Daughters, the Estonian Defence League currently comprises over 24,500 volunteers in action,¹³ compared to the 6000-large regular Estonian army. Those national defense organizations, which received advanced training and guerilla-type military equipment, are designed to conduct a guerilla warfare against Russia in case of a direct, cyber, or fifth column type attack on their soil. Their mission is to buy time to enable NATO to mobilize and deploy its troops, and help prevent

a Russian take-over of the strategic Suwalki gap, the narrow land corridor situated between Kaliningrad and Belarus (on the border between Poland and Lithuania) that would serve as the main corridor for the transfer of NATO forces to come to the aid of the Baltics (the second main transfer area would be the Baltic sea).

Increase of Incidents and Lack of De-escalation Mechanisms

In this volatile context, any incident might trigger a snowball effect and an unintended military escalation. Of concern is the increase in both quantity and gravity of hazardous military-military and military-civilian incidents in the Baltic Sea area since the Ukrainian crisis. Over 60 incidents between NATO and Russia were reported between September 2014 and March 2015 on the Baltic Sea, Black Sea, and Atlantic Ocean. Over 400 interceptions by NATO of Russian aircraft around Europe occurred in 2015 alone (of which 160 were conducted by the Baltic Air Policing Mission). These incidents culminated in the incident between Turkey and Russia on November 24, 2015 along the Turkish-Syrian border, leading to a breakdown of Turkish-Russian relations until their reconciliation in the summer of 2016. Additional grave incidents were documented: on January 30, 2016, a Russian SU-34 violated Turkish airspace, and in April 2016, a Russian fighter jet and a helicopter conducted dangerous maneuvers close to the destroyer *USS Donald Cook* in the Baltic Sea.¹⁴ The danger not only lies in a military-military incident but also in a military-civilian collision, exemplified by the use of a Buk missile smuggled across the border from Russia to shoot down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over Ukraine in July 2014; all 298 passengers were killed in the attack.

The increase in actual or narrowly-avoided collisions is all the more hazardous given the lack of any official agreement between NATO and Russia on how to defuse tension or deescalate a dangerous incident. Unlike the tactical “de-confliction mechanism” that Israel (and other states) established with Russia on the Syrian border, which provides a network of narrowly focused military-to-military channels of communication to avoid an inadvertent clash of armed forces operating in the same combat arena, NATO and Russia as yet possess no formal Memorandum of Understanding that would rapidly and efficiently defuse tensions. Rather, there is an ongoing NATO-Russian Council dialogue and a series of disparate and uncoordinated Cold War era agreements between a number of NATO countries and Russia.¹⁵ However, the Cold War era agreements involve only

11 NATO members and leave the remaining 17 members (most critically Central and Eastern European states and Turkey) outside of the potential de-confliction arrangement. In light of the insufficiency of the above mentioned crisis management mechanisms, the Task Force on Cooperation in Greater Europe invited NATO members to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with Russia in August 2015, yet this initiative has yet to see any palpable achievements. In July 2016, the Russian Federation suggested steps for risk reduction in the Baltic airspace, again without tangible results.

Moreover, NATO and Russia do not possess effective tools for prevention of military escalation stemming from broader attribution of political and/or strategic intentions. Such broader prevention is jeopardized by the hybrid nature of US-NATO and Russian power projection. On the one hand, Russia accuses NATO of building up military forces near up its borders, fomenting political coups in its bordering countries, and challenging Russia's strategic positioning in the Eurasian space. Meanwhile, the West charges Russia with destabilizing Europe by combining a steady military buildup in the Kaliningrad enclave and Russia's Western Military District, the use of cyber attacks, soft power, energy politics, and diaspora politics, particularly in Latvia and Estonia, which are home to a large diaspora of ethnic Russians. Under these (intentionally) confusing circumstances, it is unclear when NATO's collective defense Article V may apply, especially if one of the parties' actions involves something other than a direct armed attack. For example, once Crimea was annexed by Russia in March 2014 through hybrid means involving a minimal and unofficial use of force, NATO did not have any substantive response and reacted by merely suspending the NATO-Russia Council, a platform of consultation between NATO's ambassadors and Russia's ambassador to NATO established in 2002.¹⁶ From the perspective of Poland and the Baltic states, NATO's suspension of the NATO-Russian Council testified to NATO's lack of credibility when dealing with Russia's assertive moves. Ukraine, however, is borderline case: even though it applied for NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP) in 2008, Ukraine was and remains a non-aligned country.

The Brexit-Trump Effect: Increased Propensity for Miscalculation

The removal of Britain's voice from the EU decision making arena and the lingering uncertainties regarding Trump's loyalty to previous commitments to European defense deepened fears across Central and Eastern Europe about an imminent Russian threat, while further bolstering Russia's image

of a doomed and disintegrating European Union and transatlantic alliance. Such a situation creates fertile ground for increased misperceptions and hazardous miscalculations from both sides.

In this context, Moscow enjoys its most favorable European moment since the Ukrainian crisis began. At the same time, euphoria can be misleading. Russian hopes for a domino effect in the EU after Brexit and Europe's further decay were undoubtedly encouraged by Europe's lingering economic crisis, counter-terrorism failures, and ill-managed refugee crisis. Furthermore, Moscow may celebrate the mounting criticism of US and EU sanctions against Russia. Some NATO members as well as Donald Trump have expressed reservations regarding the functioning and value of NATO.¹⁷ And in another potential gain for Moscow, Germany has signaled greater interest in developing distinctively European defense capabilities, thereby further isolating the Polish and Baltic argument for NATO as the sole framework for collective defense.

With this new favorable context, Moscow may well overestimate Europe's disunity on the Ukrainian question, NATO's weakening, and US hesitations in case of a collision between NATO and Russia, a miscalculation that could lead Moscow to initiate bold moves in Europe and create an unintended confrontation. Indeed, Moscow's expected softening – if not complete “reset” – of relations with Washington, based on Trump's early declarations, may not hold up under the Trump administration. On the one hand, Trump's appointment of Michael Flynn as National Security Advisor and Rex Tillerson as Secretary of State, both of whom have open and strong Russian ties, potentially signal an imminent reengagement of Washington with Russia. This positive signal to Moscow followed earlier encouragement when candidate Trump antagonized Republican senators John McCain and Lindsay Graham, both known for their pro-Ukrainian positions. On the other hand, the choice of Mike Pence as Vice President (thus far harboring a hawkish position vis-à-vis Moscow), along with the broad anti-Russian consensus in the Republican Congress, the Pentagon, the intelligence community, and the military, may rapidly challenge Trump's declared intention of finding a common language with Moscow. Furthermore, both the Bush and Obama administrations intended to “reset” relations with Russia, with few results. In addition, Trump's campaign promise not to intervene in the event of Russian aggression against the Baltic countries, and his plan to make US aid dependent on these countries raising defense spending (to at least 2 percent of their GDP, compared to the US's 7 percent), may

ironically have a bolstering effect on Eastern Europe's defense budget and military preparedness. Currently, Poland and Estonia meet the Alliance's recommended level of defense spending, which is 2 percent of GDP, while Latvia and Lithuania are likewise projected to meet the NATO 2 percent target in their 2017-2018 budgets. The combined Brexit and Trump effects triggered a shift of the Eastern European countries, primarily Poland and the Baltic states, toward Germany, which is by now perceived as the only country capable of defending them against Russian aggression – a 21st century twist that reframes Germany as the democratic and liberal savior against an illiberal and aggressive Russia. Moreover, perceptions of greater Europe, especially in Eastern Europe (where domestic politics disproportionately focus on the "Russian question"), may prompt some to overestimate Russia's intentions to attack, and such an alarmist mood may breed an over-reaction to any incident or collision in the vicinity of Russia and precipitate a crisis that neither side envisioned or desired.

Eastern Europe Eyeing Israel's Border with Syria

Russia's military buildup in western Syria has been closely monitored by Central and East European states. From their perspective, the parallel wars in Ukraine and Syria now serve as two frontlines for Russia's projection of power with respect to the West. It has been argued that those two fronts even act as "communicating vases" for Moscow: they can either serve as a diversion strategy when Russia heats up tension in the Baltics to distract the world's attention from its actions in Syria, or vice versa, or serve as negotiating cards, with Russia requesting the reduction of a NATO military presence in member states and an end to sanctions in return for Russian concessions to the West in the war in Syria.

Poland and the Baltic states closely follow Israel's posture vis-à-vis Russia's buildup on its borders. It is evident that Central and Eastern Europe's relation to Russia is radically different from Israel's, because of both historical and strategic reasons. First and foremost, despite its one million Russian speakers, Israel is not a candidate for inclusion in Russia's sphere of influence; Russia has no territorial, imperial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural claim on the State of Israel. Most critically, Russia's intervention in Syria thus far does not constitute a threat to Israel in the way that Russia's military buildup does to Eastern and Central Europe.

With these main dramatic differences in mind there are nevertheless a few similarities that may justify intensified dialogue between Israel

and Eastern Europe in the near future, including periodic exchanges of assessments. Indeed, East European states and Israel share an interest in preventing unwanted military clashes with Russia and curbing some of Russia's impact, be it the destabilization of European security and stability or the strengthening of the Tehran-led Shiite axis running through Baghdad and Damascus to Beirut. Israel, however, should be careful not to allow any such dialogue to be part of an adversarial relationship with Russia similar to that existing between Russia and some East European countries. There should certainly be no illusion that in the unlikely event that Israel finds itself in a real conflict with Russia that it cannot deal with alone, any European state, even Germany, will be willing or able to constitute an adequate substitute for the United States.

Conclusion

It may well be that the recent wave of military incidents in the Baltics is merely a replay of previous scenarios involving heightened and yet temporary tensions between NATO and Russia, such as those surrounding the 2008 Georgian War and the 2014 Crimea annexation. Yet many fear that it signals a tipping point that will unleash an enduring confrontation between Eastern Europe and Russia, involving not only military buildup and deterrence on both sides but the actual outbreak of a military conflict. In either case, perceptions about a weakening transatlantic alliance and fears about Russia's reinforced posture toward the West – whether or not validated under the new Trump administration – may continue to have repercussions in the Middle East. With the legacy of Russian military intervention on Israel's border with Syria, Central and East European states and Israel may be pushed to intensify their dialogue on challenges posed by the volatile dynamics in the East European and Middle East arenas.

Notes

- 1 Sweden and Finland are not NATO members, yet they have participated in the 28-member NATO meetings in different formats. The two non-aligned countries have moved closer to NATO and US security structures in light of the deteriorating security situation in the Baltic Sea. However, their full membership in NATO is not on the near-term agenda due to domestic opposition in both Sweden and Finland.
- 2 The Eastern Partnership program aims at enhancing the EU's relations with countries that Russia considers as belonging to its own sphere of influence (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine).

- 3 NATO Wales Summit Declaration dated September 5, 2014, "NATO's Readiness Action Plan. FactSheet. July 2016." See http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160627_1607-factsheet-rap-en.pdf.
- 4 NATO-Russian relations were established in 1991 within the framework of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. In 1994, the Russian Federation joined the Partnership for Peace program. In 2002, the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) was established as a platform of consultation, dialogue, and joint decision making. Following Russia's annexation of Crimea, NATO unilaterally suspended cooperation with Russia but preserved a channel of communication within the NRC and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council at the ambassadorial level and above.
- 5 The RAP includes a series of assurance measures such as operation of fighter jets on air-policing patrols, deployment of ground troops to the eastern part of the Alliance for NATO training, or intensified NATO maritime patrols in the Baltic Sea. The long term "adaptation measures" include the strengthening of the NATO Response Forces (NRF) and the establishment of multinational NATO headquarters (NFIUS) on the territories of the East European allies (Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia) that are to become operational by the end of 2016.
- 6 Canada stands as the "framework nation" for Latvia, Germany plays this role for Lithuania, the UK is assigned to Estonia, and the US will serve in this capacity for Poland.
- 7 "NATO Chief Gives Details about Battalions on Eastern Flank, Black Sea Region," UNIAN Info, October 26, 2016, <http://www.unian.info/politics/1592591-nato-chief-gives-details-about-battalions-on-eastern-flank-black-sea-region.html>. See also Anna Maria Touma, "Romania and Bulgaria to Host Greater NATO Presence in the Black Sea Region," Atlantic Council, October 31, 2016, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/romania-and-bulgaria-to-host-greater-nato-presence-in-the-black-sea-region>.
- 8 "European Reassurance Initiative, Department of Defense Budget, Fiscal Year 2017, February 2016," p. 4, http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2017/FY2017_ERI_J-Book.pdf.
- 9 The exercise involved almost 4,000 troops from the US, the UK, Germany, Canada, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Luxemburg, and the three Baltic states (compared to 2,500 in 2015 and just over 2,000 troops participating in 2014).
- 10 This military exercise included some 31,000 troops from Poland, the US, and 17 other NATO member nations.
- 11 David A. Shlapak and Michael W. Johnson, "Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank," RAND Corporation, 2016, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1200/RR1253/RAND_RR1253.pdf.
- 12 An IHS Markit analysis shows that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania boosted their spending on new defense equipment from \$210 million in 2014 to \$390

- million in 2016. By 2018, the three nations are collectively expected to spend approximately \$670 million annually on new equipment. See "Press Release: Baltic Defence Budgets Surge as Russia's Neighbours Respond to Perceived Threat, IHS Markit Says," October 20, 2016, <http://news.ihsmarket.com/press-release/aerospace-defense-security/baltic-defence-budgets-surge-russias-neighbours-respond-per>.
- 13 See the website of the Estonian Defence League, <http://www.kaitseliit.ee/en/edl>.
 - 14 Lukasz Kulesa et al., "Managing Hazardous Incidents in the Euro-Atlantic Area: A New Plan of Action," Policy Brief, European Leadership Network, November 2016, pp. 7-9, <http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/medialibrary/2016/11/02/ab4a4c1d/ELN%20Managing%20Hazardous%20Incidents%20November%202016.pdf>.
 - 15 Eleven NATO countries enjoy bilateral agreements with Russia to prevent incidents at sea (INCSEA) (the US, the UK, Germany, France, Italy, Norway, Spain, the Netherlands, Canada, Portugal, and Greece). Three other agreements on managing potentially dangerous encounters exist: (1) the US-USSR (now Russia) Agreement on Preventing Dangerous Military Activities (DMA), signed in 1989; (2) the Canada-USSR Agreement on Preventing Dangerous Military Activities (DMA) from 1991; (3) a Greece-Russia DMA signed two years after end of the USSR. Ian Kearns and Denitsa Raynova, "Managing Dangerous Incidents: The Need for a NATO-Russia Memorandum of Understanding," March 7, 2016, http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/managing-dangerous-incidents-the-need-for-a-nato-russia-memorandum-of-understanding_3578.html.
 - 16 From March 2014 until December 2016, the NATO-Russia Council convened only three times, thereby reinforcing the potential for military escalation.
 - 17 Trump made a statement in July 2016 to the effect that he would not jump to defend the Baltic states from Russian attacks. David Sanger and Maggie Haberman, "Donald Trump Sets Conditions For Defending NATO Allies Under Attack," *New York Times*, July 20, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/21/us/politics/donald-trump-issues.html?_r=0.

Negotiating Global Nuclear Disarmament: Between “Fairness” and Strategic Realities

Emily B. Landau and Ephraim Asculai

Background

Global actors have contemplated nuclear disarmament since nuclear weapons made their first appearance over seventy years ago, and more intensively, since the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) came into force in 1970. This treaty, designed to stem the proliferation of nuclear weapons to additional states, includes a provision (Article VI) directed to the nuclear states themselves. It states that the parties to the treaty will undertake to pursue negotiations in good faith on measures relating to the end of the nuclear arms race and to nuclear disarmament. While nuclear arsenals have been reduced over the years, disarmament has not been achieved, and the fulfillment of Article VI, or lack thereof, has been an ongoing bone of contention between the members of the NPT that joined and forswore nuclear weapons, and those that continue to hold them.

An interesting milestone in the effort to advance the goal of disarmament was achieved on October 27, 2016, when the UN First Committee adopted a draft resolution on “taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.” In effect, this was an ambitious call to begin talks in March 2017 to negotiate “a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.”¹

The resolution passed by a very large majority: 123-38, with 16 member nations abstaining. The more prominent among the 38 votes against the resolution were states that hold or are assumed to possess nuclear weapons: four of the five NPT-designated Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) and Israel.

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China broke ranks with the other NWS and abstained, together with India and Pakistan. North Korea – a de facto nuclear state that alone has tested nuclear weapons in the current millennium, while threatening its neighbors with nuclear strikes – voted in favor of the resolution; Japan and South Korea – targets of North Korea’s threats – voted against. In early December 2016 the UN General Assembly deferred action on this resolution;² nevertheless, the implications of the October decision are worthy of analysis as it is not likely to disappear from the international agenda.

Two previous notable initiatives over the past two decades attempted to advance the goal of universal nuclear weapons elimination, though neither has yet met with success. The first was an attempt to forge a treaty that would cut off the production of fissile materials, the essential component for a nuclear explosion. The idea was raised at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva, but never gained traction. The failure of the proposed Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) was due in the main to Pakistani opposition, which prevented a consensus vote (essential for the workings of the CD) and led essentially to a shelving of the initiative. The second initiative – the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) – made greater progress and was opened for signature in 1996; however, the treaty has not yet entered into force, since the United States and others that must ratify it in order for this to happen have so far declined to do so, for a variety of reasons.

The current initiative for a global ban on nuclear weapons began with the 2015 UN General Assembly Resolution 70/33 that set up an Open Ended Working Group that was convened three times over the course of 2016. The working group presented its report to the UN General Assembly

in September 2016, without offering a single agreed-upon plan for moving forward.³ Instead, it defined several modes of action, while leaving open many questions regarding the definition of the required end result. The approach that garnered the most (though not unanimous) support was the “progressive approach,” that was reminiscent of the thirteen “practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI of the [NPT]” that were presented at the NPT Review Conference in

In their bid for fairness, the non-nuclear weapons states have turned a blind eye to the willful non-compliance on the part of determined proliferators.

2000.⁴ These included ratification of the CTBT, the establishment of an FMCT, and the elimination of nuclear arsenals. No progress has been made on these steps since their inception, which raises initial doubts about the

prospects for the renewed efforts. Whatever happened behind the scenes at the UN General Assembly is not publicly known, but the outcome seems to indicate that the world is not yet ready for these drastic steps.

Fairness and Strategic Realities

When weighing the degree to which the new initiative is realistic and/or feasible, one must consider its normative underpinnings and strategic implications. These must be clearly laid out in any serious discussion of conditions for moving toward the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The most significant norm that the initiative seeks to promote is the notion of “fairness.” Indeed, a main driver of the nuclear ban initiative – beyond the goal of eliminating the prospect of a nuclear weapon actually being used – is the desire to redress the lack of fairness inherent in the NPT framework, which defined two (discriminatory) categories of states – nuclear and non-nuclear. Pursuant to the biased set-up, an ongoing complaint has been that Article VI – which requires the NWS to work in good faith toward the goal of disarmament – was never seriously considered by these states.⁵ While the nuclear arsenals of the two superpowers were significantly reduced over the decades, disarmament has remained an elusive goal. Many non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS) cannot accept that they were required to remain non-nuclear while the NWS have retained their weapons. In their view, if the nuclear states cannot be forced to disarm through the provisions of the NPT, then a new treaty must be negotiated in order to ensure fair and across-the-board disarmament, similar to the chemical and biological treaties.

While inherently appealing to liberal minds, the norm of “fairness” has been applied to the NPT by its critics in a narrow manner, and has been limited to the issue of prior possession or non-possession of weapons. There is, however, the question of NNWS compliance with the terms of the treaty. In fact, the most profound dangers emanating from the NPT in today’s world concern the current determined proliferators – Iran and North Korea – that have blatantly violated their commitment to remain non-nuclear by working on nuclear weapons capabilities while members of the treaty (North Korea later withdrew, activating Article X), all the while displaying aggressive regional behavior.

It is difficult to envision any major across-the-board disarmament actually taking place in the foreseeable future.

Over the course of 2016 North Korea stepped up the frequency and increased the explosive power of its nuclear tests, as demonstrated in January and September, and worked to create a warhead that can be mounted on its long range missiles. For its part, Iran over the past year has boosted its ballistic missile program – including problematic testing – while showing no indication of backing down from its nuclear ambitions, despite the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The missiles that Iran tested are precision-guided and can carry a nuclear payload. In the post-JCPOA world, Iran’s ability to shore up power and influence in the region will make it all the more difficult to stop it from moving in the direction of nuclear weapons development down the line, if and when it decides to do so.

In short, while the new nuclear ban initiative reflects the continued frustration of the non-nuclear states and their demand for fair and equal treatment, states like Iran and North Korea are certainly not upholding the norm of fairness in their own behavior. Moreover, they did not (illegally) advance their nuclear weapons programs because the treaty set-up is biased in favor of the NWS. Rather, they have worked on these capabilities – and in North Korea’s case already achieved them – in order to advance their own strategic interests. Whether to ensure survivability (for North Korea), or to ensure survival in the face of aggressive steps they may choose to

Ironically, perhaps, it is the recognized nuclear states that have created arms control agreements and rules of the game that encourage stability, whereas the determined proliferators have highly dangerous motives and do not mind breaking the rules.

take in order to pursue their regional hegemonic ambitions (Iran), the motivation of these two states is not a function of the NWS not moving to total disarmament (i.e., in order to redress an unfair situation). It emanates rather from the *strategic value* that they attribute to these capabilities. For Iran, the NATO attack on Libya in 2011, after Libya gave up all weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in late 2003, certainly drove home the message that had Libya held on to its WMD, it might not have been subjected to attack. North Korea likely drew the same conclusion. Finally, both states have demonstrated that they will advance these capabilities even if it means violating their treaty commitments.

The question of incorporating the notion of fairness in nuclear arms control efforts must also take into consideration that some actors have manipulated the fairness norm in a cynical bid to advance their interests. Iran is a case in point. What are its grounds for demanding fairness in the

nuclear realm after violating the NPT – as confirmed by the IAEA in its definitive report of December 2015 on the Possible Military Dimensions (PMD)? And what is fair about Iran lying about its violations, claiming to have never done anything wrong in the nuclear realm, and on that basis negotiating a deal that grants it more legitimacy for enriching uranium than it had in the past? For Iran to preach fairness in nuclear matters, with its own dismal record – including regarding internal and regional affairs – is a cynical misuse of the norm.

These issues represent some of the rapidly emerging challenges that cannot be ignored. They are about aggressive power plays by states bent on becoming nuclear, rather than abstractions like fairness. Indeed, in their bid for fairness, the NNWS have turned a blind eye to the willful non-compliance on the part of determined proliferators. How will the new initiative deal with states that have no qualms about cheating on commitments and violating treaties?

Additional Challenges and Practical Implications of the Initiative

In the context of prominent bilateral and regional relationships, there are additional problems and constraints to the idea of negotiating a treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons. In today's world, strategic interests are actually driving some states further away from the idea of arms control and from prior bilateral agreements. Russia has of late adopted a more assertive nuclear posture vis-à-vis the United States and NATO, to the point of mentioning the possibility of using nuclear weapons, and conducting drills among the population in preparation for a nuclear attack.⁶ Russia has been upset for years about US and NATO plans for missile defense systems in Europe, and feels threatened by NATO's increasingly close presence to its borders.⁷ US-Russian arms control efforts have stalled over the past few years, and President Obama's 2013 proposal to reduce the number of deployed strategic nuclear weapons by one third fell on deaf ears. Plans for nuclear modernization continue, while China is increasing the size and sophistication of its nuclear arsenal.⁸ In addition, the issue of possible nuclear terrorism cannot be ignored. These worrying trends will not be resolved by the UN initiative.

The vote that was taken on the resolution in the First Committee also revealed how some additional states look at challenges in their regions. Japan's decision to oppose the resolution is likely a reflection of this country's sober assessment of real world dynamics as they play out in its region. While

one might expect Japan to be an obvious supporter of the resolution due to its past history and long-standing opposition to nuclear weapons, the current reality of nuclear North Korea that is issuing nuclear threats in all directions – including toward Japan – might have convinced it for now to prefer the continued protection of the US nuclear umbrella, as did South Korea. While North Korea itself voted in favor of the resolution, there is no indication that it has any plans to actually move in that direction.

Finally, even on the practical/technical level there are issues that would need to be resolved before any progress toward the elimination of nuclear weapons could take place. These include:

- a. Would the five NWS lose their privileged status and a new NPT be adopted – alongside of, or instead of the new (or amended) treaty – in order to accommodate this change?
- b. What does it mean to “eliminate” nuclear weapons? Is the separation of the fissile material from the explosive mechanism of the nuclear weapon sufficient? Or, must the fissile material be reshaped into non-usable form in a nuclear explosive device? Does the plutonium have to be converted into reactor fuel? Should the highly enriched uranium be diluted into enrichment content not usable in nuclear explosives?
- c. On a more basic issue, should the separation of plutonium from irradiated fuel be prohibited? Should all uranium enrichment facilities be placed under rigorous inspection regimes?
- d. Should all past production of fissile materials be accounted for and diluted/converted?
- e. How does one eliminate the threat of nuclear terrorism, if the treaty is state-based and does not apply to non-state organizations?

Assessment

The elimination of nuclear weapons is a worthy cause. The consequences of using a nuclear weapon are devastating, as evinced by their only use to date in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The vast number of warheads that were amassed by the superpowers, and their potential to wreak havoc on the entire world, is what spurred bilateral arms control negotiations between the US and Soviet Union beginning in the 1960s, as well as negotiations on the creation of Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZ) in different regions (the most recent were established in Central Asia and Africa in 2009). The result is that for over 70 years nuclear weapons have not been used, and rules of the game – some would argue even a taboo against nuclear use –

have been established among the recognized nuclear states. No doubt the potential for a first strike, or a nuclear exchange, still exists, and Russia's rhetoric toward the US has heated up. But the continued existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the few states that have possessed them for years and have carved out agreements and rules of the game is less of a challenge to the international community than the spread of nuclear weapons to additional states with a record of breaking the rules.

Indeed, the NPT has been abused by states that have cheated (Iraq, Iran, Libya, and Syria) or officially withdrawn from their obligations (North Korea), as well as by others that have supplied the proliferators with technology and materials. The efficacy of any new treaty, therefore, is dubious, if it does not include the five NWS and does not create effective mechanisms for dealing with non-compliance.

Thus given the current global situation, the time is not ripe for this initiative – which is positive in its aim, but unrealistic regarding the very real constraints that will be faced. Indeed, it is difficult to envision any major across-the-board disarmament actually taking place in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, and taking their cue from the US-Soviet arms control experience, more limited arms control agreements can be achieved. Such efforts – geared to mitigate the dangers associated with nuclear weapons by addressing the challenges posed by the states that hold them, and especially those aspiring to develop them – should certainly be a very high priority for the international community.

Conclusion

The new disarmament resolution passed in the UN First Committee is not feasible because of continued objections by the nuclear states. More significantly, however, it rests on very shaky ground in normative and strategic terms. The fairness norm that is promoted is warped in that it legitimizes demands for fairness from some blatantly “unfair” states, and does not confront the thorny issue of noncompliance. Moreover, key states are currently moving away even from bilateral arms control; therefore, the expectation that they will now disarm is unrealistic. While nuclear weapons have horrific implications if used, ironically, perhaps, it is the recognized nuclear states that have created arms control agreements and rules of the game that encourage stability, whereas the determined proliferators have highly dangerous motives and do not mind breaking the rules. A better

solution would be to avoid unrealistic initiatives and focus instead on the type of arms control that can actually work.

Notes

- 1 See document on the Reaching Critical Will website, <http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com16/resolutions/L41.pdf>.
- 2 “The Assembly deferred action on draft resolutions on a ‘Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices’ (L.65/Rev.1) and on ‘Taking forward multilateral negotiations’ (L.41), due to budget implications.” See <http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/ga11866.doc.htm>.
- 3 See document on the Reaching Critical Will website at <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/OEWG/2016/Documents/OEWG-report-final.pdf>.
- 4 See <https://www.armscontrol.org/aca/npt13steps>.
- 5 Article VI of the NPT says: “Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a *treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control*” [emphasis added].
- 6 See Alex Lockie, “Russia is Preparing for Nuclear War,” *Business Insider*, October 25, 2016, <http://www.businessinsider.com/russia-prepares-nuclear-war-wwiii-2016-10>.
- 7 See Andrew E. Kramer, “Russia Calls New U.S. Missile Defense System a ‘Direct Threat,’” *New York Times*, May 12, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/13/world/europe/russia-nato-us-romania-missile-defense.html?_r=0.
- 8 Data from SIPRI report quoted in Prasun Sonwalkar, “China’s Nuclear Arsenal is Becoming Bigger, More Modern,” *Hindustan Times*, London, June 13, 2016. According to the report, India and Pakistan are also increasing their arsenals. See <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world/china-s-nuclear-arsenal-is-becoming-bigger-more-modern/story-BLGrFsaXYeK9w53RzSWfjJ.html>.



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