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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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A Note from the Editors

The January 2020 issue of *Strategic Assessment: A Multidisciplinary Journal on National Security*, which was launched by the Institute for National Security Studies in 1998, is the first to appear in its new, expanded format.

We view this publication as an academic and professional platform for comprehensive, in-depth discourse on a range of topics related to national security in the broadest sense of the term. Alongside the emphasis on Israel's national security challenges in both traditional and more contemporary understandings of the concept, we seek to develop a theoretical framework for the field and enrich the discourse elsewhere in the world with studies relating to the discipline.

Beginning with this issue, the publication, which includes essays that have undergone a process of double blind academic peer review, will continue to be published in both Hebrew and English and address the wider audience of readers and researchers in Israel and abroad. In addition to expanded academic essays, which will appear in the Research Forum, the new format will feature other content sections. Policy papers will appear in the Policy Analysis section; reviews of professional literature touching on the various disciplines of national security will appear in the Academic Survey; and in-depth interviews with experts and senior thinkers in a variety of national security topics will appear in the Professional Forum. The publication also includes a Book Review section.

As opposed to previous editions, *Strategic Assessment* will first be published online on the publication's new website. All back issues of the journal have been uploaded to the new site. The website is structured to allow easy, convenient searches by a range of parameters, making it a source of essential, content-rich, accessible information and knowledge for researchers and readers interested in national security disciplines. The website will likewise serve as the platform for submission of papers to the editorial board.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Mark Heller, the outgoing editor of *Strategic Assessment*, for his longstanding contribution to the publication's status in the national security community. We also thank the members of the editorial board.

We hope that *Strategic Assessment* in its updated format will make a significant contribution to the growing need for an in-depth, critical, comprehensive examination of the wide range of national security issues.

Kobi Michael and Omer Einav
Editors, *Strategic Assessment*
Tel Aviv, January 2020



The Main Challenges Facing Strategic Intelligence

Itai Shapira

This article analyzes the main contemporary challenges facing strategic intelligence, particularly in Israel and the United States. These challenges derive from shrinking trust in state institutions; the decline in the status of truth in the post-truth and fake news era; the “addiction” bordering on absolute dependence of commanders and decision makers on operational and tactical intelligence; and the inherent limitation of the ability of intelligence to influence leaders’ vision and ideology. Although these are not new challenges, they are intensified in today’s day and age, in part by the interface between them. In the era of advanced technologies and big data, strategic intelligence might find it difficult to justify its epistemological and professional basis. This article recommends methodological reflection and a technological leap forward in strategic intelligence, which now, needed more than ever, must undergo a revolution within the greater intelligence world. It is precisely because of these multiplying challenges and their complex environment that while this is the darkest hour for strategic intelligence, it is also its finest hour.

Keywords: intelligence, strategic intelligence, post-truth, fake news, intelligence methodology, decision making intelligence, politicization of intelligence, terror, campaign between wars

Introduction

This article analyzes the main challenges currently facing strategic intelligence, stresses their singularity in relation to the challenges facing operational and tactical intelligence, and recommends some directions for addressing them. It focuses primarily on Israel and the United States, and in light of differences between national intelligence cultures (Crosston, 2016), it tends toward the “Anglosphere” (the United States and Western countries) (Aldrich & Kasuku, 2012).

The article does not present a comprehensive discussion of the nature of strategic intelligence, or of the relationship between intelligence and leaders; both subjects have been extensively studied (for example, Johnson, 2003; Gazit, 2004). For the purposes of this article, strategic intelligence (Brun, 2015) is seen first of all as a field that serves the strategic decision making echelons (in Israel: the politicians, and in a certain sense, the IDF General Staff and the heads of organizations in the intelligence community). Second, the field deals with the strategic environment (the strategic echelons of adversaries, rivals, and friends, and with elements that influence strategy—the stability of regimes, economies, technologies, and so on). Its primary purpose is to provide information, but also to create knowledge and insights that are relevant to the planning, implementation, and critical review of strategy. It is also in charge of clarifying reality on a strategic level¹ and for creating insights that affect strategy. In turn, this should lead to changes in reality (Dado Center, 2016).

The article covers a variety of challenges: sociological, philosophical, methodological, and technological; challenges connected to the nature of the leaders; and others relating to the environment in which intelligence operates. It posits that unlike in operational and tactical intelligence, most of the challenges derive from the difficulty of strategic intelligence to establish its epistemological and professional authority. While most of the challenges are not

new, it appears that changes in the strategic environment, together with significant improvements in operational and tactical intelligence, the unique character of some decision makers, subversion of the status of truth and facts in decision making processes in the post-truth and fake news era, and technological changes in the information age intensify familiar challenges.

A recent description of the glass ceiling of strategic security intelligence proposes learning from the world of business (Barnea, 2019), but this article argues that in the current era, there is actually an increase in the added value strategic intelligence can provide for commanders and leaders. In order to meet these challenges, national strategic intelligence must engage in methodological reflection and implement advanced technologies. It must undergo the same Revolution in Intelligence Affairs (RIA) as did operational and tactical intelligence.

Context

A recent article (Palacios, 2018) offers a sharp description of the challenges faced by strategic intelligence “in the post-everything age” and hints at the ramifications of post-modernism, post-truth, and fake news. First, strategic intelligence competes for the attention of decision makers against other elements that create strategic information, knowledge, and insights; second, traditional intelligence grew and developed in the modern era in which it was important to clarify the truth, but in the post-modern era the status of truth is undermined and is replaced with narratives; third, traditional intelligence developed on the basis of a perception that the exposure of secrets would help complete the puzzle, but today it is necessary to deal more with mysteries and complexities; fourth, traditional intelligence focused on countries and organized entities, but today must deal with non-state and non-organized entities, and identify emerging units; fifth, a considerable number of leaders’ decisions today are based on opinions,

perceptions, beliefs, and their derivatives, rather than on intelligence; sixth, strategic intelligence is used to support decisions that have already been taken, and in effect help the leaders to “market” narratives to the public; and seventh, intelligence organizations strive to strengthen their influence by means of strategic intelligence, while decision makers are more interested in operational and tactical intelligence, and even use intelligence for other needs, such as covert diplomacy. This analysis forms the basis for the challenges discussed below.

Contemporary Challenges to Strategic Intelligence

Competition and the National Intelligence Monopoly

Competition for attention of leaders and the loss of the national intelligence monopoly have been mentioned in recent years largely in the context of information overload (Treverton, 2004) and the availability of open information and intelligence (William & Blum, 2018). In 2005 it was even suggested that intelligence analysis could become less relevant for decision makers (Teitelbaum, 2005). Some have referred to “the rise and fall of intelligence” in the 20th century (Warner, 2014), while others argue that intelligence is currently the business of many elements apart from security intelligence, partly in view of the development of artificial intelligence and machine learning (Brantly, 2018). In other words, for the last decade strategic intelligence has been fighting for its place.

Presumably in cases where operational and tactical intelligence is required—to launch air attacks, frustrate terrorism, level focused economic sanctions, and so on—national intelligence faces no real competition. But at the strategic level, the situation is different.

The first potential area of competition is linked to the possibility that leaders do not rely only on intelligence to clarify and understand situations, but rather base their decisions on their own direct understanding of the strategic

environment as well. For example, US President Trump, responding to an assessment by the American intelligence community of January 2019 that Iran was not taking the steps necessary to develop a military nuclear project, said that the intelligence personnel “should go back to school,” since in his opinion they were “passive and naive” (Oprysko, 2019). Trump’s different assessment regarding Iran was ostensibly not a case of deliberate deflection or politicization of intelligence (Hastedt, 2013), but reflected his own assessment of the strategic environment, which in this specific case differed from that of the intelligence professionals. To be sure, the phenomenon of leaders “ignoring” intelligence that does not match their own perceptions is not new (Handel, 1989); however, in recent years leaders have apparently acquired greater access to the strategic environment, *inter alia*

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through direct meetings between the leaders themselves, and through the use of technology that enables them to consume “customized” information. Therefore, it is possible that they have a stronger sense that strategic intelligence created by national state institutions offers no added value in relation to their own understanding of the situation.

The second possible area of competition is linked to the security and civilian research institutes and think tanks that are engaged in strategic analysis. Much of the output of these institutions is designed to influence strategy and policy (e.g., Institute for National Security Studies—INSS; RUSI; Chatham House; Washington Institute; Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs). Research studies created by these civilian institutions examine

interactions between arenas and beyond arenas; deal with more than military aspects; analyze developing technologies; and create an assessment and long term forecast. They also include a combination of observations of “the red” (the environment) and “the blue” (own forces) in net assessment/thinking (such as Marshall, 1972)—a subject that is sometimes absent from security intelligence products, which are ostensibly not supposed to analyze “the blue side.” In Britain, for example, the study produced by a long term analysis of the strategic environment was not written by an intelligence entity (Ministry of Defence, 2018).

The main challenge, therefore, derives from the possibility that some decision makers feel that there is a substitute for strategic intelligence. This position might have existed in the past, but the leadership style of some contemporary decision makers intensifies it.

The main challenge, therefore, derives from the possibility that some decision makers feel that there is a substitute for strategic intelligence. This position might have existed in the past, but the leadership style of some contemporary decision makers intensifies it. Moreover, it appears that leaders do not have the same approach to operational and tactical intelligence. If this hypothesis is correct, it explains why strategic intelligence might face difficulty in establishing and justifying its epistemological basis and demonstrating to the leadership its unique added value.

The Decline of Truth and the Rise of Narrative

The common assumption is that intelligence is an institution to clarify reality and discover truth (Brun, 2015). A notable reflection of this perception is the way the American intelligence community describes their relations with senior members of the administration, namely, “truth to power” (Morrell, 2018). Brun and Roitman

(2019) argue that in the post-truth and fake news era it is difficult to clarify reality, and this harms decision making in the fields of national security. In their view, such decisions are often made on the basis of beliefs, opinions, and feelings, rather than on the basis of orderly processes (that includes strategic intelligence) conducted by professionals—as part of the broader trend of a loss of faith in state institutions. RAND even gave the trend a name: “truth decay” (Kavanagh & Rich, 2018). Brahms (2019) described the link between post-truth and the difficulty of discovering objective truth, and the era of technology and information overload. Michlin-Shapir and Padan (2019) use the concept “liquid modernity” and claim that today’s prevalent approach holds that there is not one single truth but a range of narratives, and there is no central authority that is able to judge which narrative is correct. These issues are relevant to the discussion of strategic intelligence.

National intelligence developed in the modern age, which prioritized truth and deemed science the main institution for its discovery. In this sense, it is a clear product of the Enlightenment (Hayden, 2017). In Israel there was an emphasis on the need to use scientific methods in intelligence practice (Ben-Israel, 1999), and the terminology used by the American intelligence community—based on the tradition of Kent (1949), who saw intelligence as a scientific discipline—shows how they carried the torch of the search for truth. Perhaps not surprisingly, etched into the wall of the lobby of the CIA Original Headquarters Building is a verse from the Book of John (8:32): “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

However, the literature recognizes the limitations of intelligence to function only as “an institution for discovering truth.” As far back as the early 1960s, Wasserman (1960) wrote about erroneous basic assumptions—naive realism and inductionism—that lead to intelligence failures. Wasserman attacks the perception that can be called “objectivist,” which maintains not

only that the objective truth exists, but also that intelligence can reveal it using scientific methods. In Israel, Granit (2006) was one of the most prominent opponents of this perception, which he called “the realistic paradigm.” The American application of this approach was recently thoroughly researched (Marrin, 2020).

In addition, the term “post-modern intelligence” has arisen often in recent years (Rathmell, 2002), and studies claim that scientific approaches should be combined with creative approaches (Cavelty & Mauer, 2009). It is possible that intelligence has remained planted in the positivist approach, while it is in fact other disciplines in the fields of social sciences and the exact sciences that are liberating themselves from this paradigm (Manjikian, 2013).

At the same time, it does not appear as though leaders have stopped asking intelligence to uncover the truth. In 2018, for example, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu presented the operation by the Israeli intelligence community to disclose the Iranian nuclear archive. He claimed that Iran had lied to the international community about its military nuclear project (Hai, 2018), and also revealed the sites used by Hezbollah in Lebanon to convert rockets into precision missiles (Azoulay, 2018). The implication is that not only does the Prime Minister deem truth important; he also uses intelligence to reveal it. In the United States, while the Trump era is perceived as an expression of post-truth and deliberate lies (Cassidy, 2018), it also looks as if the American President is not questioning the importance and place of truth and facts, but rather arguing that national intelligence institutions have not engaged in clarification of the relevant facts. The President claimed—contrary to the facts presented by the intelligence community in January 2019—that Iran had conducted tests with rockets, that the Iranian economy was collapsing, that North Korea had stopped testing missiles and returned the American prisoners, and more (Oprysko, 2019). In fact, the President did not present narratives that

were not dependent on truth, but focused on facts and truths, including the “alternative facts” (Bradner, 2018) that supported his narratives.

While the subversion of the importance of truth is a challenge for intelligence in general and strategic intelligence in particular and may have intensified recently, it appears that leaders are not necessarily questioning the ontological basis of the truth. However, they are perhaps questioning the epistemological, institutional, and methodological basis of intelligence for the discovery of truth. Moreover, since strategic intelligence deals fundamentally with abstract phenomena that are open to interpretation and less with physical facts defined by orderly and generic behavior (Shapira, 2020), it is harder to apply the concepts of “truth” and “facts” to it. It appears therefore that strategic intelligence has difficulty justifying its epistemological basis mainly for the purpose of an abstract description of the strategic environment. Operational and tactical intelligence do not face a similar challenge, since they deal mainly with the discovery and exposure of factual and physical truths. They are concerned with secrets, while strategic intelligence focuses also (although not only) on puzzles and mysteries.

Secrets, Puzzles, and Mysteries

Many argue that today’s intelligence must deal mainly with highly complex mysteries (Treverton, 2004), whereas formerly—for example, in the struggle against the Soviet Union during the Cold War in the American context, or in the location of military preparations for war on the part of Syria and Egypt in the Israeli context (Gazit, 2003)—it was primarily concerned with revealing secrets.

Nevertheless it appears that strategic intelligence has dealt with mysteries for many years (Hulnick, 1999). A study of the archives of [National Intelligence Assessments](#) in the United States illustrates this, and a similar phenomenon is found in Britain (Cradock, 2002). However, it appears that the mysteries have become more complex. For example, in

its National Intelligence Estimates, American intelligence presents issues relating to advanced technologies, artificial intelligence, energy, climate, organized crime, and cyber. In order to

In its National Intelligence Estimates, American intelligence presents issues relating to advanced technologies, artificial intelligence, energy, climate, organized crime, and cyber. In order to locate developments in these areas, a different kind of strategic intelligence is required, unlike its previous format in which it was mainly intended to warn of war.

locate developments in these areas, a different kind of strategic intelligence is required, unlike its previous format in which it was mainly intended to warn of war preparations or report on regime stability. Moreover, many of the current mysteries are not focused on just one country, but are also linked to non-state entities.

Irregular and Non-State Entities, and New Cyber Challenges

Numerous studies have stressed the need to adapt intelligence to deal with terror (Herman, 2003a), and maintain that today's central challenges originate in irregular entities (Freedman, 2006). Terror organizations, cyber hackers, and international technology companies are prominent examples of such entities, but in recent decades intelligence organizations have made changes to deal with them, so these are not new challenges for strategic intelligence.

In Israel, for example, warnings of war preparations are a vital component in the concept of security (Hershkovitz, 2017) and in IDF strategy (IDF, 2018), but in recent years changes have been required in the functions of intelligence in this context. Kuperwasser (2007), for example, described changes introduced in the first decade of the new millennium; Kochavi & Ortal (2014) and Brun (2015) described changes in the IDF Intelligence Directorate since

2011, based in part on the need to produce additional output apart from war alerts. In fact it appears that Israeli intelligence has succeeded in adjusting to the challenges of terror (Kabir, 2019; Shpiro, 2012), and for some years has focused on irregular and sub-state entities, whose activities also find expression in interactions between arenas and beyond arenas (A. E., 2016). This issue in itself does not create a new challenge.

Moreover, the need to deal with state and regular issues is actually returning, and to a large extent presents itself as in the Cold War period (Hennigan, 2018). A study of documents published by the US administration dealing with national security issues in 2015-2019 national security strategy (The White House, 2017; The Pentagon, 2018; Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015; Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2019; and Coats, 2019) illustrates the greater priority given to the two countries that create strategic competition (the great powers competition)—China and Russia—and the lower priority given to two rogue countries—North Korea and Iran. In April 2019 the CIA Director remarked that in recent years the Agency had focused on fighting terror and supporting military operations, but had neglected its traditional capabilities vis-à-vis states (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019).

Thus it appears that the need to deal with irregular and non-state entities, together with the necessity to engage once again in traditional intelligence concerning states, does not create new challenges for strategic intelligence. However, an examination of the challenges facing American strategic intelligence with respect to countries such as Russia, China, and North Korea leads to an assessment that it is no longer only a matter of issuing warnings when military force and expeditionary forces are activated, or about the deployment of nuclear weapons or the stability of the regime and the economic situation. American intelligence is required—in addition to, and not instead of the above—to analyze scenarios in the cyber

dimension. To a large extent this is a new challenge.

Although the literature is replete with studies of cyber as a dimension of warfare (Sharma, 2010); of the need to create a revolution in intelligence affairs in the reciprocal relationship between data collection and research (Siman Tov & Allon, 2018); of the difficulty of attributing a cyber attack to its source (Rid & Buchanan, 2015); of intelligence as the basis of creating cyber defense (Mattern et al., 2014); of the intelligence challenge posed by cyber attacks on national infrastructures (Rudner, 2013); of the challenge of exploiting cyber to track the sources of terrorist funding (Winston, 2007); of the cyber challenge created by states (Brantly, 2014); and more, it is hard to find a rich theoretical basis for a discussion of the link between strategic intelligence and the cyber dimension. Are concepts such as “strategic warning” or “a Pearl Harbor-type surprise” relevant in the field of cyber (Wirtz, 2018)? Is the link between operational/military intelligence that deals with capabilities and strategic intelligence that deals with intentions also relevant to the cyber dimension? How, for example, should strategic intelligence handle groups of Russian or North Korean hackers? And can it make use of a methodology similar to the one used to track operational expressions of the strategic logic of Russia and North Korea? The dearth of literature dealing with these issues and with the concept of “strategic cyber intelligence” to a great extent demonstrates the intensity of the challenge.

Intelligence and Leadership

Complicated links between leaders and intelligence, whereby intelligence is used to support decisions already made by leaders, existed in the past (Herman, 2003b; Bar-Joseph, 1998; Freedman, 1997). Matza (2017), for example, described strategic intelligence inter alia as the “spokesperson” that enables the leader to recruit public support for a decision that has already been made. The use

of intelligence to facilitate the United States withdrawal from the war in Iraq in 2003 is an accepted example of this process (Hastedt, 2005; Freedman, 2004).

It appears that the relationship between a leader and intelligence—which is also influenced by the character and personality of the leader (Steinhart & Avramov, 2013)—could today, as in the past, lead to a politicization of intelligence. But it is possible that intelligence organizations are currently perceived as part of the traditional establishment, and certain leaders even demonstrate a lack of trust in them (Zelizer, 2018). In the United States, for example, it is argued that the CIA is going through a process of politicization, marked by opposition to the President’s approaches (Gentry, 2018); some Agency employees have described liberal bias (Gertz, 2018); and even in the 1960s it was possible to discern political bias in its assessments (Freedman, 1997).

Strategic intelligence continues to struggle with a familiar challenge—the superiority that leaders ascribe to their own world view and ideology compared to the professional analysis, and certainly if the latter claims to be objective. Operational and tactical intelligence appears not to confront a similar challenge, since its main purpose is to enable the implementation of policy, and not to influence or change it.

There have already been some who argued that strategic intelligence analysis has had limited influence over American foreign policy (Marrin, 2017); that US presidents since World War II have arrived “prepared” for the presidency with perceptions and strategies, and intelligence only influences them to the extent that it supports their original views (Immerman, 2008); or that even though the strategic intelligence was high quality and relevant, the leaders often chose not to make use of it (Kovacs, 1997). In this sense, strategic intelligence continues to struggle with a familiar

challenge—the superiority that leaders ascribe to their own world view and ideology compared to the professional analysis, and certainly if the latter claims to be objective. Operational and tactical intelligence appears not to confront a similar challenge, since its main purpose is to enable the implementation of policy, and not to influence or change it.

But do today's leaders rely on beliefs, opinions, and feelings more than in the past? Does the debate that they lead today deal more with ideology than in the past, which means they have less need of intelligence that is designed to reveal the truth and presents itself as objective, or do they feel that they are less dependent on strategic intelligence than their predecessors? A full response to this question is beyond the scope of the present study, but leaders and commanders seem to rely increasingly on tactical intelligence.

Improved Operational and Tactical Intelligence: At the Expense of Strategic Intelligence?

Intelligence Gathering and Output

In recent years collecting and processing intelligence capabilities have greatly improved, thanks partly to advanced technology, artificial intelligence, and machine learning (Weinbaum & Shanahan, 2018). This allows more intimate access to raw information, which ostensibly gives a better reflection of what is happening in the area where the data is collected. It seems reasonable for leaders and senior commanders to demand and consume such information, which consists almost entirely of operational and tactical intelligence.

The importance of reading raw information and the “addiction” of leaders to such information are not new—at least in Israel (Ben-Porat, 1984; Bar-Joseph, 2013). However, it seems likely that these phenomena have intensified in recent years in view of the quality and intimacy of the data. Therefore, the more a commander makes use of intimate and sensitive information that symbolizes penetrating to

the heart of the secret, the more information he or she feels is needed, and it must be more intimate. And the more intimate the information, the more powerful the addiction.

While the use of tactical information and intelligence is relatively intuitive, and leaders or commanders may feel that they experience the environment directly without the need of interpretation or mediation, this is likely not the case with strategic intelligence (in this context an American study even examined the difficulty for senior generals of using strategic intelligence; Wolfberg, 2017). While tactical intelligence is usually factual and therefore also concrete and deals with physical entities, strategic intelligence is usually abstract and vague, and deals with human phenomena that are difficult to quantify. Therefore it is difficult to point to a link between improved data collection and improved strategic intelligence, more than to the impact of improved collection on the quality of tactical intelligence. And since this is the case, leaders are apparently more and more “addicted” to operational and tactical intelligence, but not necessarily more dependent on strategic intelligence.

However, military actions that depend on tactical intelligence also require high quality strategic intelligence for their formulation and implementation.

The War on Terror in the United States, Prevention and Influence Strategy, and the Campaign between Wars in Israel

The strategy of prevention and influence is a central component of IDF strategy (IDF, 2018) “to frustrate the threats, to deter and postpone war, and to shape the area in a way that suits Israel...and damage the enemy's capabilities in order to create the optimal military, political, and cognitive conditions for the future decision of any war that may erupt, and to strengthen deterrence” (pp. 19-20). The campaign between wars (CBW) makes it possible to implement this strategy: “CBW activity is ongoing, exists in every arena of war, based on a situational assessment

and the facilitating intelligence...CBW activity is based on quality intelligence” (p. 24). In order to carry out an attack in Syria against Iranian and Hezbollah sites, to expose the Hezbollah tunnels on the Lebanese border (Mizrachi, 2019), or to attack the legitimacy of Hezbollah in the international community (Zeitoun, 2018), there is a need for high quality and intimate operational and tactical intelligence, at high resolution and in real time. And since CBW has become a central component of Israeli security activity (Zeitoun & Porat, 2019), the demand for this type of intelligence will probably grow.

But how far is strategic intelligence adapted to the format of CBW warfare? Intelligence at various levels, including the strategic level, is described as one of the conditions for its implementation (Allon & Freizler-Swiri, 2019). CBW planning and implementation requires the highest quality of strategic intelligence, which analyzes the strategic environment holistically and identifies windows of opportunity; possibly this was the process that in recent years led Israel to embark on a campaign against Iranian entrenchment in Syria (Even, 2019). However, a study of the professional literature reveals a significant gap in the methodological debate about the link between strategic intelligence and CBW. Apparently, CBW—given the high speed at which it is managed, the significant risks it involves, and its need to engage constantly with secrets, but also with puzzles and mysteries—creates a new challenge for strategic intelligence.

In the United States it is also possible to point to a link between the rise in importance and relevance of certain types of conflict—above all the war on terror (CT – counterterrorism) and insurgency (COIN – counterinsurgency)—and the prominence of operational and tactical intelligence. For example, there is a strong link between operational and tactical intelligence and the activity of the American Special Forces (Gentry, 2017) and these forces are the central component of the war on terror. But what is the place of strategic intelligence in these forms

of action? Some argue that the American intelligence community has adopted an approach that puts the emphasis on information (information-centric intelligence) and by implication on tactical intelligence, more than on research and assessment (Dudley, 2018). In Britain it has been claimed that the roles of strategic intelligence are in doubt (Gibson, 2009). Moreover, in the United States there is apparently a trend of focusing on current

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intelligence in a way that leads to neglect of capabilities and skills that are more relevant to strategic intelligence (Marrin, 2013; Heinderich, 2007). A further illustration of the prominence of operational intelligence rather than strategic intelligence emerges from an analysis of the place of intelligence in the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) (Hundley, 1999). Such a revolution is usually the result of a combination of changes in technology, weapons, structure, organization, and perceptions (Adamsky, 2012). The latest revolution is based to a large extent on precision information, of high quality and high resolution, that facilitates the activation of an “information-crush combination” (Rosen, 2019). There is no doubt that this in fact refers to operational and tactical intelligence, but with regard to strategic intelligence, it is relatively absent from the literature on the subject, possibly indicating that strategic intelligence has not yet adjusted to changes in security thinking and practice.

The Revolution in Intelligence Affairs and Strategic Intelligence

While tactical intelligence is undergoing a Revolution in Intelligence Affairs, mainly by exploiting new technologies, strategic

intelligence appears to have been left behind. Underlying the theory of the RIA is the idea that a radical change in intelligence is influenced by technologies—particularly those relating to artificial intelligence and data analysis; combat efforts—in the intelligence context this refers

While tactical intelligence is undergoing a Revolution in Intelligence Affairs, mainly by exploiting new technologies, strategic intelligence appears to have been left behind.

mainly to information systems that enable data mining and use of big data; structural and organizational issues—mainly regarding units that fuse various intelligence sensors, but also those that combine intelligence with operations and technology; and new perceptions—mainly those relating to the search for an alternative to the “intelligence cycle” as the organizing idea of the intelligence process, while creating new combinations of collection and research. In the professional literature, it is common to refer to several revolutions in intelligence affairs over the course of history (Lahneman, 2007; Denece, 2014; Barger, 2005), but it is clear that the main catalysts for the current revolution are big data and the information revolution. The most relevant type of intelligence for this type of revolution is operational and tactical.

Col. Y. of IDF Intelligence describes (2018) the potential of the digital age. He looks mainly at intelligence that facilitates the struggle against suicide terrorists, in other words, operational and tactical intelligence. As background to this discussion, in the Israeli context, the focus on improvements in operational intelligence is due inter alia to the gaps identified during the Second Lebanon War in 2006 (Bar-Joseph, 2007), and it appears that this was also one of the considerations for setting up the Activation Unit in the Intelligence Directorate (Buhbut, 2016).

Another expression of the role of operational intelligence in military and intelligence revolutions can be found in the literature dealing

with changes underway in military intelligence (Ferris, 2005). In 2004, the emergence of the RMA was described as the result of how intelligence is incorporated into net-centric warfare (Ferris, 2004), and clearly these are the consequences of the information revolution. Another study (Evans, 2009) describes the changes that are needed in the “traditional” model of the intelligence process—the “intelligence cycle”; this study also focuses on military intelligence, and implicitly on operational and tactical intelligence.

However, the literature dealing with the link between the information revolution and big data on the one hand, and strategic intelligence on the other, is rather limited. In the United States it is already argued that the CIA units that dealt with strategic intelligence did not fully exploit the information revolution (Berkowitz, 2007). There are many references to an article dealing with the use of big data for strategic intelligence purposes (Lim, 2016) but this is apparently the exception that proves the rule.

Conclusions, Further Research, and Recommendations

This article presents various challenges facing strategic intelligence, and even if most are not new, it appears that taken together they become more intense. It describes the sociological aspect of the loss of trust by the public and its leaders in institutions, of which state intelligence is one; the philosophical aspect linked to the weakening of the ontological basis of objective truth and in particular the epistemological basis of its discovery by means of facts and empirical findings; aspects relating to the difficulty of intelligence to influence vision and ideology; the growing demand from commanders and political leaders for operational and tactical intelligence, rather than strategic intelligence; and the methodological aspect, linked to the limited adoption of innovative technologies by strategic intelligence and only partial implementation of the Revolution in Intelligence Affairs.

The article presents the hypothesis that strategic intelligence has difficulty in establishing its epistemological and methodological authority. It has not sufficiently adopted innovative technologies, and is largely based on intuitions and familiarity with the environment and past experience; Brun (2018) calls this the “educational school” of intelligence research. At a time when information science and advanced technologies have become an important condition for making decisions, strategic intelligence has difficulty persuading leaders of its unique added value and its ability to make full use of technologies for the purposes of strategic analysis.

In order to validate or refute the hypotheses raised by this article, it is necessary to develop an empirical base and conduct interviews with leaders and senior members of the intelligence community (an example of over sixty years ago is Hilsman, 1956) from the very contention that intelligence studies do not sufficiently use interviews (Van Puyvelde, 2018) or observations. Empirical information should above all provide an understanding of the way in which leaders perceive strategic intelligence and its added value, and of course an understanding of the latest challenges now facing the practice of strategic intelligence. In addition, the concept “strategic intelligence” is vague and demands interpretation, and it is therefore possible that a different approach could refute the thesis developed by this article.

In addition, it seems that the literature on the subject of strategic intelligence continues to engage in the traditional subjects—surprise, warning, relations with leaders, politicization, organizational issues, cognitive deflection, and so on (for example, Betts & Mahnken, 2003; Johnson, 2003; Phythian, Gill, & Marrin, 2008). Although recently attempts have been made to emphasize the impact of theories on intelligence practice (Gill & Phythian, 2018; Coulthart, 2019), there is still a gap in orderly writing about the effect of technology on the practice of strategic intelligence, or in other words, a gap in research

that combines practical, up-to-date knowledge with broad theoretical observation.

Furthermore, there is no satisfactory research into alternative models for the intelligence cycle in the context of strategic intelligence. In Israeli Military Intelligence (AMAN), for example, 2019 marked the start of implementing the Fifth Dimension project that is generating changes in the process of creating intelligence (Fishman, 2019). It appears that this project is indeed challenging the intelligence cycle and creating unique combinations of research and data collection, while utilizing advanced technology, and it is therefore recommended to use this framework to develop a theory and updated models that will also be relevant for strategic intelligence.

The ticket that gives intelligence personnel entry to the halls of national security was and remains operational and tactical intelligence, but strategic intelligence must also shape its own “room for strategic discussion.” In effect it must undergo its own Revolution of Intelligence Affairs.

In order to deal with the challenges described in this article, strategic intelligence must engage in reflection, define its methodology, establish critical thinking (Hendrickson, 2008), and nurture the foundations of the profession (Coulthart, 2016). In that way it will be possible to raise its credibility in the eyes of the political leadership (Gookins, 2008), through a combination of quantitative analysis and abstract, qualitative analysis, giving expression to wise and innovative use of technology, particularly with respect to information science. The ticket that gives intelligence personnel entry to the halls of national security was and remains operational and tactical intelligence, but strategic intelligence must also shape its own “room for strategic discussion.” In effect it must undergo its own Revolution of Intelligence Affairs.

The phrase “methodological reflection” does not refer only to the implementation of basic research methods such as scenario analysis, war games, reverse filming, red teaming, and so on. Strategic intelligence must also examine how the utilization of big data can help to locate patterns and thereby identify anomalies (Kuosa, 2010); a striking example relates to macro-economic and global trends (and not only the economies of countries). It must develop an orderly methodology for strategic warnings of cyber attacks, not necessarily on the part of official state elements, and also warn of emerging trade wars, such as between China and the United States. It must establish an approach using integrative models on data collection for strategic matters. For example, changes in the concepts of force buildup and deployment have made the serial process of data collection guided by defined questions (known unknowns) irrelevant, because these are cases of emerging processes that may not be related to decisions by leaders on the other side. Strategic intelligence must “take ownership” of methods linked to horizon scanning in order

Political leaders appear to consume raw information and develop independent access to the strategic environment, but in fact, quality strategic intelligence can frame the strategic discussion, indicate which information requires further investigation and which is not currently relevant, show the possible directions for development in the strategic environment if specific strategies are implemented, and give politicians suggestions for alternative strategies to the ones already chosen.

to identify trends that could develop in the long term. One example is the need to identify emerging technologies in the field of artificial intelligence, which could have an impact not only on the operational environment, but also on strategic competition between countries (Allon, 2018; Hershkowitz, 2019).

The thread that runs through all these recommendations is the belief that strategic intelligence should not be deterred from the adoption of innovative technologies, maximization of capabilities in information science and artificial intelligence, focus on technologies as the subject of research, and systematic work on methodology. It must not leave the field open only for operational and tactical intelligence. Apart from the new tasks indicated above, it must continue engaging with the traditional tasks of intelligence, such as warning of war threats, political upheavals affecting enemies (and friends), and so on. In these cases, too, intuition and deep familiarity with the strategic environment are essential, but not sufficient.

What prospect, therefore, does strategic intelligence have in the current era? Paradoxically, the complex, challenging environment of information overload and rapidly changing technology; leaders who undermine a basic element of the discipline and methodology of state intelligence in general, and strategic intelligence in particular; and the difficulty of clarifying events—all these factors increase its added value. Political leaders appear to consume raw information and develop independent access to the strategic environment, but in fact, quality strategic intelligence can frame the strategic discussion, indicate which information requires further investigation and which is not currently relevant, show the possible directions for development in the strategic environment if specific strategies are implemented, and give politicians suggestions for alternative strategies to the ones already chosen. Quality strategic intelligence is a holistic product (and process) that constantly moves inwards and outwards, between details and the whole picture, and also between disciplines and different research issues. Today’s complex environment demands such a holistic view. Relevant strategic intelligence is both artistic and scientific (Shapira, 2020)—like strategy itself (Brodie, 1998). True, these were its essence

in the past, but the sheer volume of today's challenges and information reinforce its ability to provide unique added value.

It is certainly difficult to measure the success of intelligence in general and strategic intelligence in particular (Moore, Krizan, & Moore, 2005), and thus a retrospective examination of the value of assessments is unsatisfactory. The true test of strategic intelligence is to a large extent its ability to influence the direction, planning, and implementation of strategy, and by implication, to shape the environment. It must do this by means of professional analysis, which, even if it does not claim absolute objectivity, must be based on facts, as well as on in-depth interpretation and the use of relevant conceptual frameworks. This is what creates the "strategic lenses" that lead to an understanding of a complex and dynamic environment in a way that also facilitates shaping it. Strategic intelligence is now needed more than ever: this could be its darkest hour, but also its finest hour.

★

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Notes

- 1 There is an ontological debate about “strategic reality,” and an epistemological question regarding intelligence’s capability to clarify it, but this is beyond the scope of this article.



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Violent Conflicts in the Middle East: A Quantitative Perspective

Mora Deitch and Carmit Valensi

The Middle East has long been considered one of the most conflict-ridden areas in the world. The ongoing events over the past decade of the “Arab Spring” that intended to march the Middle East toward a more positive future have instead deepened regional instability, fanned existing conflicts, and sparked new turmoil. This study examines conflicts in the Middle East and the way in which they end in comparison to global trends. It offers an additional perspective on Middle East conflict research through data and quantitative analysis, and provides a preliminary foundation for further research on the question of whether the characteristics of Middle East conflicts are unique or resemble global trends. Quantitative analysis is based on data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), which includes data on 347 “conflict years” in the Middle East from 1946 to 2018. The study investigates the types of conflict, their scope, intensity, number of fatalities caused, and ways in which they ended. These conflicts are characterized by a high level of intensity and a high degree of international involvement, and therefore evince low chances of peaceful resolution. Findings show that beginning in 2003, there was a sharp rise in the scope of conflicts in

the Middle East, primarily in intrastate conflicts. However, since 2014 there has been a decline in the number of fatalities. The findings also indicate that most conflicts in the Middle East do not differ in nature from conflicts in other arenas around the world.

Keywords: Middle East, violent conflicts, intrastate conflicts, UCDP, civil war, conflict intensity, international involvement, conflict resolution

Introduction

Since 1945, the Middle East has been viewed as an area afflicted by conflict and confrontation (Sørli et al., 2005), with the most prominent of those conflicts being the Arab-Israeli wars, the Iran-Iraq War, and the First (1991) and Second (2003) Gulf Wars. These were joined by conflicts and civil wars in Iraq, Syria, Algeria, Jordan, Oman, Yemen, and Lebanon, as well as border disputes such as those between Egypt and Libya, Jordan and Syria, Israel and Lebanon, Iraq and Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and others. Many of these conflicts are the result of colonial legacies and the fragility of the countries that emerged in their wake from the early twentieth century through the 1970s. Competing ideologies, ethnic and religious tensions, competition between the powers, and the development of autocratic nation-states are some of the accepted causes of conflict in the region (Fox, 2001; Sørli et al., 2005).

The events of the “Arab Spring” that swept through the Middle East beginning nearly a decade ago have deepened regional instability and tensions that have long characterized the region and sparked new conflicts. The regional turmoil has assumed various conceptual and structural forms over the years; prominent among have been the “revolution” phase (2010-2011), which represents the uprisings that led to the downfall of four regimes—in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen—and to turmoil within Syria, which is still struggling to stabilize itself following a prolonged civil war. Other countries that did not experience turmoil directly (Iraq, Bahrain, Jordan, and Lebanon)

are characterized by ongoing instability. The rise of the Salafi-jihadists from 2014-2016 and the emergence of the Islamic State, which attempted through violent means to impose the Salafi-jihadist idea as the region’s leading ideology, as well as the increased involvement in the Middle East cauldron of regional and international actors driven by competing political and economic interests, all served to make the Middle East a fragile, chaotic, and violent arena (Valensi, 2015).

Beginning in 2003 there was a sharp rise in the scope of conflicts in the Middle East, primarily in intrastate conflicts. This trend is inconsistent with events at the global level, where there has even been a slight decline in the scope of such conflicts since 2016.

This study examines the violent conflicts in the Middle East over the past 72 years, starting in 1946, the year following the end of World War II, through 2018, from a quantitative-statistical perspective. The purpose of this study is to enable a deeper understanding of Middle East conflicts—their various types, scope, intensity, the number of fatalities caused, and how they are resolved. This topic has been examined relatively little in quantitative research (compared to qualitative analyses). The study will also compare Middle East conflicts with conflicts in other arenas worldwide.

The findings show that beginning in 2003 there was a sharp rise in the scope of conflicts in the Middle East, primarily in intrastate conflicts.

This trend is inconsistent with events at the global level, where there has even been a slight decline in the scope of such conflicts since 2016. In addition, there is a trend both in the Middle East and globally of a gradual and continuous increase in the incidence of intrastate conflicts, as opposed to interstate disputes. A similar trend, both in the Middle East and in the global arena, indicates an increase in foreign involvement in conflicts. However, contrary to the global trend that demonstrates a decline in high intensity wars and an increase in the incidence of low intensity conflicts, the Middle East is characterized by a relatively higher rate of high intensity wars. There has been a sharp increase in the number of fatalities in the Middle East since 2011, although since 2014 there has been a decline of some 75 percent in fatalities. Finally, around 74 percent of all conflicts in the Middle East have not concluded.¹ Of the conflicts that ended, the findings indicate that the most common ways to end disputes are low levels of activity (conflicts that do not come to a complete conclusion); a military victory by the state over rebels; and regulation of the conflict through a ceasefire. On the other hand, the less common ways to end a conflict in the region are victory for rebels (the non-state party) or a peace agreement. That conflicts in the Middle East persist and sometimes do not end at all can be attributed to the characteristics noted above—a high level of intensity and a great degree of foreign involvement, which reduce the chances of bringing conflicts to an end, in particular through peaceful means. Therefore, in most cases conflicts in the Middle East reflect global trends.

The article includes a review of the relevant literature on conflicts in the Middle East and around the world and the ways they are terminated. The methodology is described below, including the research method and definition of variables. The empirical findings that emerged from the analysis are then discussed in detail. Finally, the main conclusions

and recommendations for future research are presented.

Literature Review

For years, the Middle East was considered one of the most violent areas in the world. Since the Cold War, the Middle East has witnessed a series of intrastate wars that are among the most prolonged conflicts in the world (for example, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) and bloody interstate wars (for example, the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988). Moreover, foreign actors are prominently involved in the region (as in Iraq in 1991 and 2003, and in Syria in 2015). This section presents some notable findings from the literature on theories and conceptualizations of conflict types, their intensity, and their termination, including from the literature on conflict research in general and the Middle East in particular.

Conflict Types

The research literature discusses primarily two types of conflict. The first focuses on conflicts between states; the second focuses on conflicts inside states—between the regime and non-state actors (for example a rebel organization). This division is largely related to competing paradigms in international relations. The realism paradigm dominated research during the period when conflicts between states were common, and emphasized the centrality of states as well as the importance of structural factors, polarities, and the balance of forces in the global system as possible drivers for the outbreak of conflicts (Cunningham & Lemke, 2013). On the other hand, later theories such as liberalism and especially constructivism began to focus on non-state actors as influencers of political processes and on “softer” considerations that go beyond the discussion of interests, power, and influence (that are common in realism) as motivators for actors’ behavior. The non-state actors are violent and often threaten the state, or fight each other without any interference on the part of the state. These organizations

threaten national and international security as they challenge the state monopoly through the use of force, usually within defined territory, thus creating a phenomenon of intrastate conflicts (Williams, 2008). These conflicts are considered a grave threat to global peace and security, given their particularly lethal form of warfare. They are characterized by slim prospects for termination through regulation and peace agreements (Salman, 2014; Backer & Huth, 2014; Toft, 2010).²

The widespread proliferation of violent non-state actors has led to the fact that since the end of the Cold War, the most common type of conflict currently occurring in the world in general and the Middle East in particular is intrastate conflict that includes ethnic/religious conflict, revolution, and genocide (Schiff, 2018). The number of interstate conflicts, on the other hand, has remained relatively low.

Conflict Intensity

Conflict intensity is measured primarily in the number of fatalities, although the issue is sometimes examined through the number of combatants and the size of the combat area.³ Clearly many factors affect the intensity of both interstate and intrastate conflicts,⁴ and can be classified in three categories: psychological factors, internal state factors (socio-economic), and external factors. Another significant factor relates to the competing ideologies of the parties to the conflict. Political, secular, and religious ideologies often legitimize the use of violence, accentuate the differences between rival groups, and raise the level of hostility between them. Fundamental belief in ideology can lead people to sacrifice their lives in its name (Taber, 2002; Sanin & Wood, 2014; Ugarriza & Craig, 2012).

One of the factors affecting the intensity of intrastate conflict is a difference in religious, cultural, and ethnic identification between different population sectors. Such gaps and contrasting worldviews prolong the duration of the conflict and make it difficult for the parties to conduct successful negotiations (Leng & Regan,

2003; Toft, 2003). Feelings of belonging and societal and sectorial solidarity affect conflict intensity and the willingness of communities to protect their identity. Economic ability (Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008) and type of regime are other factors that influence conflict intensity and the strength and staying power of the parties. Thus, for example, democratic regimes are less violent, and therefore the intensity of conflict within democratic states will be lower (Fearon, 2004).

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Furthermore, intensity of conflict may also be influenced by external factors such as the involvement of foreign actors. Such support, usually expressed in the form of military armament and economic aid, influences the strength and spirit of the fighting forces (Saideman, 2001; Filote, et al., 2016). In fact, the longer and more violent a conflict and the higher its intensity, the harder it will be for the parties to terminate the conflict peacefully (Deitch, 2016).

Termination of Conflicts

Conflict resolution as a field of research began in the 1950s and 1960s and matured in the era following the Cold War. Conflict resolution research poses several challenges, especially in view of the rise in internal conflicts and the global war on terror that has weakened the idea of "democratic peace," whereby there is a low chance of violent conflict in democratic states (Ramsbotham et al., 2011).

A common definition of conflict termination is when there has been a significant reduction in the number of fatalities. However, it is clear

that the means of termination is an empirical phenomenon that is difficult to characterize and measure. In fact, there are a number of ways to terminate conflicts, from military victory and annihilation of the enemy to a peace agreement with the enemy. In the pre-World War II era, most internal wars ended when one party completely defeated the rival who surrendered, was annihilated, or fled (Toft,

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2010). However, the standard assumption today is that a conflict does not necessarily end with a military victory or a peace agreement, but in other circumstances that are less sharply defined, such as fatigue on both sides (Kreutz, 2010).⁵ In fact, the number of internal wars that have ended without a decisive military victory or peace agreement has increased significantly since the end of the Cold War (Toft, 2010).⁶ Kreutz (2010) expanded the conventional division of termination of conflicts into four types: military victory, peace agreement, ceasefire, and “other,” with the latter category the most common end to internal disputes in 1946-2005.

The involvement of many parties can lead to difficulties in finding peaceful solutions to conflicts. According to Yaakov Bar-Simantov (2010) there are strategic, structural, and psychological barriers to a peaceful resolution of disputes. Strategic barriers arise from security risks following peacemaking and tangible concessions. These barriers also relate to the strategies implemented by the parties, sometimes due to concerns over the future, ignoring the need to construct peace. Structural barriers relate to internal, bureaucratic, and institutional constraints that create difficulties for the peace process. These barriers stem from the opposition of political elites, political

parties, interest groups, and security bodies to the peace process, which they regard as running counter to interests. Psychological barriers are cognitive and emotional barriers, such as national narratives, values, culture, ideology, or religion, which make it difficult to change attitudes toward rivals and to the conflict as a whole. Thus these barriers may make it difficult to accept compromises and concessions, and lead to skepticism regarding a peace process and resolution of the conflict.

Most studies surmise that negotiations to terminate a conflict contribute to the stability of peace more than military victories (Licklider, 1995; Dubey, 2002; Fortna, 2008; Toft, 2003). However, Luttwak posits otherwise, and contends that wars lead to termination of conflict (Luttwak, 1999). In this context, Wagner’s premise (1993) supports Luttwak’s approach, arguing that negotiated settlements tend to break down due to the failure to involve rebel forces in a new government, while victory leads to the destruction of the opponent in a way that prevents recurrence of the conflict.⁷ Similarly Kreutz (2010) finds that military victory on the whole characterizes short conflicts and reduces the chance of their recurrence. However, Hartzell (Hartzell, 2009; Hartzell, 2007) examines 108 civil wars that occurred between 1945 and 1999, and concludes that both military victories and negotiated settlements reduce the chances of conflict recurrence. Other researchers found that there is indeed no statistical significance to the means of termination and the duration of peace (Doyle & Sambanis, 2000; Walter, 2004).

The Study of Middle East Conflicts

In the most recent research on Middle East conflicts, one school of thought tends to attribute realistic explanations (cost-benefit considerations, power, and interests) to the large number of conflicts and wars in the region (Sørli et al., 2005; Milton-Edwards & Hinchcliffe, 2007). This school of thought emerged in response to scholars who rely on a substantive view and attribute a Hobbesian nature to the region

(Gran, 1998; Salamey, 2009; Hariri, 2015). These researchers surmise that the roots of the conflict in the Middle East lie in the region's economic, cultural, post-colonial, and institutional characteristics (Gran, 1998). The economic approach explains the uniqueness as a product of the failure to establish liberal economics in the region, that is, the weakness of the middle classes and poor international economic policy in the region. Cultural explanations focus on the failure of Middle East modernization processes, the predominance of Muslim codes and culture, gender superiority, and widespread cultural suspicion of Western modernization. Another cultural aspect is linked to post-colonial views, which claim that it was Western colonialism that led to the creation of fragile and dependent Middle East policy establishments and the rejection of democratic institutions and values. Institutional explanations focus on the absence of proper democratic institutions in the Middle East that work to advance political freedoms and are characterized by military and security dominance (Salamey, 2009).

In contrast, realist researchers do not see the Middle East as a unique region, and attribute the phenomenon of conflict to universal explanations, resulting from a desire for power and influence. In their book *Conflicts in the Middle East since 1945*, Milton-Edwards and Hinchcliffe analyze several conflicts in the Middle East, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Iran-Iraq War, and clashes between the Kurds and the Iraqi government through an examination of the social, political, cultural, and religious characteristics of each of the arenas. They contend that in many cases, the roots of the conflict lie in the ongoing history of intervention by external powers motivated by strategic interests, including access to regions rich in natural resources, primarily oil, and do not result from characteristics unique to the Middle East (Milton-Edwards & Hinchcliffe, 2007).

The continued involvement of external actors in the region is usually conducted in the name of the battle against extremist religious

groups (such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State) or in the name of humanitarian intervention, whether as a justification or a pretext (such as in Libya and Syria). These accelerated clashes and proxy wars and encouraged battles for control, influence, and power (Mahdavi, 2015).

Quantitative studies examining the causes of conflict in the Middle East in comparison to other arenas around the world have also concluded that “there is nothing mysterious or particular about conflicts in the Middle East or in Muslim countries.” The conflicts can be explained satisfactorily with general theories of civil war and conflict resolution.

Quantitative studies examining the causes of conflict in the Middle East in comparison to other arenas around the world have also concluded that “there is nothing mysterious or particular about conflicts in the Middle East or in Muslim countries.” The conflicts can be explained satisfactorily with general theories of civil war and conflict resolution (Sørli et al., 2005). These studies shed light on the wide range of different types of conflict in the Middle East that go beyond the classic definition of military warfare and extend to political violence, low intensity fighting, malign propaganda, economic boycotts, territorial and water disputes, resistance to occupation, and more, and maps the clashes that have occurred in the region according to several criteria (Milton-Edwards & Hinchcliffe, 2007): interstate clashes, including clashes between Arabs and Iranians, between Israelis and Arabs, and between Arabs and Arabs; regional clashes that occurred mainly as part of the Arab-Israeli conflict; and clashes between regional and external actors such as the 1956 Sinai Campaign and the 1991 Gulf War. Finally, there are intrastate conflicts and ethnic violence, including the Lebanese Civil War of 1975-1990; the tragic struggle of the Kurds—a minority spread among four countries in the region, whose demands range from recognition of their right to self-determination to political

and social rights in the countries in which they live; civil wars in Libya and Yemen; and the early stages of the fighting in Syria.

This division illustrates the change in the type of actors involved in the conflicts. In the past, research into regional conflicts dealt with traditional rivalries between states and competition for control of natural resources such as water and oil. From the 1990s, with the end of the superpower conflict in the framework of the Cold War, conflict research has focused on the growing role of non-state actors that began to compete with the sovereign state for power, influence, and resources.

The spread of intrastate conflicts in the Middle East, as in other arenas, especially Third World countries, is linked to the weakness of those countries and their limited ability to provide public services and security on a continuous basis, as evident in Afghanistan, Sudan, Lebanon, and Iraq. There are cases in which the regime provides basic public services in central towns but is less effective in the periphery. The government in these areas may share its sovereignty with violent non-state actors. This phenomenon, called “fragile sovereignty,” results from the friction and interface between the state and the violent non-state actors. The lack of full control by the state in a particular area is what enables the penetration by these actors and fans internal conflicts (Mulaj, 2010).

Furthermore, in some countries in the Middle East, national institutions do not reflect the will of the people, but rather the will of the ruling elite or the aspirations of a specific ethnic group. This reality leads to the rise of power elements that challenge central government, among them local leaders. Such processes can result in the emergence of sub-state entities and in some cases even lead to civil war, which can end with the collapse of the existing order.

Joel Migdal (1988) examines the question of relations between the state and civil society in Third World countries, including in the Middle East, through a model of state-society relations.

This model sharpens the struggle of the state against other social organizations. According to his findings, even though the government that emerged in these countries following the decolonization process has at its disposal resources greater than those of other social-political organizations in the country, and even though the rulers present a veneer of absolute state control over events in society, and of government and society being identical, for the most part they fail to achieve this, except for the sake of appearance. Consequently, they are weak states with strong societies (Migdal, 1988). In these countries, there is an ongoing struggle between state leaders on the one hand, who seek to mobilize residents and hoard resources in order to subordinate all and everything to one set of rules designed according to their vision, and on the other hand, traditional, social, local, and other organizations competing with them for de facto control. Sometimes these organizations are so powerful that they succeed in “conquering” parts of the country, as happened with Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

Like Migdal, Ayoob (1995) deals with conflicts in Third World countries, including in Middle East states, in the post-Cold War era. His arguments are based on two assumptions: first, these countries are characterized by a narrow legitimacy base; and second, security is rooted in the political space more than in the military space. He argues that the source of instability in these countries lies in the early stages of their creation. Namely, their late entry into the state system created the infrastructure for crises (Ayoob, 1995).

Methodology

This study examines all violent conflicts in the geographical area of the Middle East (not including North Africa, and therefore the war in Libya is not included here) over the past 72 years, starting in 1946—the year after the end of World War II—through 2018, from a quantitative-statistical perspective. This time period was

chosen to correspond with the database through which the analysis was conducted. However, the research focuses on the past two decades and the impact of these conflicts on the Middle East system.

These violent conflicts include interstate conflicts and intrastate conflicts that occur between a state and a non-state party. The unit of analysis is 347 violent “conflict years,”⁸ which include the total of conflict years examined in the Middle East, while making a comparison to trends in the international system. The purpose of this study is to enable a deeper understanding of Middle East conflicts—their various types, scope, intensity, number of fatalities caused, and how they are resolved. This topic has been examined relatively little in quantitative research compared to qualitative analyses.

The Empirical Basis

The study quantitatively-statistically examines 347 “conflict years” from 1946 to 2018 from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) database,⁹ which contains a comprehensive list of 2,385 “conflict years” that occurred worldwide during this time frame. A violent conflict is defined as “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year” (UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, 2013). The definition includes five components: first, the use of armed force: any physical weapon, including guns, but also sticks, stones, fire, water, and so on; second, at least 25 deaths in a calendar year as a result of the use of armed force between rivals; third, rivals: the government of a state or any opposition organization or alliance of these organizations. A government is defined as the party that controls the capital of a state, while an opposition organization is defined as a non-governmental organization that employs armed force in order to influence a given conflict. This database deals only with officially organized resistance, and

not with spontaneous violence. Fourth, the state: an internationally recognized sovereign government that controls a population and a defined territory; and fifth, a conflict pertaining to government and/or a disputed territory: opposing positions regarding government, i.e., opposition to the type of political system, to a change of central government, or a change of political composition. Alternatively, these disputes may be in relation to a specific territory, for example in the case of transfer of control of a specific territory to another state (international conflicts), a request for secession, or autonomy (intrastate conflicts) (UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, 2013).

The unit of analysis is 347 violent “conflict years,” which include the total of conflict years examined in the Middle East, while making a comparison to trends in the international system. The purpose of this study is to enable a deeper understanding of Middle East conflicts—their various types, scope, intensity, number of fatalities caused, and how they are resolved.

For the purpose of the study, violent conflicts in the Middle East were coded according to selected criteria available in the framework of the database, which will be discussed extensively in the next section. A comparison will also be made between the Middle East system and the global system.¹⁰ Data regarding the global arena likewise includes data for conflicts in the Middle East.

Research Variables

This study seeks to characterize conflicts in the Middle East arena and compare them to global conflicts according to five main criteria: the type of conflicts, their scope, their intensity, the number of fatalities caused, and how they are terminated.

Type of conflict: Coded according to the UCDP dataset as follows: (1) extra-systemic conflict: takes place between a state and a

non-state actor, with the state struggling to gain control of a territory outside of its own territory; (2) interstate conflict: takes place between two states; (3) intrastate conflict (internal): takes place within a state, where Party A is a government while Party B is a non-state actor (one or more). This type of conflict does not include foreign involvement by another government in fighting; (4) internal conflict with international involvement (internationalized internal): takes place between Party A, which is a government, and Party B, the non-state actor (one or more), together with foreign involvement by another government in the fighting.

Scope of conflict: The number of conflicts that take place in each given year, between 1946 and 2018.

Intensity of conflict: This variable relates to the level of violence, which is measured in the number of deaths in a calendar year. The variable was binary-coded by the dataset in the following way: (1) low intensity: between 25 and 999 battle-related deaths as a result of fighting between rival sides to a conflict in a calendar year; (2) war: at least 1,000 battle-related deaths as a result of fighting between rival sides to a conflict in a calendar year.

Number of deaths: A continuous variable of the exact number of fatalities in a calendar year, reported according to the UCDP database.¹¹

Termination of conflict: According to the dataset, termination of conflict is when there are fewer than 25 deaths during a calendar year.¹² This variable was coded as follows: (1) peace agreement; (2) ceasefire; (3) government victory; (4) rebel victory; (5) low level of activity (due to a cause other than the above, for example, fatigue of one of the parties); (6) an actor ceases to exist.¹³

Findings

Presentation of the findings will focus on conflicts that took place in the Middle East from 1946 to 2018, with reference to the five variables mentioned above.

Scope and Trends

Figures 1 and 2 present data on the scope of conflicts (y-axis) between the years 1946 and 2018 (x-axis). Figure 1 provides a comparative view of the scope of global conflict by year (including the Middle East, 2,385 “conflict years” in total) compared to the Middle East (347 “conflict years”), while Figure 2 focuses only on the Middle East. Figure 1 indicates a significant increase of three and a half times in the scope of global conflicts between 1960 and 1991. Despite a decline in the 1990s and early 2000s, there is another increase starting in 2012, which peaked in 2016.

Figure 2 shows an increase in the number of conflicts in the Middle East from 1959 to 1967, and an additional increase from 1977 that remained relatively stable until 1995. From 2002 to 2018 there is a dramatic (sixfold) increase in the number of conflicts that occurred in the Middle East.

Conflict Types

Figures 3 and 4 present data on the types of conflicts from 1946 to 2018.¹⁴ Figure 3 focuses on the types of conflicts in the world (including the Middle East, 2,385 “conflict years” in total), while Figure 4 focuses only on the Middle East (347 “conflict years”). Figure 3 indicates that there is a significant decline in the scope of conflicts between countries in the world, and in the number of extra-systemic conflicts. However, there is a significant rise in the rate of conflicts inside states against non-state organizations, and these constitute the majority of conflicts in the world today (around 61 percent of all conflicts in 2018). Moreover, beginning in 2012, there has been an increase in the scope of internal conflicts characterized by foreign international support.

Figure 4 indicates that similar to the global trend, along with a limited scope of interstate conflicts and extra-systemic conflicts, there is a growing trend in the Middle East (constituting 58 percent of total conflicts in 2018) of intrastate conflicts between state and non-state

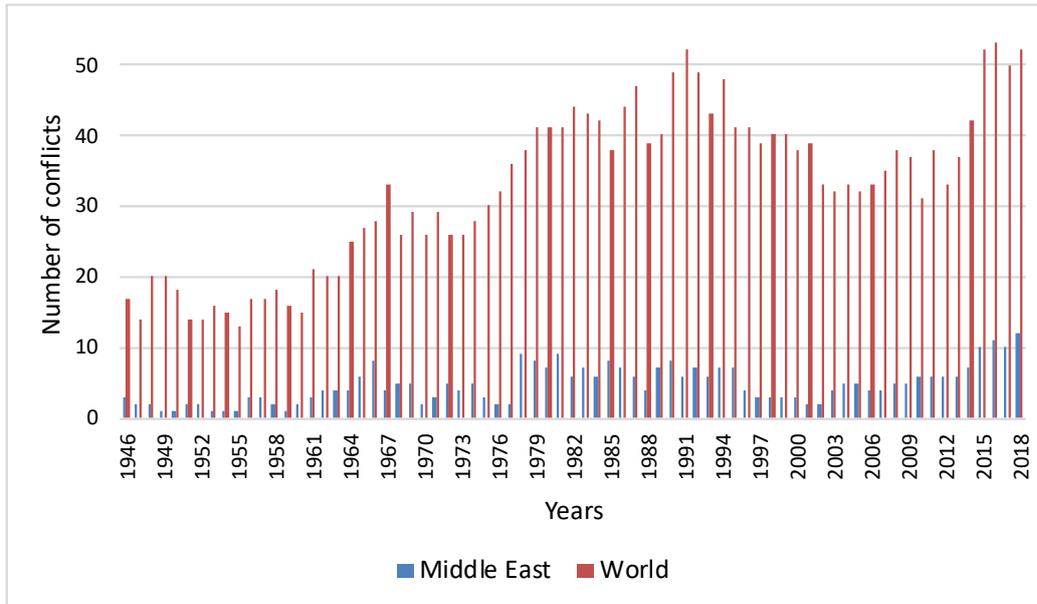


Figure 1. Scope of conflicts: global vs. regional trends, 1946-2018

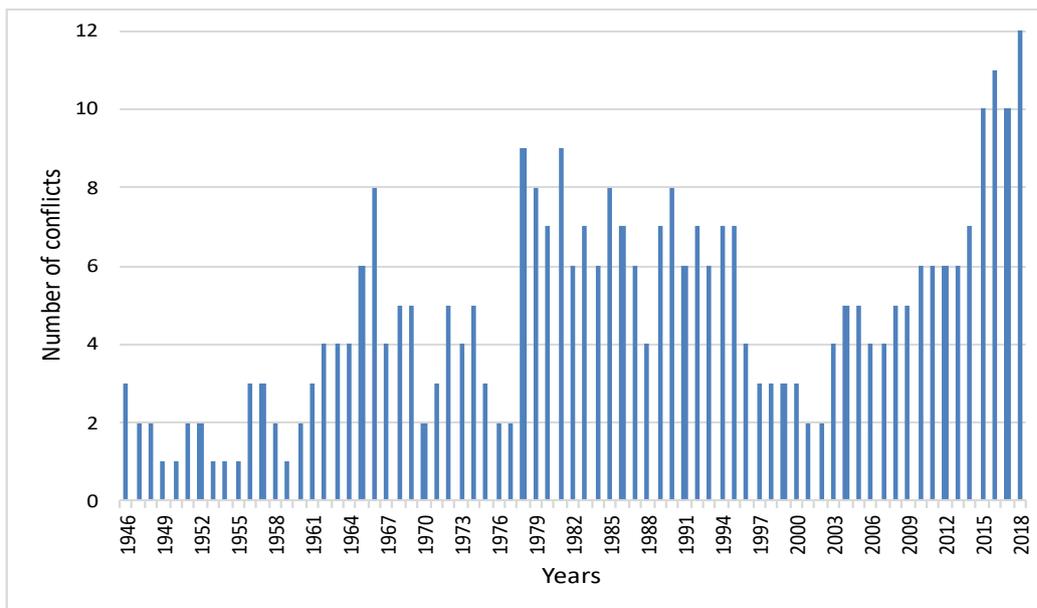


Figure 2. Scope of conflicts in the Middle East, 1946-2018

organizations. In line with the global trend there is also an increase in conflicts characterized by international involvement of foreign countries in internal fighting, in particular from 2014 onward.

Conflict Intensity

Figures 5 and 6 present data on conflict intensity regarding conflicts around the world from 1946 to 2018 (including the Middle East, 2,385 “conflict years” in total), and the Middle East (347 “conflict years”), respectively. Figure 5 shows that as of

1946 there has been a consistent increase in the rate of low intensity conflicts (fewer than 999 deaths per year), alongside a relatively steady trend in the scope of wars (more than 1,000 deaths per year). Furthermore, it is evident that the incidence of wars among overall conflicts has decreased, compared to the rate of low intensity conflicts, which in 2018 accounted for about 88 percent of all conflicts in the world.

Figure 6, which focuses on the Middle East, charts a mixed trend, although for most of the

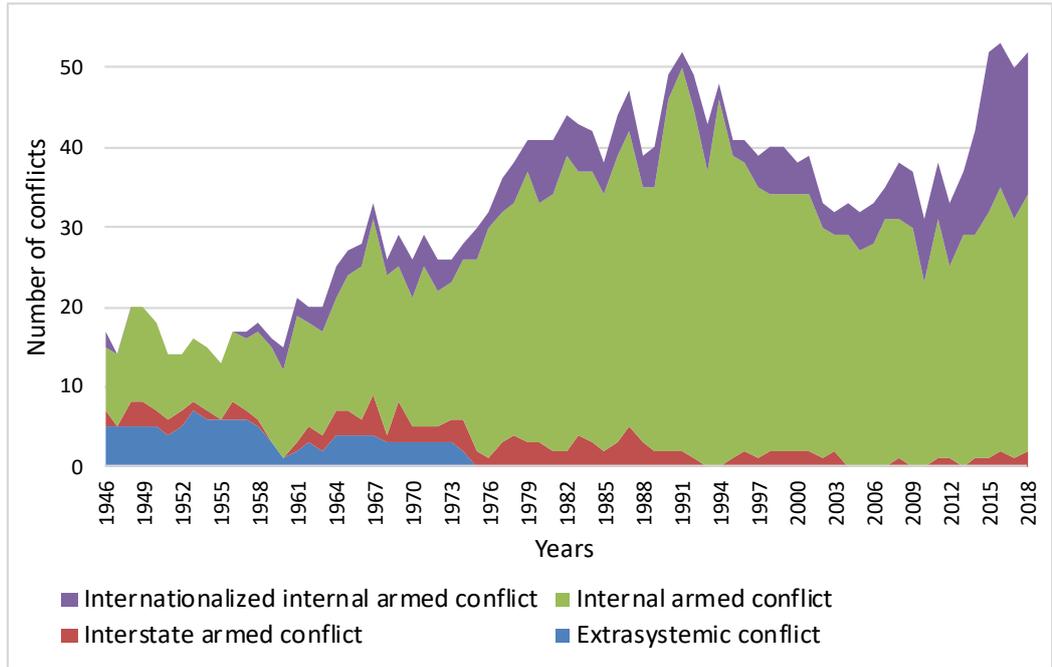


Figure 3. Conflict types: global trends, 1946-2018

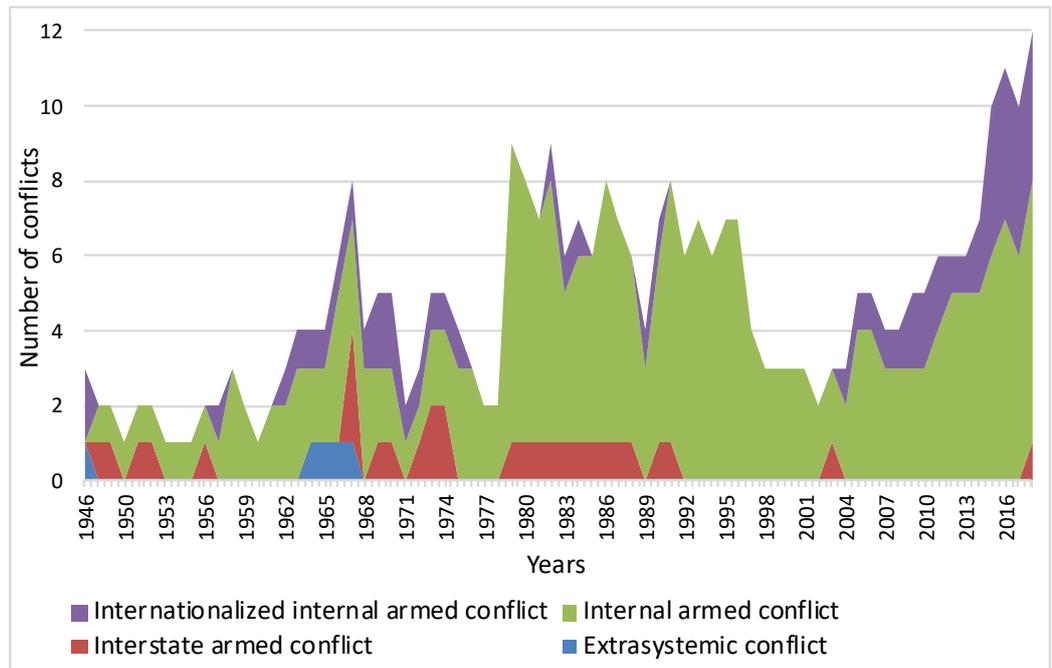


Figure 4. Conflict types: regional trends, 1946-2018

period under review, it is evident that the scope of low intensity conflicts exceeds the scope of wars. However, from 2009 and until 2015 there was an increase in the incidence of wars in this region, which influences the global trend.

Number of Fatalities

Figure 7 presents a comparison between the number of fatalities in the regional arena as compared to the global area (including the Middle East) from 1989 to 2018. The figure indicates that there is a sharp increase in the number of fatalities in the Middle East beginning

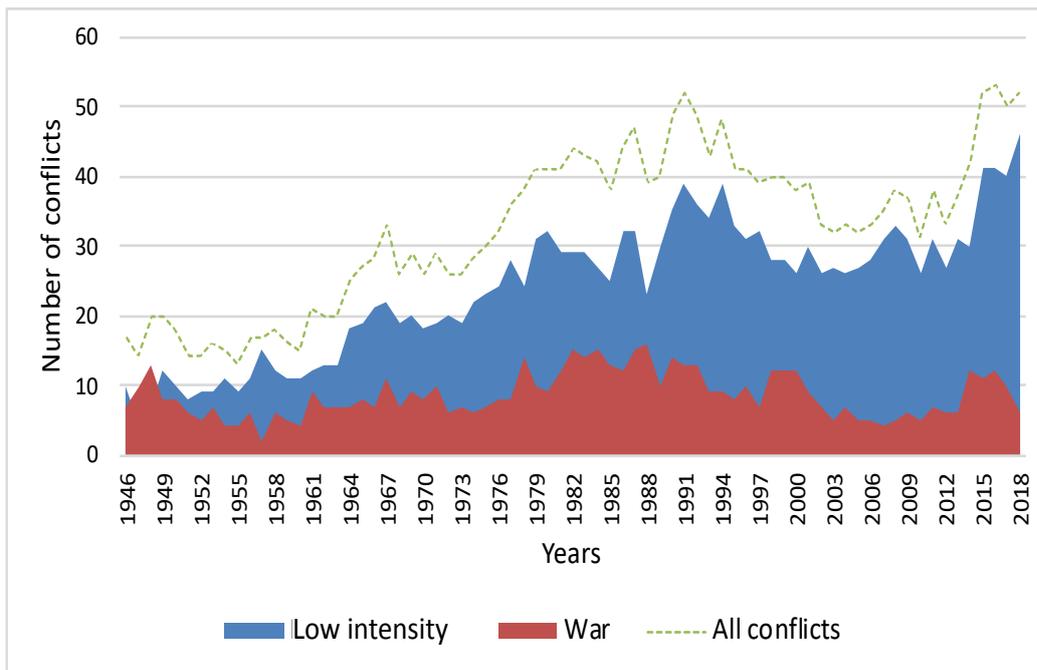


Figure 5. Conflict intensity: global trends, 1946-2018

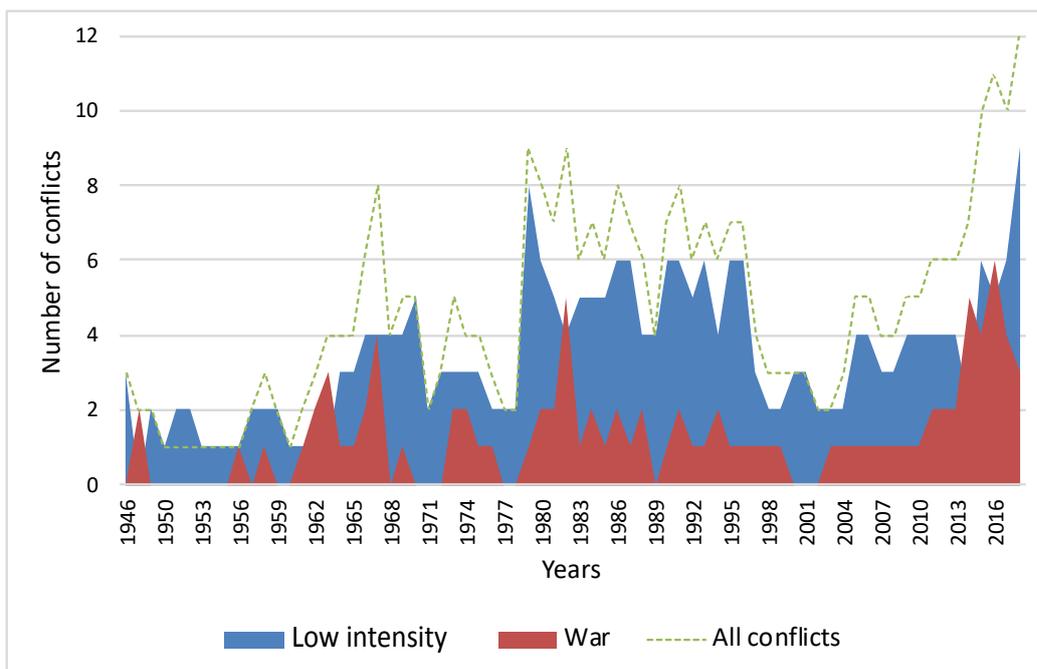


Figure 6. Conflict intensity: the Middle East, 1946-2018

from the events of the “Arab Spring” in 2011, peaking in 2014 with more than 73,000 fatalities. However, since 2014, there has been a consistent decline in the number of fatalities in the region, and they have declined by some 75 percent (some 19,000 fatalities in 2018). As of 2010 the number of fatalities has been compatible with

the global trend. A global increase in the number of fatalities in the late 1990s and from 2007 to 2009 does not characterize the regional arena.

Termination of Conflicts

Figures 8 and 9 present data on the termination of conflicts in the Middle East from 1946 to

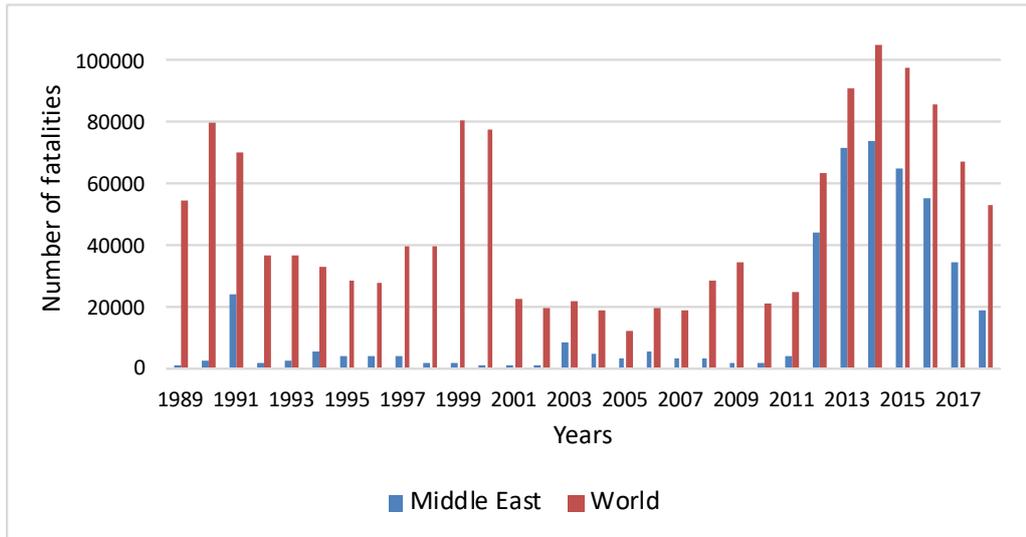


Figure 7. Number of fatalities: global vs. regional trends, 1989-2018

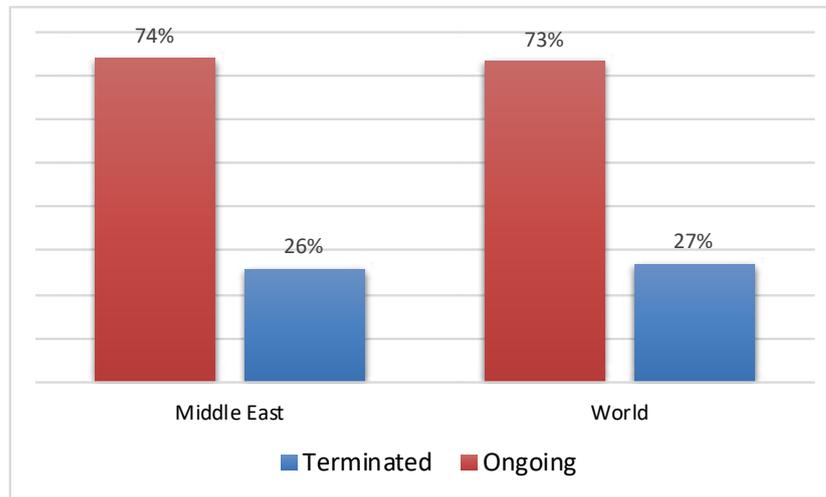


Figure 8. Termination of conflicts in the Middle East, 1946-2015*

2015 and include 371 combat dyads.¹⁵ Figure 8 shows that most of the conflicts in the region, comprising 276 dyads that constitute some 74 percent, have not been terminated and continue until the present day. However, some 26 percent of conflicts in the Middle East (composed of some 95 dyads) have terminated. Figure 9 focuses on the group of conflicts and presents distribution according to termination types. From the graph, it is evident that some 40 percent (38 dyads) of these conflicts terminated as a result of a decline in rebel activity over the years. Eighteen

percent (17 dyads) of the conflicts terminated as a result of a ceasefire between the parties. An additional 18 percent (17 dyads) terminated as a result of military victories by states. Ten percent of conflicts (9 dyads) terminated as a result of an actor ceasing to exist (for example, a rebel organization disbanding), while 8 percent (8 dyads) of these conflicts terminated as a result of a peace agreement signed between the warring parties. It is evident that only 6 percent of these conflicts (6 dyads) ended with a military victory by the rebels.

* These figures chart each year of the conflict years, in other words, the unit of analysis is each and every year during which the conflict occurred, and not the conflict itself. For example, the conflict between Israel and Hamas is counted by the duration of years of combat. Years in which the sides reached a regulation or ceasefire are included in the category of terminated conflicts (26 percent).

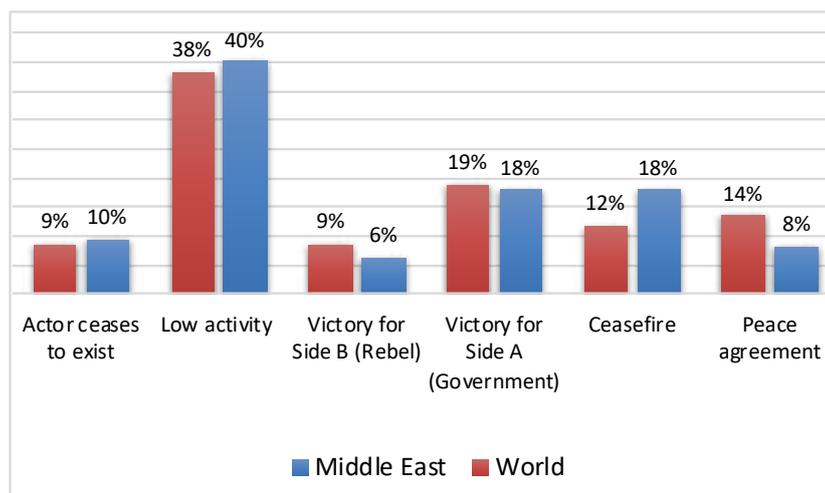


Figure 9. Type of termination of conflicts in the Middle East, 1946-2015

Discussion

What, therefore, characterizes conflicts in the Middle East and how are they terminated?

Until the early 2000s, conflicts in the Middle East appeared to reflect trends similar to conflicts in other arenas around the world, such that the Middle East was not a more violent arena. In fact, between 1980 and 2005 there was a decline in conflicts in the Middle East relative to other areas (in the early 2000s there were more conflicts in Africa and in certain areas of Asia that also saw higher fatality figures than in the Middle East) (Sørli et al., 2005).¹⁶

However, data show that since 2003 there has been a gradual, steady increase in the number of conflicts in the region. During that year, three conflicts took place, including the US-British led coalition invasion of Iraq in March 2003 aimed at overthrowing the regime of Saddam Hussein (a struggle that continued until December 15, 2011, when the United States officially declared an end to its military involvement in Iraq); the battle against Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad within the framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and the confrontation between Turkey and Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which Ankara defines as a terrorist entity.

The most prominent increase in the number of conflicts was registered in 2010 and was connected to the Arab tremors that shook the Middle East and raised hopes of a liberal and

democratic change. Instead, the Middle East became a more chaotic and violent arena. This trend peaked in 2018, a year in which there were 12 conflicts, involving a series of clashes with the Islamic State (in Syria, Iraq, and Egypt); fighting between the forces of Bashar al-Assad and the rebels in Syria; Egypt's struggle against its rival, the Muslim Brotherhood and especially against the HASAM movement—Harakat Sawa'd Misr; Iran's ongoing struggle against the Kurdish minority in its territory,

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and specifically against the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) and the Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK), which in 2016 renewed its armed struggle against the Iranian regime; Syria against the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and Turkey against the PKK in Turkey; and the war in Yemen. Israel is listed as a party to conflicts in that year as part of the conflict with Hamas, and as part of the low intensity confrontation with Iran along the border with Syria. Despite the relatively negligible position of the Kurds in

the Middle East story, they constitute integral and consistent actors involved in the region's conflicts.

In the remaining arenas in the world there was a consistent increase from 1946 until the end of the Cold War (including a peak in 1991). From 1991 there was a gradual decline until 2006, characterized by inconsistency until 2012, when until 2016 there was a sharp and consistent spike in conflicts; this can be attributed primarily to the events of the "Arab Spring." This trend has moderated and seen a minor decline since 2017. In the Middle East, on the other hand, there has been a consistent increase in the rate of conflicts since 2003.

With regard to the types of conflict, the Middle East does not differ from the global trend of a decline in the number of wars between states, and an increase in the number of intrastate (internal) wars; in 2018 there were seven such conflicts in the region: Egypt against the Islamic State and against the Islamist HASAM movement; Iran against the Iranian Kurds (PDKI, PJAK); Israel against Hamas, Syria against the SDF; and Turkey against the PKK.

Similar to the global trend, since 2014 there has also been an increase in conflicts in the Middle East that include international involvement of foreign countries in interstate fighting (internationalized internal). In 2018, for example, there were four such conflicts: Iraq's battle against the Islamic State organization (with the support of the United States and coalition countries); the Syrian regime's battle with the Islamic State (with Russian and Iranian support); the Syrian battle against the rebels (again with Russian and Iranian assistance); and the war in Yemen¹⁷ (supported by Bahrain, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates).

Foreign state involvement in internal conflicts affects the shape of the conflict. Not only do foreign states not solve the conflict, but overall, they extend it and make it more lethal (Saideman, 2001; Filote et al., 2016). The involvement of Iran and especially Russia in

Syria since September 2015 is a perfect example. Russia led to a strategic shift in the war following a number of successes by the rebels and the capture of large areas of Syria, bringing them close to the capital, Damascus. It is widely believed that the Assad regime was close to collapse and that it owes its survival to the support of the two foreign countries, Russia and Iran—intervention that also led to the long duration of the war and its lethal outcomes (more than half a million people are estimated to have been killed in the war).

With regard to conflict intensity, the Middle East differs from the global trend whereby there is a decline in the ratio of wars compared to the total number of conflicts in the world. Most conflicts (88 percent) in 2018 were characterized by low intensity (less than 999 fatalities). In the Middle East, on the other hand, there was an increase in the number of wars from 2011 to 2014 (in 2013 the number of wars was higher than the number of low intensity conflicts) and the number peaked in 2016 to six wars: Iraq-ISIS, Syria-ISIS, Syria-rebels, Yemen (Northern Yemen against supporters of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi), Turkey-ISIS, and Turkey-PKK. Since 2016 there has been a decline in wars in the region, and in 2018 there were three wars: Syria-ISIS, Syria-rebels, and Yemen.

In line with the rising number of conflicts in the world, the events of the "Arab Spring" increased the number of fatalities in the Middle East, with a sharp rise since 2011. In comparison, the number of fatalities before the "Arab Spring" stood at 3,800. The number of fatalities peaked in 2014 (73,501) and was probably connected to the phenomenon of the Islamic State, which, after declaring itself a caliphate in June, wielded unrestrained terror against the Syrian and Iraqi populations. With the collapse of the Islamic caliphate and the significant damage inflicted on the organization's military capabilities, as well as the termination of the main fighting phase in Syria, there has been a downward trend (some 19,000 fatalities in 2018).

Seventy-four percent of conflicts in the Middle East from 1946 to 2015 did not end in the period under review.¹⁸ Of those that terminated, 26 percent ended through a settlement (peace agreement or ceasefire).¹⁹ Clearly these findings do not differ from the global trend.

Most conflicts in the Middle East that terminated through peace agreements, both intrastate and interstate conflicts (five out of eight conflicts), occurred from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s and later periods. It would seem that the number of conflicts terminating this way is decreasing. Examples include the peace agreement between Iraq and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in 1970; the Algiers agreement between Iran and Iraq (1975); South Yemen and North Yemen (1972); and the peace agreements with Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (1967) and the first Lebanese civil war (1958).²⁰

Not surprisingly, the termination of conflicts in the Middle East through ceasefires (sometimes known as *hudna* or *tahadiya*) is more prevalent than peace agreements, as they allow for more ideological flexibility in the sense that a ceasefire does not require the sides to make significant ideological concessions or unequivocal declarations. However, in many cases, this type of termination leads to a recurrence of the conflict. Examples of such terminations are the ceasefire between Turkey and the PKK in 2013; Israel and Hezbollah (2006); Iran and the Kurdistan Free Life Party (2011); Egypt and al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya (1998); and more.

Only 24 percent of overall conflicts in the Middle East terminated with a military victory. Of these, 18 percent ended as a result of the military victory by the state. For example: the victory of the Lebanese government over the forces of Michel Aoun (1990); the victory of the government of Yemen over the Democratic Republic of Yemen (1994); and more. Furthermore, it is evident that just 6 percent of these conflicts terminated as a result of military victory over rebels, for example, the Ba'ath Party

coup in Iraq (1963); the Free Officers' Movement in Egypt (1958); the Neo-Ba'ath Revolution in Syria (1966); and more.

Approximately half of the conflicts did not officially terminate and were conducted at a low level of activity, that is, the death toll remained below 25 fatalities per year, with no definite and official termination such as a settlement or decisive victory. For example, it is evident that 40 percent of conflicts terminated as a result of diminishing rebel activity over the years, and another 10 percent terminated as a result of an actor that ceased to exist or diverted its military activity to the political dimension (such as al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in the West Bank, or the Amal organization that abandoned its military operations).

Conclusions

Studies on the Middle East tend to emphasize its violent character and the multitude of contests, conflicts, and wars that take place in the region relative to various other arenas in the world (Hariri, 2015; Sørli et al., 2005; Gran, 1998). This article compares conflicts in the region with other conflicts in the world using a quantitative method that relies on a broad database. The comparison shows that according to most of the criteria tested, the characteristics of conflicts in

The comparison shows that according to most of the criteria tested, the characteristics of conflicts in the Middle East and their development reflect similarities to the characteristics and trends of conflicts in the international arena.

the Middle East and their development reflect similarities to the characteristics and trends of conflicts in the international arena. Thus, regarding the types of conflict, findings show that the conflicts taking place in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world reflect a gradual and continuous increase in the ratio of intrastate conflicts to interstate conflicts.

Another data item relates to an increase in involvement by a foreign country in internal conflicts, both in the Middle East and in the global arena. In this context, the findings presented here support the claim that international involvement is one of the key factors leading to more lethal conflicts, translated into a higher number of fatalities. Similarly, the number of fatalities in the Middle East over the past decade reflects similar global data.²¹

Finally, as in other places in the world, most conflicts in the Middle East (as of 2015) have not yet terminated. Among the conflicts that have terminated, the least common ways to terminate intrastate conflicts in the region are: victory for rebels (the non-state party) or a peace agreement. This data is especially interesting given that most of the conflicts in the Middle East today are intrastate and therefore include non-state actors/rebels. This finding significantly challenges the effectiveness of the struggle of the non-state party and therefore indicates a low chance of success or victory for that party in conflicts.

The findings that are inconsistent with the global trend (but not significantly contradictory) relate to the scope and intensity of the conflict. Thus there was a drastic increase in the scope of intrastate conflicts in the Middle East from 2003 to 2018. At the global level, on the other hand, there is a moderation and even a slight decline in the scope of conflicts since 2016.

The violent reality and multiplicity of conflicts will continue to be a part of the Middle East landscape in the coming years, and hence the need to deepen the understanding of the issue is growing.

Furthermore, contrary to the global trend that demonstrates a decline in wars and an increase in the number of low intensity conflicts, it is evident that since 2003, and especially since the events of the “Arab Spring,” the Middle East is more violent than in previous years, and is characterized by a higher ratio of wars

in comparison to the global arena. In line with the level of clashes, it is evident there has also been a sharp increase in the number of fatalities in the Middle East since 2011, although since 2015 there is a decline of about 75 percent in fatalities.

These findings indicate on the one hand a more positive trend in the Middle East, whereby since 2015 there has been a decline in the number of wars and the number of fatalities in the region. On the other hand, data do not indicate the beginning of a period of peace, reconciliation, or agreement, but rather “fatigue” of one of the parties as a result of being worn down by the other party (usually the state party), especially since there is not a linear decline.

A further conclusion from the findings is that the widespread conflicts in the Middle East over the past decade reflect the broad spectrum existing in conflict classification in a way that undermines the conventional binary classification in quantitative research and in general research. Conflicts in the present era constitute a combination of a number of categories. Thus, for example, the civil war in Syria, which began as a local uprising, became a wide scale civil war to which a regional aspect was added with the growing involvement of Sunni states—Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey—on the one hand, and by Shiite elements headed by Iran and its proxy Hezbollah on the other. American involvement, especially since the establishment of the international coalition against the Islamic State in September 2014 and the entry of Russia into the Syrian maelstrom a year later, shaped the international nature of the conflict. This phenomenon, in which an intrastate crisis becomes a broad conflict with regional and international dimensions, is known in the literature as “cross and integrated conflicts” (Kriesberg, 1980). Thus, the conflict in Syria can be perceived as an intrastate conflict and an interstate conflict (the regime against Turkey). This complex reality undermines to some measure the validity of unequivocal

categories prevalent in quantitative research, and their ability to provide a comprehensive and complete explanation for complex political phenomena.

Finally, the Middle East in 2019 was rife with conflicts and clashes. The ongoing wars in Libya, Yemen, and to a lesser extent in Syria; the confrontation between Iran and its proxies and between Israel, which for the time being has been limited to disruptive and preventive actions in Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria, and containment actions in Gaza; the struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which has recently become a direct confrontation; the potential for escalation to a conflict between Iran and the United States; and the growing ferment of anti-regime sentiment among sectors of the public in their countries (Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt) that could translate into rebellion, clashes, and internal wars—all these suggest that the violent reality and multiplicity of conflicts will continue to be a part of the Middle East landscape in the coming years, and hence the need to deepen the understanding of the issue is growing.

This paper has focused on an initial attempt to characterize the conflicts in the Middle East on the basis of a number of parameters and with reference to a broad database, and to compare them to other disputes in the international arena. The use of theoretical statistics leads to a number of interesting initial conclusions that may constitute the foundation for further studies that will deepen the comparison between conflicts in the Middle East and those around the world through the use of additional criteria (for example, the duration of the conflict, the number of combatants, or the area affected as additional indices for conflict intensity). Furthermore, beyond description and characterization of the conflicts, the way that conflicts have been characterized in this paper indicates the potential for further research to address the factors that lead to the outbreak of conflict (including regime type, economic growth, natural resources, religion,

ethnicity, and more) using methods, tools, and methodologies of deductive statistics.

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Notes

- 1 The UCDP database defines termination of conflict as a year in which there are fewer than 25 battle-related deaths.
- 2 Salman (2014, p. 163) notes that according to one estimate, between 1945 and 1990, approximately 3.3 million people were killed in 25 international wars that included the participation of 25 states, and in which mediation efforts to stop the conflicts lasted on average three months. On the other hand, during the same period some 16.2 million people were killed in 127 civil wars that took place in 73 countries, and in which mediation efforts went on for six years on average.
- 3 See: Political Instability Task Force dataset.
- 4 The article does not discuss the factors affecting conflict intensity, but only descriptive data.
- 5 However, Balcells and Kalyva (2014) determine that in the past decade there has been a trend showing an increase in the number of military victories of the state, compared to victories by rebels (the non-state party).
- 6 For more, see Fortna (2009), which examines why the date of change differs in both types of wars. In the last decade there has been an upward trend in the number of state victories compared to rebel; see Balcells & Kalyvas (2014). However, Carroll (1969) referred to international wars involving two or more countries, and claimed that most of them end with

peace agreements or ceasefire agreements. Civil wars, wars of independence and imperial wars, on the other hand, for the most part do not end with an agreement, but in other fashions.

- 7 See also Licklider (1995, p. 681) who supports his assumption, but only in wars based on identity.
- 8 The unit of analysis in the database is a “conflict year,” that is, one conflict containing several units/rows of analysis in the database, as per the number of years the conflict continued. The choice of this unit of analysis is necessary in order to obtain numerical data by years.
- 9 The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) database is available online at: <http://ucdp.uu.se/#/>.
- 10 The coding is conducted through the use of a “geographic region” variable that was coded by the UCDP database as follows: (1) Europe; (2) the Middle East; (3) Asia; (4) Africa; (5) North and South America.
- 11 This variable was coded by the dataset for conflicts that began in 1989 and up to 2018 only.
- 12 For more see Kreutz (2010, p. 244).
- 13 This variable was coded by the dataset for conflicts that began in 1946 and up until 2015, with the dyad as the unit of analysis.
- 14 In contrast to other variables (scope of conflict, number of fatalities, and termination of conflicts), for variables consisting of multiple categories (conflict types and conflict intensity), two separate graphs were presented rather than one comparative graph. However, a comparison was made and the choice was solely for the sake of presentation.
- 15 Until now, the unit of analysis focused on two rivals only (for example, the Syrian conflict includes Rival A, the government of Syria, while Rival B includes all the organizations fighting against it). In this section, the analysis focuses on the dyad level, which refers separately to the different organizations fighting each country (for example: Syria-ISIS, Syria-al-Qaeda, etc.) in order to characterize in the best possible way termination of conflicts.
- 16 The only exception was the Iran-Iraq War, which made the region the world’s most bloody area during the 1980s.
- 17 The conflict in Yemen is different from the conflicts noted, as the involvement of the powers (American and Russia) is limited. However, there is greater involvement of regional actors.
- 18 See Note 16.
- 19 According to Deitch (2016) some 50.6 percent of violent intrastate conflicts in the world terminate with a settlement, as compared to 49.4 percent of conflicts that end with a military victory.
- 20 However, many of the conflicts that terminated with a peace agreement broke out anew in later years, but the dataset does not offer data on these conflicts. Furthermore, in the Israel context, the Oslo Accord did lead to an end of the conflict (namely, less than 25 deaths per year) and therefore was not coded in this category. In addition, the conflict between Israel and Egypt terminated in 1974 and therefore was not coded as termination as a result of a peace agreement (which was signed later on, in 1979, when the conflict was no longer active).
- 21 However, a global increase in the number of fatalities in the late 1990s and from 2007 to 2009 does not characterize the regional arena.



A New Role for the Public in Climate Politics: The Social Media Potential

Gilead Sher and Adelaide Duckett

In light of Russian interference in the 2016 United States presidential elections, the public discourse regarding the influence of social media in politics has seen a resurgence. In this environment, teen climate activist Greta Thunberg has attracted global attention following the rapid spread of her school strikes for climate movement through social media. With nine million followers on Instagram alone, Thunberg has leveraged social media platforms to magnify her call to action on climate change, highlighting the ability of social media to amplify voices that might not otherwise be heard, such as that of a youth activist. This article reviews the scholarly research around the role of social media in politics, and in particular the global political discussion surrounding climate change. It assesses the state of environmental politics in Israel, seeking to apply lessons from the role of social media in the global climate debate to the Israeli case. The authors conclude that social media has the potential to disrupt current political norms and elevate climate discussion in Israel, if leveraged by environmental activists and environmentally oriented politicians.

Keywords: climate, social media, environment, negotiations, internet, security

Introduction

Environmental activism is a valuable case study on the political potential of social media, due to the urgent need for global public support and mobilization behind climate cooperation. Energy security issues have come to dominate the global agenda in recent years, with geopolitical competition for resources being a major driver of conflict. In contrast to a system defined by fossil fuels, the diversity of emerging green energy technologies allows the possibility of a future global system less defined by energy competition. Nearly all countries possess potential for solar, wind, hydro, or other energy production, and thus an increased emphasis on advancing access to these technologies could revolutionize international geopolitics. However, studies routinely display the tendency for the public to place more weight on issues they see as directly affecting their daily lives, such as economic issues, and ignore issues like climate change that are considered more esoteric (Leiserowitz, 2018). The internet has proven to be a valuable tool for spreading global awareness of problems typically not discussed by traditional media.

Given the crucial nature of generating political momentum behind the issue of climate change, the lack of focus on environmental issues in Israeli politics is a major concern. Insofar as social media has been employed effectively around the globe to mobilize the public behind climate change, this article examines the potential for social media to disrupt environmental narratives in Israel and push climate control higher on the political agenda. How might social media be leveraged to improve the potential for greater action on climate issues by the Israeli government?

Research Overview

Writing in 2011, Brian D. Loader and Dan Mercea of the University of London described the disruptive stance that social media assumed in scholarly thinking on the role of the internet in promoting participatory democracy. While

the internet provided a platform to increase dissemination of knowledge, traditionally powerful voices, such as those of politicians and news organizations, remained the most amplified. With the advent of social media, however, what the authors call the “second generation of internet democracy,” the old “public sphere model” of the internet was displaced by “a networked citizen-centered perspective providing opportunities to connect the private sphere of autonomous political identity to a multitude of chosen political spaces” (Loader and Mercea, 2011). Enthusiasm surrounding the possibilities of social media to alter political outcomes perhaps reached its height in 2011-12 with the so-called Arab Spring, where the use of Facebook by protestors led many to believe in the revolutionary implications of the new internet sphere. While warning against an excess of enthusiasm about the political possibilities of social media, the authors are cautiously optimistic about its potential to bring about political change. They note that instead of acting as a “passive consumer” of internet information, social media allows the citizen “to challenge discourses, share alternative perspectives and publish their own opinions” (Loader and Mercea, 2011).

Feeling a sense of fulfillment through online action with little effect, citizens will not feel motivated to engage further.

One common criticism of the role of social media in political conversations is the “slacktivism” critique. This is the hypothesis that the ability to participate in political movements passively, by liking posts, signing petitions, and engaging in other online actions will actually make citizens less likely to engage in political causes in more concrete ways (e.g., volunteering, working for a cause, attending physical protests). Feeling a sense of fulfillment through online action with little effect, citizens will not feel motivated to engage further. Therefore,

proponents of the slacktivism theory argue that social media has weakened, rather than strengthened, participatory democracy. Philip N. Howard et. al., in their 2016 contribution to the *Journal of International Affairs*, refute the slacktivism hypothesis in their analysis of the successful gubernatorial campaign of Mexican politician El Bronco, an independent candidate who delivered an upset victory after successful widespread use of voter engagement through social media. The authors argue that “the data reveal that candidate engagement with citizens on the Facebook fan page had a positive effect, resulting in continued platform use.” They conclude that El Bronco’s campaign indicates that “social media can be used to sustain a large quantity of civic exchanges about public life well beyond a particular political event” (Howard et al., 2016).

The slacktivism hypothesis remains unconvincing in light of a multitude of successful social media campaigns in the sphere of environmental politics. An examination of the progress of the COP21 climate negotiations leading up to the Paris Agreement of 2015 reveals the influence of social media activism at the highest levels of environmental advocacy. According to researcher Jill Hopke, in advance of the negotiations, “activists held more than 2,300 events in more than 175 countries in a Global Climate March,” displaying global support for a goal of transitioning entirely to renewables by 2050 (Hopke, 2019). In its 2019 annual report, the World Economic Forum reflected that the political climate surrounding

helped to create “political confidence” in the negotiations. This high level of mobilization from the public served to create a “can-do feeling” that “captured the imaginations of heads of states, as well as leading climate negotiators and environment ministers,” successfully leading to an agreement—unlike the failed COP15 negotiations in Copenhagen (Lambertini et al., 2019).

Contributing to this success, the format of the Paris negotiations differed in crucial ways from that of previous negotiations. Instead of a strictly top-down approach, COP21 “also added a ‘bottom-up’ dimension,” allowing governments the freedom to decide how they would implement collective goals and to set their own individualized agendas. According to WEF experts, this greater flexibility promoted increased willingness to cooperate. It also placed “climate change at the core of domestic politics, so that citizens could hold governments to account for their pledges” (Patrick, 2019). Not only did this decentralized negotiation model lead to more effective outcomes for cooperation, but it also created a greater opportunity for public influence, making domestic politics and public opinion bear more weight in international negotiations. In this new space, social media serves a key role in providing a vehicle for public mobilization and the communication of public sentiment.

The Role of Social Media

The energized public sentiment surrounding COP21 was aided significantly by social media messaging. Indeed, Hopke and Hesteres posit a connection between the prominent activist message calling for a 1.5 goal and the resulting goal that was signed, suggesting the influence of such messaging. After authorities placed restrictions on physical demonstrations in Paris during the negotiation process, activists largely relied on social media to direct their messages to leaders and to receive updates on the negotiation process. In her analysis of the social media conversation surrounding the COP21

In their analysis of the use of images in social media messaging throughout the COP21 negotiations, researchers noted the connection between prominent advocacy messages on Twitter and decisions made by negotiators in the drafting of the agreement.

the Paris negotiations, created in part through greater mobilization from non-state actors,

talks, one researcher found that the “more than 2.4 million posts” discussing the negotiations “had a reach of 26 billion potential impressions” (Hopke, 2019). This huge reach alone, shown by the sheer volume of the discussion, marked an accomplishment in climate awareness. Alongside this strong reach of top-down social media messaging, activists also found space to send their messages upwards through various platforms, very possibly to crucial effect.

In their analysis of the use of images in social media messaging throughout the COP21 negotiations, researchers noted the connection between prominent advocacy messages on Twitter and decisions made by negotiators in the drafting of the agreement. They cite a prominent trend of images circulated on social media demanding a goal of limiting planetary warming to 1.5 degrees, as opposed to the prevalent norm of 2 degrees. Significantly, this goal “gained traction during the Paris climate talks,” leading several large economies, traditionally more in favor of a 2-degree goal, to surprise the world in making declarations of support for 1.5 degrees (Hopke and Hesteres, 2018).

There is no definitive proof that social media messaging can be credited fully with the 1.5-degree aspirational goal in the final agreement. However, most stakeholders entered the negotiations with an expectation of a 2-degree limit, and thus it is significant that countries like the US, China, and Canada, some of the largest polluters, decided to support a goal of 1.5 degrees over the course of the negotiations. Officials explained that the new goal was based on arguments by low-lying developing countries that fear that an additional half a degree of warming would have dire effects on their territories. However, this shift in goals took place during the negotiation process, in the absence of new scientific revelations regarding 1.5 versus 2 degrees. As the science remained the same during that time, heightened public demands being the only new element, it seems likely that demands from activists, spread effectively through the vast network

of social media COP21 discussion, played a role in this shift.

The possible influence of social media messaging during COP21 negotiations also seems plausible given the influence of other environmental demands popularized on social media. Social media has already demonstrated its ability to mobilize the public behind environmental action, resulting in new regulations and pledges from businesses. One example of a successful social media strategy is the trend of campaigns targeted at single-use plastic. Discussion of waste and pollution on social media has picked up markedly over the past several years. In the first quarter of 2018, conversation about plastic waste on Twitter was more than double what it had been during the same period in 2017 (Joyce, 2018). This trend has been translated to concrete action in various examples. After a petition circulated online by Greenpeace generated nearly 100,000 signatures, the popular American supermarket chain Trader Joe’s announced that it would phase out single-use plastic from its stores. This case exemplifies the power of social media to translate increased awareness of environmental issues to concrete action.

With the possibility of online petitions serving as a signal of real-time public opinion measures, social media can serve as a vehicle to translate shifts in public opinion into changes in government and business policy. Given these implications, further research into the makings of successful social media messaging is warranted. Hopke and Hesteres emphasize the need for social media campaigns to include more images that depict the effects of climate change on people around the world. They also cite the value of combining such messages with information about actions individuals can make in their daily lives to lessen their own environmental footprints. In doing so, climate activists can employ social media to make the connection in peoples’ minds between their personal actions and the effects they have around the world.

Notwithstanding these positive developments, social media has key limitations as a tool to advance climate action. In their analysis of visual framings of the Paris negotiations on social media, Hopke and Hestres note that while discussion among activists and politicians was strong, participation from fossil fuel industry stakeholders was minimal. Despite being key stakeholders in any plan to reduce carbon emissions, “fossil fuel industry and trade group accounts largely bypassed discussion of COP21.” With clear motives to avoid action on climate change, the fossil fuel industry, given the tremendous influence it exerts on governments around the world, is a key player in any climate agreement. Failure to engage such a key stakeholder indicates clear limitations of social media’s ability to influence political actions. While social media has allowed for more direct channels of communication between citizens and government officials, backchannel lobbying efforts by fossil fuel companies do not take place in this new public sphere.

Although there is recognition of the dangers of climate change to national security throughout Israeli leadership, climate concerns have not been sufficiently prioritized to parallel the severity of the climate crisis.

In addition, while activism and public opinion make up key elements of domestic politics in democracies, freedom of speech online is a key element within this puzzle. In countries like China, where the government closely monitors and regulates the online activity of citizens, online criticism of government climate policy would not prove a viable strategy for improving Chinese climate commitments. This is a key weakness of social media strategies, as China is the world’s largest polluter and a powerful actor in negotiations. Other concerns include the potential for fake news on social media regarding climate change to have a detrimental effect on momentum for climate action. Due

to these limitations, obstacles still remain on the road toward greater citizen influence on the global political climate surrounding climate change.

Given that social media has proven effective in increasing participatory democracy domestically, as in the El Bronco campaign, in addition to amplifying public environmental opinion to bring about behavior changes in businesses and in international climate negotiations, there are promising prospects for the application of social media strategizing for improving the climate conversation in Israel.

The Israeli Case

Israel faces a unique situation in the arena of climate change action due to the higher priority of other threats in the public mindset. In the face of threats of war, people tend to view climate change as a distant and therefore less important concern (Carmi and Bartal, 2014). One study even found a decrease between 2003 and 2015 in the percentage of Israelis considering global warming a severe threat. Although there is recognition of the dangers of climate change to national security throughout Israeli leadership, climate concerns have not been sufficiently prioritized to parallel the severity of the climate crisis. In a 2013 article in *The Geographic Journal*, Michael Mason argues that “climate risks are crowded out by proximate existential threats” in Israeli government decision making (Mason, 2013). However, given the escalation of the water crisis in the Palestinian territories in recent years, experts have called for stronger action on environmental issues and more focus on the environment in public discourse as an issue of immediate national security concern. Lessons learned from the use of social media in climate activism are therefore relevant to Israel in several ways.

Most importantly, social media should be employed by climate activists and other stakeholders to promote the view of climate change as a national security issue. In a discussion paper published jointly by INSS and

the organization EcoPeace Middle East, the authors evaluate the altered reality surrounding water negotiations. They write that “given technological advances in the manufacture of new water, water issues are no longer a zero-sum game as they were in 1995,” during the negotiation of the Oslo II agreements. Today, desalination technology and other innovations enable a wider range of water security solutions for Israel and the Palestinian territories. This new context for negotiation might allow for more productive dialogue. This potential should be capitalized on through generating public demand, as solutions are sorely needed to prevent an intensified water crisis, which would likely create instability and security risks for all involved.

Water negotiations between Israel and Jordan have proven productive, even leading to subsequent cooperation on other matters, due to the fact that Jordan has viewed “cooperation on water issues with Israel as a matter of national security, and therefore a matter necessary to deal with, despite political disagreements on other issues.” In contrast, the PLO has maintained a refusal to negotiate with Israel on water issues outside of a framework for final status agreement negotiations. Now, however, with increased recognition of climate change-related water scarcity issues, many in the Palestinian public have altered these mindsets. Many now favor “cooperation on water with Israel as a Palestinian water security and national security issue” (Eran et al., 2018).

The influence of a public mindset viewing environmental issues as issues of national security is of key importance here. If effective social media content can spread knowledge of the importance of water for the security of both parties, public opinion might be altered so as to provide a more fruitful negotiation environment. As occurred in the Jordanian case, cooperation on water issues might then open doors for further cooperation. Social media messaging in this case would likely be most effective in combining visuals and

information regarding the water crisis with information on steps individuals can take (both political and lifestyle-related), as per the recommendations of Hopke and Hesteres. In addition, one study from the Yale Program on Climate Communication found that perception of personal risk from climate change was the strongest predictor of environmental activism in study participants (Ballew et al., 2019). This result highlights the need to make climate messaging direct, personal, and alarmist. However, alarmist rhetoric must also be carefully balanced with positive messaging to maintain audience engagement. Campaigns should also highlight the positive effects that could result from resolving Israel’s water crisis, such as progress in peace negotiations and environmental restoration.

This “discursive hold” of immediate existential threats does not leave room for the equally dire but less timely existential threat of climate change. Under these circumstances, social media could help to provide the boost needed for discussion of climate change mitigation to gain political traction in Israel.

As Mason argues, the fact of climate change being a “threat multiplier for Israeli-Palestinian relations, especially with regards to forecasted stresses on water availability, food production and public health,” is nothing new. He notes that given that this reality is evident to so many policymakers, the fact that such knowledge has “had minimal impact on Israeli and Palestinian governing authorities indicates the discursive hold of more immediate existential threats – for the State of Israel, ongoing security dangers from political violence and, for the Palestinian Authority, the threats to Palestinian national survival posed by a deepening occupation” (Mason, 2013). This “discursive hold” of immediate existential threats does not leave room for the equally dire but less timely existential threat of climate change. Under

these circumstances, social media could help to provide the boost needed for discussion of climate change mitigation to gain political traction in Israel. Additionally, social media should be employed as a tool to heighten Israeli public awareness of environmental issues leading up to upcoming environmental summits. Ahead of the 2020 Convention on Biological Diversity COP meeting, scientists, activists, and other stakeholders should seek to educate the public about the importance of biodiversity in order to maximize public involvement in the meeting and recreate the environment that surrounded COP21. However, while Israelis can still contribute valuably to this political climate, Israel's power as a small country is inherently limited in the arena of COP negotiations. Consequently, Israel does not have a large potential for influencing the course of climate change mitigation (though its commitment to these goals remains important).

Despite this limitation, Israel has an advantage in its strong technology sector, leading the globe in water and agricultural technology, and coming in first place in the 2014 Global Cleantech Innovation Index. This will prove increasingly beneficial as more states seek critical assistance with climate change adaptation. This dynamic might place Israel in a strategically beneficial position, enabling it to strengthen diplomatic ties with countries in need of its technological assistance, and positioning it as a global leader in climate adaptation (Alterman, 2015). Israel's technological advantages also extend to the crucial energy sector, Israel being home to some of the world's leading researchers in biofuels and other energy alternatives, further increasing its value to other parties in climate agreements. These advantageous aspects of focusing national attention on climate action should also be emphasized through political social media campaigns, enabling the public to both acknowledge the security risks of failing to act on climate, as well as the significant economic and geopolitical benefits of doing so.

In Israel in particular, where national security concerns dominate public discourse, the issue of climate change is in need of a boost in national consciousness. In light of this gap in public awareness, social media has the potential to mold public perceptions toward greater enthusiasm for climate change action, and greater acknowledgment of environmental threats as issues of national security. Emphasis on promoting national identity as a leader in green technology may have potential as a positive catalyst for wider discussion of environmental issues more broadly, prompting greater lifestyle alterations and progress on water and pollution issues.

Conclusion and Future Implications

As a global network of information sharing, social media contains enormous potential to build a global consensus on the need for climate action. Indeed, social media has already proven an invaluable tool for advancing the conditions for fruitful climate negotiations through mobilizing the public from the bottom-up to encourage stronger government actions. Research indicates that carefully crafted social media posts and discourse connecting personal action to global damage can act effectively to spread such awareness and support. The power of this phenomenon can be observed directly through public demand for plastic regulation that began through social media movements and continues to result in increased regulation and pledges from the business sector.

Social media also allows for a direct channel of communication between members of the public and their political representatives from the bottom-up. In this way, social media may work to create a larger level of influence from public opinion through its ability to reflect real time public reactions to political decisions, as well as its ability to illuminate and emphasize public demands. Social media should be used in different ways by different stakeholders in the climate debate. As in the El Bronco case study, social media has demonstrated potential

to build momentum around non-traditional political candidates. If any Knesset candidates chose to make climate change a key pillar of their campaign, they would be wise to build up social media presence to begin connecting with youth around these issues well in advance of their campaign. Given Israel's environmental technology advantages, building a positive vision of Israel as a climate leader, in place of alarmist rhetoric, may prove a helpful strategy. Climate activists, including organizers, those working for environmental nonprofits, and climate scientists, should leverage social media campaigns as a central pillar of their efforts in order to bring environmental topics to the forefront of public consciousness. This might include ads calling for petition signing in response to specific threats, educational content connecting personal action to climate effects (as promoted by Hopke and Hestres), and other content. Despite the irregularity of viral content, paid advertisements are an option for groups willing to prioritize investment in social media messaging as a promising tool for change.

Further research is required in this field to help answer several key questions. First, the results of Hopke and Hestres' study, reflecting the importance of crafting messages to connect personal behaviors and actions to global climate change, must be expanded upon. With increased knowledge on the effectiveness of different forms of posts, activists can more effectively alter the political climate surrounding climate action. In building such a consensus, the positive effects of communicating public demands on negotiations processes can be expanded. The Yale Program on Climate Communication has been a leader in research in this new frontier, noting the greater persuasive power of video over text to convey climate information, in addition to other internationally applicable studies. Much of their research, however, focuses on the American electorate and may not be directly transferable to Israel.

Second, the role of public opinion in climate negotiations demands further study in order to

better reveal how to translate the consensus-building power of social media into direct political influence. In order to face the global challenge of climate change, activists must find ways to create a better-informed global public, which in turn can produce more effective climate negotiations. Following the effects observed in Paris and public perceptions of plastic, social media clearly amounts to a key element of this puzzle. However, other strategies

Given Israel's environmental technology advantages, building a positive vision of Israel as a climate leader, in place of alarmist rhetoric, may prove a helpful strategy.

are needed to exert influence over the fossil fuel sector, as well as to increase awareness and motivate action by states lacking internet freedom. In addition, much remains unknown about the mechanisms by which some posts or movements go viral while others remain unnoticed. A sustained effort to leverage social media to amplify climate discussion would surely be met with more failures than success in this regard. However, sustained saturation of social media with climate change content has the potential to significantly alter public climate perceptions. With further study, social media could prove a powerful tool to motivate global climate action by creating the political conditions for more effective international cooperation.

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ל ומערכת הביטחון

The War of Attrition: Three Wars, One Story

Dov Tamari

2019 marked the the fiftieth anniversary of the War of Attrition, which was fought mainly against Egypt, and on a smaller scale, was waged along the ceasefire lines with Jordan and Syria. This article refers to the mindset in the IDF and within the General Staff during the six years between the Six Day War (1967) and the Yom Kippur War (1973), and to the nature of the discourse between the military and the government. The War of Attrition against Egypt enables three wars to be merged into one story, due to the decisive prominence of Egypt in these wars against Israel. The focus is on the military echelon and the interactions between the military echelon and the political echelon during the years of the War of Attrition, and the impact of military thinking on political thinking between the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War, while focusing on the years of the War of Attrition in the Egyptian theater.

Introduction

In 2019, the Israeli media covered the fiftieth anniversary of the War of Attrition, which was fought mainly against Egypt, and on a smaller scale, was waged along the ceasefire lines with Jordan and Syria. The War of Attrition resulted in 968 fatalities and 3,730 wounded, 260 of whom were combatants in the Suez Canal arena. On June 16, 2019, four former IDF Chiefs of Staff were interviewed on the Israeli television channel Kan, and recalled their memories of that war. All four men, who are deserving of much esteem for their military service and their dedication to the State of Israel, fought during the War of Attrition as junior officers, and their stories were replete with the nostalgia typical of those recalling painful past experiences. However, during the program, none of the four addressed the question of the relevance of that war to the present day.

This article refers to the mindset in the IDF and within the General Staff during the six years between the Six Day War (1967) and the Yom Kippur War (1973), and to the nature of the discourse between the military and the government. Within this context, the article focuses on the nature of the fighting in the Egyptian arena during the War of Attrition, which differed from the fighting against Jordan and Syria. More specifically, the War of Attrition against Egypt enables three wars to be merged into one story, due to the decisive prominence of Egypt in these wars against Israel. The questions addressed include: Did the way in which the General Staff interpreted the War of Attrition and its modus operandi derive from its interpretation of the Six Day War and from the idea of expansionism that evolved within the IDF following the War of Independence? Were both of these wars the direct precursor of the Yom Kippur War? What remains relevant from the War of Attrition today?

This article does not survey the international environment, the positions of the world powers, or their involvement and influence in the War of Attrition and during those six years, and does

not refer to the arguments within the Israeli governments over the six years of intensive conflict. Rather, the focus is on the military echelon and the interactions between the military echelon and the political echelon during the years of the War of Attrition, and the impact of military thinking on political thinking between the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War, while focusing on the years of the War of Attrition in the Egyptian theater.

Interpretive and Formative Concepts

My interest in the three wars, and primarily in the War of Attrition, focuses more on what the political and military leadership were thinking during those six years and less on what they did. My research on “how they thought” includes analyses of the deliberations in the various echelons and analyses of plans of action and the evolution of the thought processes during those six years. All of these present a series of concepts, most of which evolved from past experience, previous political baggage, and cognitive baggage of identifiable origin.

No person is capable of comprehending his environment and reality without interpretive concepts; the same is true of any social organization. In this context, “concepts” are not mere terms, but rather conceptions or approaches used to interpret reality and prompt toward action. Although the Agranat Commission decided that “conception” is a dirty word and should be avoided, without this or that conception, there is nothing, and we are left at the starting line. Therefore, the important questions are: Is the conception that we have—i.e., the set of concepts used to interpret reality—indeed relevant to reality? And, are individuals capable of discerning—and if so, when—that their conceptions are no longer relevant to interpretation of emergent reality?

Among the familiar concepts routinely used in studies about national security are: existential threat; warning; deterrence; decision; strategic depth (and the lack of strategic depth); endurance; “crushing” capability; offensive

defense strategy; shift of the war to enemy territory; security borders; air supremacy; and many more, up to personal security, which replaced the concepts of general security and safe peace. These concepts are still awaiting proof of viability.

A review of the history of the relations between statesmen and the military in Israel shows that the political leadership's conceptual horizon relating to security and war was almost always supplied or designed by the senior military echelon. This means that discussions between the echelons almost exclusively tapped concepts used by the IDF to interpret reality and understand threats and crises (Tamari, 2012).

It follows, therefore, that the governmental-organizational structure called the "political echelon"—and the "military echelon" that is subordinate to it and receives directives from it—is operating properly in terms of the hierarchy needed to underpin the running of a democratic state. But the thinking, the understanding, the concepts, and the language created in the IDF and the extent of the transformation and internalization of these concepts in governments, and vice versa, is uncertain and vague, as long as the members of the government and the prime minister are not systematically engaged in the development of knowledge relating to security and the crises that require the operation of military force.

Another assumption, based on decades-long observation of the IDF, is that the IDF's interpretive concepts are deeply affected by tactical language and concepts, given the impact of the tactical level on the levels above it. The fireworks of every war are the tactical achievements, because they are more critical to the fighting capability of every individual soldier, unit, and formation. They are a significant generator of the socialization of the individual and of society in relation to that particular war. Over the years, the tactical excellence of IDF was outstanding and surpassed that of its enemies. Consequently, "tactics" became the interpretive conceptual anchor of the military experience

and of military thinking, sometimes up to the highest level.

When tactical conceptual language is applied to the strategic and operative thinking environments, a crisis will almost certainly occur, because the logic underlying these spheres of knowledge is very different; tactical thinking is a natural response, a matter of incidents and responses, while the logic underlying strategic and operative thinking engages in creating conceptions for the near or distant future, providing guidance in force buildup processes, and deciding modes of future force deployment in scenarios that are difficult to foresee. Because switching between

When tactical conceptual language is applied to the strategic and operative thinking environments, a crisis will almost certainly occur, because the logic underlying these spheres of knowledge is very different.

the strategic to the tactical and vice versa is problematic, as Yehoshafat Harkabi described in his book *War and Strategy* (1992), the imposition of tactical thinking and its adoption at higher echelons is liable to transform the strategy and the campaigns being planned into a mere set of incidents and responses.

The Onset of Indecision regarding the Outcomes of War

The Six Day War of June 1967 ended after Israel defeated three neighboring Arab armies. The Israeli government, the public, and possibly also the IDF were surprised by the achievements of such a short war and its relatively few casualties, compared to the prevalent public gloom before the war.

In the wake of the unexpected new reality, disagreements arose on June 18-19, one week after the ceasefire on all fronts, at a meeting of Israel's first national unity government, regarding some of the decisions that were made. The purpose of the deliberations was

to formulate and clarify Israel's position with regard to the outcomes of the war in preparation for the debate at the UN and toward clarifications that were sent secretly to the American administration. Subsequently, the discussions engaged in a series of material issues in this newly emerging reality, such as the status of previous agreements with neighboring countries; changes in the armistice lines; the future of the West Bank and a possible annexation of territories; the unification of Jerusalem; the possibility of a binational state, and more.

The government's discussions and resolutions give us an idea of the conceptions held by members of the government even before the war—conceptions originating from the years since the War of Independence and the Sinai Campaign—that now had to be reexamined in light of a new reality. Striking during these discussions was the position of Minister of the Police Eliyahu Sasson, a longstanding Arabist since before 1948, who argued that if the ministers were discussing a new order in the vicinity, their understanding of Arab countries and their governments was inadequate.

The Security Concept

Israel's security concept between the War of Independence and the Six Day War comprised several essentials: full recruitment of the resources of the state and the society toward the possibility of war; the need for the war to be short, be it initiated by Israel or launched as a preventive war or preemptive strike; and victory on the territory of neighboring countries.

The security concept was also summed up succinctly as a trifold strategy of deterrence,

warning, and decision—an inherently erroneous approach that was never viable since it is paradoxical, because any deterrence dissipates at some point, warning is never guaranteed, and decision is transient by nature. This triad reflected a deterministic approach. These "essentials" were not sufficiently analyzed, and they were not revised if and when reality changed, sometimes to an extreme.

Subsequent to the Ben Gurion government, almost none of the Israeli governments forged or formulated any coherent security concept. The Israeli research literature addressing this important issue often presents security concepts that were formulated by researchers after the fact; i.e., researchers performed a retrospective analysis and formulated what in their opinion was a security concept, and sometimes, what should have been a security concept. It is unlikely that the relevant political and military leaderships formulated any idea of a security concept in the same way that researchers did after the fact and years later. It appears that in Israel, security concepts were formulated retrospectively in light of successful wars, and not before them. What was done between 1950 and until the First Lebanon War in 1982? The IDF, the General Staff, and the senior military leadership formulated approaches for deploying military forces that could be called security concepts. One can see in them "expansionist approaches" or "positioning Israel in the region." In other words, some of Israel's wars were designed to be expansionist, while others were caused as a consequence of the expansionist policy (Tamari, 2012).

Expansionism

From the War of Independence and until after the Yom Kippur War, the IDF was considered to be the most successful organization in Israeli society (Tamari, 2012). Successive governments related to the IDF as the entity that guarantees the state's existence and is capable of providing the right response to any situation and conflict with enemy countries on the one hand, and on

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the other hand, as a social entity that builds the nation and the society. The IDF, for its part, saw itself as hegemonic in relation to all national security issues and as the organization that must influence and also sometimes define the infrastructure development in the State of Israel during its nascent years in light of its security needs. The IDF also assumed the role of government tool, even beyond immediate security needs.

A methodical perusal of General Staff and regional command documents, multi-year plans, and various staff research studies of the General Staff between 1950 and 1973, and even until 1981, finds that the IDF cultivated unequivocal conceptions about expansionism, about demarcating completely new borders for the State of Israel, and about Israel's positioning in the Middle East. At the same time, and notwithstanding the subversive nature of this conception, it was no secret and was not concealed from the prime ministers and defense ministers, though for their part, the governments did not delve into the conceptions of war adopted by the IDF.

The expansionist policy, as designed in the IDF, influenced the conduct and outcomes of the Sinai Campaign in 1956, the Six Day War, the War of Attrition and surrounding events in 1967-1970, the Yom Kippur War, the First Lebanon War, and, it appears, the occupation of the West Bank. All of the staff plans and research studies pertaining to expansionism were designed to create "forward strategic depth" in the hostile regions between Arab armies and Israel's living space (Nevo Research, 1954). The Lavi strategic planning dossier of the Operations Branch/Planning Department, November 1953, clearly contains the idea of expansionism, with an advanced planning addendum that proposed the inclusion of the expansionist plans in the IDF's multi-year plan; i.e., a prescribed directive for planning every war so that it would be capable of acquiring new territories for Israel. Planning for such a war, so it was written, must be coordinated

for critical dates and opportunities that might emerge between 1954 and 1957. In addition, expansionism appears in all of the multi-year plans subsequent to the Sinai Campaign and until the Six Day War. The five-year Bnei Yaakov plan of 1958 stated that a war with one or more neighboring countries requires the conquering of territories of up to 250 kilometers from Israel's borders. The five-year Bnei Or plan of December 1964, which was in effect until 1969 and retroactively also covered the Six Day War, stated that Israel must be proactive and occupy the West Bank until the borders are changed.

The expansionist ideas were what prompted the IDF to occupy territories in the Sinai Peninsula, in the West Bank, and in the Golan Heights in 1967. Subsequently, the IDF was tasked with defending them, but a defensive approach was not formulated, but rather only an approach for a continuation of expansionism. The objectives of the war defined by the General Staff headed by Lt. Gen. David Elazar in the summer of 1973 were to defeat Egypt and Syria in order to maintain the status quo achieved after the Six Day War and "to improve the ceasefire lines" at the end of the war ("The Yom Kippur War," Doctrine and Training Division, 1980). The improvements were approved by Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan and included the occupation of territories not much smaller than those occupied in 1967.

The IDF's expansionist policy was designed not only to eliminate imminent danger and deter an enemy by a show of Israel's power, but also to effect a permanent change in the State of Israel's geostrategic conditions. The Six Day War is clear evidence of this—the government had not issued any instructions to the IDF about which territories to occupy and for what purpose. The government's only instruction to the IDF was "to remove the seal choking the State of Israel," and indeed, this was removed in one day as a result of the Air Force's achievements. All the rest—the occupation of the entire Sinai Peninsula up to the Suez Canal, contrary to the directives of the Minister of Defense, the

occupation of the West Bank and the Golan Heights—were an outcome of the expansionist approach, which was the prevalent mindset in the IDF that dominated easily, due to the absence of directives from the government, and superseded any government directive to moderate the scope of the occupation. After the Yom Kippur War and after the disengagement agreements, and also after the peace accord was signed with Egypt, the General Staff retained the desire to return to the Sinai, as is apparent from the Gates of Salvation operational plans and similar plans from 1981 that were formulated in case the agreements with Egypt were not fulfilled.¹

Examination of the IDF's expansionist approach prompts the question: How would the IDF occupy extensive territories in the region? Decisive answers to this were provided in the form of the structure and organization of the IDF, the military force deployment concepts, and utilization of the overall Israeli potential for the possibility of war. A historical review shows that the question of how Israel would hold occupied regions was almost never addressed—a salient issue given that the neighboring countries would not be eager to accept the loss of territories and would do everything in their power to get them back.

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disregarded reality and the IDF's duty to use its military, strategic, and systemic knowledge.

Defending the Sinai Peninsula after the Six Day War

Very briefly, in mid-June 1967, it appeared that Israel's wars against its neighbors were over, after the Arab armies suffered such a crushing defeat. Yet very quickly it became evident that this was not the case. There are different ideas on when the War of Attrition began. While Israel and the IDF say it began in March 1969, it can also be understood as a war that started two weeks after the end of the Six Day War, launched unequivocally by Egyptian President Nasser (Kabha, 1995). Some researchers believe that it did not start before September-October 1968, while others assert that every war has a "maturation period" prior to its outbreak, and the War of Attrition against Egypt is an example of this. The Egyptian decision to launch the war was accompanied by a series of brutal attacks against the IDF along the Suez Canal and at sea. It began with seemingly sporadic incidents, such as the sinking of the *Eilat* battleship, which resulted in 34 fatalities, and two preplanned massive shelling attacks in September and October 1968, which resulted in the deaths of 25 soldiers. But until then the IDF did not understand what a war of attrition is, or how it should prepare for it. Prime Minister Eshkol, who was skeptical despite the victory in June 1967 and was concerned that the victory and the quiet were only temporary, did not know how to translate his concerns into clear directives to the government and to the IDF.

Until the Six Day War, the IDF did not lack basic military knowledge about defensive fighting as a strategic foundation, but for justified reasons it was deemed an unacceptable option. As long as it was necessary to defend the State of Israel at the ceasefire lines, the solution for defensive fighting was initiated war and preemptive strikes. This might be the reason for the inadequate engagement in defensive fighting until the Six Day War. After

the war, the thinking about defense of the newly occupied territories was adversely affected by the lack of prior knowledge about the concept of defensive fighting. After the Six Day War and the seizure of expansive territories three times larger than Israel at the ceasefire borders, one would expect that thought processes about strategic defense might be initiated, but this did not happen.

Upon his appointment as Chief of Staff, Haim Bar-Lev held a series of meetings on the subject of defending the Sinai. The basis of the discussions about defense should have relied on a conceptual system that clarified the concept of strategic depth, the volume of military forces and their availability relative to the region, the military capabilities of the adversary's army, and the government's policy and its interpretation by the General Staff. During a General Staff meeting in September 1968, Chief of Staff Bar-Lev said ("The Yom Kippur War," Doctrine and Training Division, 1980):

As for the question: Which war? I think that here too, if we hang onto some defensive conception, it's an optical illusion because, in the final analysis, we have always said: we will stop the enemy's attack and we will shift the war to its land. I think that this was valid during the period of the Green Line and it is also valid today. And our forces need to be trained to stop a surprise attack and switch to an offensive response. I think that the war—if there will be an all-out war—will be a war that they initiate. I see very little chance or likelihood that we will be the initiators.

The Chief of Staff developed his approach when he said that if a war erupts, it might become necessary to occupy targets, like Cairo or Alexandria or the hills surrounding Cairo; i.e., an optimal course of action, according to him. This would also be true for Amman and

Damascus or Jabal al-Druze, the Litani River or Port Fouad, and the western side of the Suez Canal. To this end, Israel's military force must also be prepared for the scenario that the force will accomplish a maximum achievement, which is a long term arrangement that might require Israel to remain in Cairo or in its vicinity for a month or two years—so he said. His statements contained a new twist, or perhaps were a return to the model recalled from the War of Independence—i.e., a war that opens with a defensive stance and, as soon as it succeeds, switches to an offensive stance to win the war and gain achievements at least as advantageous as those of the Six Day War.

A few weeks later, in November, during a meeting at the General Staff attended by Minister of Defense Dayan, OC Southern Command Maj. Gen. Yeshayahu Gavish clarified the defensive approach for the length of the Suez Canal line (ibid.):

The principles on which the plan is built are as follows: first—we must defend the canal line. The defense needs to enable us to prevent any crossing of the canal in places not under our control...Naturally, the significance of our deployment along the canal is an outcome of two considerations—military and political...There is no doubt that the vulnerable point of the forces crossing the canal is the preparation time before the crossing and their being in the water. We will achieve this advantage if we deploy along the shoreline.

The Chief of Staff summarized:

But like I said, we have all of the chances of stopping them on the canal line based on three elements: the defined areas, counterattacks, and air power. We hope that all three will work, because then it will be good.

Even if two of them work, this will also be good. (ibid.)

Therefore, the line of strongholds along the banks of the Suez Canal, whose construction began in the winter of 1968, was not designed solely for a war of attrition. This was a line that was designed to protect the Sinai region at its most western edge, in the event of a wide-scale war. The viewpoint of the Chief of Staff, the General Staff, and the Southern Command contradicted any basic military logic. The defensive holding line, which is the line that as long as is held fulfills its mission, was the most forward line possible, hundreds of meters from the Egyptian military forces. Therefore, there was no tactical depth and no systemic depth—which thwarts any defense in advance.

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The next Chief of Staff, David Elazar, did not revise his predecessor's viewpoint, but added that he absolutely negated defensive fighting as a reasonable option in war. He considered an attack on the Suez Canal and on the Golan Heights as the opening position of the war, even though he admitted that the prospects of an Israeli preemptive strike were low. Regarding the possibility of war being initiated by Egypt, he said in the summer of 1973 (ibid.):

I don't want to talk about the conception, about deployment at the canal in a defensive posture and about managing a defensive war. I think this will be a disaster....Don't

talk to me about the conception of the strongholds and the Bar-Lev Line....If war indeed breaks out, it must have one mission: to defeat the enemy's army.

The Chief of Staff went further and essentially buried defensive fighting as a basic scenario in a war: "The Sela defensive plan [the code name for the Sinai defensive plan] must give us an alert for a rapid switch to the offense... and to gain major and substantial achievements immediately."

OC Southern Command Maj. Gen. Ariel Sharon promptly came to the support of the Chief of Staff: "We are not presenting Sela at all, because we have Sela overlapping the maximum offensive plan." The Operations Branch officer added: "Sela is general, while we have two additional divisions at the front line—162 in the northern sector and 143 in the Refidim sector on the arteries and um-Machtsa in the direction of the central sector...when the operation is being built in order to launch Operation Desert Cat" (ibid.).

It appears that after the Six Day War, both Chiefs of Staff and three OCs Southern Command nearly completely ruled out the defensive fighting designed to maintain Sinai under Israel's absolute control. The set of conceptions that the IDF designed and followed prior to 1967 remained as it had been—a strategic attack to win the war immediately after it erupts, despite the possibility that an intelligence warning of imminent war was not guaranteed,² while the possibility of an Israeli preemptive strike similar to the Six Day War was not plausible. A similar situation also existed on the northern front opposite Syria.

The military outcomes of the Six Day War cemented the strategic thinking in the IDF. After the reality drastically changed in the entire region, the approach toward deploying military force (or perhaps the security concept) remained as it was between 1956 and 1967: with the same sets of concepts, and the

same approaches toward force deployment. The security paradigm was not reviewed or challenged by a new paradigm. The preparation for the next war was a replay of the Six Day War. The complete set of military conceptions that was relevant prior to 1967 was imposed on an entirely different reality, which did not undergo any paradigmatic scrutiny. The War of Attrition, mainly along the Suez Canal—which ended in August 1970 without Israel relinquishing any territorial gain—strengthened this fixation.

If we examine the foundation for the discussion about defensive fighting designed to hold the territory occupied by the IDF, which is supposed to be based for the most part on a set of conceptions that clarify the “strategic depth,” the volume of the military forces and their availability relative to the region, the national potential from which military capabilities can be tapped for the new reality, the military capabilities of the enemy army, and the government’s policy and its interpretation by the General Staff, it appears that the error or perhaps the cognitive fixation was quite profound.

The War of Attrition in the Egyptian Arena, June 1967-August 1970

In retrospect, it can be argued that the War of Attrition, particularly in the Egyptian arena, was the cognitive link between the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War. It was an outcome of the former and its repercussions forged the beginning of the latter.

The IDF and the political echelon failed to delve into the question of how Israel will hold on indefinitely to the expansive territories it occupied in 1967. The test of both the lack of understanding and the ability to retain occupied territories was the Yom Kippur War. However, the failure in the IDF and in the government to consider the question did not begin the day after the Six Day War. Its roots can be seen in the plans for holding onto Sinai (one of the objectives of 1956), and continued in the six years between 1967 and 1973, Israel’s 18-year

presence in Lebanon, and its occupation of the West Bank since 1967 to this day.

One of the essential rules of thought in large organizations, and certainly in military organizations, is that every change of guard requires the leader (the Chief of Staff, in this case, or the Minister of Defense) to analyze the extent of the relevance of the existing paradigm and of the dominant cognitive conception, and to challenge them with a new external paradigm.

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The most prominent situation to emerge from the Six Day War is paradoxically a rare military achievement and a cognitive inability to contend with the outcomes of the war. The fixation that prevailed after the war originated in the assumption that Israel had designed a permanent reality, and that all that was left for it to do is to preserve it. As for the IDF, which at that time was an organization lacking any multidimensional strategic discourse, there was no government above it that could balance or challenge the policy and the one-dimensional conception that characterized the Israeli military.

The War of Attrition against Egypt enabled and even mandated a re-examination of the

security concept, of the outcome of the war, and of the IDF's approaches to deployment. Up until October 6, 1973, this did not happen.

Theoretical Perspective on the War of Attrition

Every war in every location in the world differs from other wars, but nevertheless there are some common characteristics. With regard to wars of attrition, the objectives of the war are limited, and the initiator's intention is to motivate a change in the existing reality, while the responding side exerts efforts to preserve it; the term "decision," which is always ambiguous, does not suit a war of attrition in which the parties are not looking to be victorious, but rather, are looking to "move toward" an innovative change or "revert to the previous situation." One assumption of the initiating side is that the rival country will not respond with all-out war, either because it does not want to launch it or it is incapable of doing so; the initiating side must assess the rival side's capabilities to withstand prolonged attrition and, to the same extent, it must assess its own stamina, since a war of attrition affects both sides. The initiating side must assess the speed of the initiated operations intended to wear the enemy down, because if they are not swift enough, the enemy might have an opening to launch an all-out war; each side looks for military, economic, and social targets that are painful to the enemy, but not devastating and decisive. For the most part, both sides are forced to prefer being capable of maintaining stable defense over an offensive, in order to avoid deterioration into all-out war; a war of attrition is never short and sometimes persists over many years. This requires both sides to begin a learning process. There is no point to defining a clear plan, including its long range future stages, and then operating according to it: both sides undergo a learning process that enables changes of direction and actions. The end of a war of attrition, if a permanent arrangement has not been achieved, requires a new learning

process in order to understand if the war of attribution has forged a different reality or one that is about to change, and what is now needed in political, military, and social spheres. Within this context, a question arises comparing a battle between countries to a battle between a country and a non-state organization, which currently characterizes the battle between Israel and terrorist organizations. It appears that similarities may be found between both cases, but this question must be analyzed fully in a separate research study.

IDF Conduct during the War of Attrition

The Bar-Lev report that the outgoing Chief of Staff submitted to the Prime Minister, to the Minister of Defense, and to incoming Chief of Staff Elazar (Bar-Lev, 1972) allows a window into the thinking in the General Staff throughout the War of Attribution against Egypt. Most of the report, about 300 pages, was written by the relevant departments in the General Staff, while the first 27 pages were written and signed personally by the Chief of Staff and are the essence of the report. The Chief of Staff divided his term of office into three periods: until the War of Attrition at the Suez Canal; the period of the War of Attrition; and following the War of Attrition, until the end of his term on January 1, 1972. The events in the Jordanian, Syrian, Lebanese, and international arenas were similarly described. Bar-Lev also wrote about force buildup in the IDF, manpower, a summary, and conclusions.³

According to the report, as soon as it became evident to the General Staff that the Egyptians began a war of attrition, and this, only in September or October 1968, the following objectives were defined:⁴

- a. To prevent Egypt from gaining any ground achievements
- b. To create pressure that will force the Egyptians to agree to a ceasefire
- c. To avoid mutual escalation in the use of heavy war materials, such as aircraft

- d. To carry out singular strikes in order to moderate Egypt's activity
- e. To deploy minimum forces along the Suez Canal
- f. To demonstrate to the Egyptian government that it is incapable of changing the territorial reality created after June 1967
- g. To compel Egypt to comply with the ceasefire agreed upon the day after the Six Day War (Bar-Lev, 1972).

The initial deployment along the Suez Canal was in outposts that had poor endurance potential. The rear camps were also in vulnerable positions and were still within Egyptian artillery range, which was far superior to that of the IDF. After two devastating Egyptian shellings in September and October 1968 that were meticulously planned in advance, the General Staff initiated a retaliatory response that quickly proved to be a great success: destruction of two bridges on the Nile River in Upper Egypt and the bombing of a critical transformer substation in the Aswan-Cairo power grid and on the Nile Delta. The damage was not very substantial, but the Egyptian government was taken by surprise. It turned out that the Suez Canal arena was defended, but the rear and critical infrastructure in Egypt were not. The Israeli course of action compelled the Egyptian government to halt its military operations for five months in order to prepare to defend its territories deep inside Egypt—time that was sufficient for the IDF to build about thirty fortified positions along the banks of the Suez Canal along 160 kilometers, which provided reasonable cover against artillery fire. In the IDF, they were called “strongholds” (“Micha Study,” Operations Branch, 1956). The capability of these strongholds of harassing the Egyptians on the other side of the canal or of defending themselves against a small or massive crossing by Egyptian forces was negligible. They were nothing more than demonstration of an Israeli presence, which required substantial investment. A stronghold-outpost could barely defend itself.

Because the strongholds were spread over a distance of 160 kilometers, and sometimes the distance between them was about 10 kilometers, armored forces and mobile forces were deployed in the intervening spaces. Armored forces would be deployed at a particular distance from the shoreline that would be capable of reaching every stronghold and every point along the canal within a short time. Artillery corps units would be deployed at a particular depth and would be able to assist the forces along the canal line and hit targets on the other side of the canal. The planning team headed by Brig. Gen. Avraham Eden, the commander of the armored corps in Sinai, presented fortified company camps at the depth of several kilometers from the banks of the canal forming divisional camps that were to fulfill these objectives—a firm defensive line reinforced by tank, artillery, infantry, and engineering units. The rear line of fortified camps that were supposed to help hold the frontline was never built.

Chief of Staff Bar-Lev's report (Bar-Lev, 1972) reveals the thought processes of the General Staff during the War of Attrition. This report has almost never been analyzed in research studies about the War of Attrition. What follows are its central points.

As soon as the War of Attrition reached substantive dimensions, the IDF's goals were to prevent Egypt from gaining any ground and to pressure it until it agreed to a ceasefire; i.e., to revert to the situation as it was the day after the Six Day War. However, in June and July 1969, it became evident that the line of strongholds would not survive without the involvement of the Air Force, in order to compensate for the lack of artillery capable of contending against the Egyptian artillery power. The first goal was accomplished in late 1969, but the second goal was not, and therefore, the decision was made to launch an aerial attack deep inside Egypt, at the risk of the Soviet Union becoming directly involved. The Chief of Staff added:

Today, it appears that during that period, we failed to analyze thoroughly the significance of the impact of the deep attacks on the Soviet involvement. But in retrospect, it appears to me that we were correct—even if intuitively—in our decision to launch a deep attack, because as a result, the fighting intensified until it reached a particular boiling point that put a stop to this process, and finally to a ceasefire....The deep attacks began on January 7 and ended on April 13, 1970, when it became evident that the Russians took it upon themselves to defend the interior of Egypt with rockets and aircraft operated by them.

The Chief of Staff explained that pressure on Egypt presented one serious problem: the Russians. But “if we thought that refraining from action (deep inside Egypt) would cause greater damage, then we confronted the Russians in Egypt.”

The Chief of Staff summarized the end of the War of Attrition against Egypt using short sentences: the Sinai Peninsula is fortified and adequately organized in terms of fortifications, roads, barriers, posts, water supply, communications, landing strips, and everything needed for fighting. The Chief of Staff did not specify which type of fighting.

And indeed, the Red Army took a very active part in defending the battleground at the frontline and deep inside Egypt. The ceasefire in August 1970, which called for a standstill (a freeze on the deployment of forces) by both sides, was immediately violated by Egypt, which advanced its ground-to-air missile batteries. The IDF’s response did not produce any results but, as the Chief of Staff said, “Our main consideration regarding an attack on the batteries was the concern that if we don’t respond, an entire array of missiles

would be deployed adjacent to the west bank of the canal, which would impede us when the fighting resumes”; in other words, if the War of Attrition resumes.

The Chief of Staff summarized the end of the War of Attrition against Egypt using short sentences: the Sinai Peninsula is fortified and adequately organized in terms of fortifications, roads, barriers, posts, water supply, communications, landing strips, and everything needed for fighting. The Chief of Staff did not specify which type of fighting—resumption of a war of attrition or all-out war between Egypt and Israel. It appears that his intention was the possibility of attrition: “preventing Egypt from gaining any ground achievement and achieving a ceasefire as soon as possible.”

What were the achievements of the War of Attrition for Israel, according to the Chief of Staff’s assessment? “Egypt’s leaders, who saw themselves as responsible for a solution in all of the territories, including the problem of the Palestinian people, are not adhering to this daily like they did in the past.” And, “Egypt of today is not enthusiastic about fighting.” Even two years after the ceasefire at the Suez Canal, clearly the thought processes at the General Staff focused on the possibility of resumption of the War of Attrition, and almost never on the possibility that Egypt would launch an all-out war against Israel.

The War of Attrition persisted until July 1969. The Egyptian army began with night incursions by small forces, which raided Israeli strongholds and planted mines on the access roads to them. Both sides persisted with raids from air and sea and with incursions by small forces that crossed the Suez Canal. Egypt had superior artillery power, and the Egyptian army launched incursions deep inside Israeli territory.⁵ Not even a few months elapsed before it became clear that Israel’s fortified strongholds were beginning to collapse. Nevertheless, not one of them was abandoned.

On July 21, 1969, the Israeli Air Force launched a massive aerial attack west of the canal on the artillery batteries, antiaircraft missile batteries, and the Egyptian forces close to the canal. The attacks were accompanied by frequent aerial skirmishes, during which Israel demonstrated clear superiority. The deployment of the Israeli Air Force in the war was more a matter of no other choice, and, despite this, it was not enough to compel the Egyptian government to stop the fighting. On the contrary, the heavy aerial bombardments deep inside Egyptian territory prompted Egypt to call up the Soviet Union, which began to take an active part in the fighting, mainly by adding massive reinforcements of ground-to-air missile batteries and combat planes. Some of the battle campaigns were manned by Red Army troops (Adamsky, 2006).

The General Staff assessed that after about 10 months of continuous fighting, the first part of the goal was achieved; i.e., that the Egyptians had no chance of holding onto the eastern bank of the Suez Canal. However, the ceasefire did not appear to be achievable using the modus operandi applied until then. In order to increase the pressure, the Israeli Air Force began attacking deep inside Egyptian territory and, although it did increase the pressure on the Egyptian government, the Egyptian anti-aircraft defense system improved and developed concurrently until it achieved superiority over the Israeli Air Force during the Yom Kippur War.

Much has been written about the special operations deep inside Egyptian territory during the War of Attrition (for example, Nadal, 2015), and this was a flourishing period of special IDF operations that has not been repeated since. Suffice it here to emphasize one conclusion about the achievements of the special operations: the first three operations on October 31–November 1, 1968, forced the Egyptian government into a temporary halt in the War of Attrition, for those who believe that the War of Attrition had already started, or even before then. This lull in the fighting enabled

Israel to build the 30 strongholds on the banks of the Suez Canal. All the rest, as successful as they might have been, did not change the conduct of the two rivals. This was a multi-round boxing match with the achievements recorded in points and not by a knock-out.

Domestic Criticism of Israel's Conduct during the War of Attrition

In cognitive and practical terms, the Israeli government and the IDF entered the War of Attrition against Egypt after a delay of more than one year. Israeli intelligence did not discern the Egyptians' preparations for a war of a type that neither Egypt nor Israel had ever experienced. The starting position of the government and the IDF was that the defeat of Egypt in 1967 would oblige the Egyptians to accede to exaggerated concessions that would enable an arrangement with Israel. The "three nos" of the Khartoum Resolution in late August—no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel, and no peace with Israel—justified, from the perspective of Israeli governments, its decision not to offer the Egyptians an arrangement that could be satisfactory to Israel and Egypt alike, even though it was not certain that any Israeli proposed arrangement would be acceptable to Egypt at that time (although President Sadat proposed a possible arrangement to Israel in 1971 through the United States).

On the Israeli side, the War of Attrition was not accompanied by a learning process in the systemic and strategic environment, but only in the narrow military sense. However, the military learning was successful in relation to several aspects: the investment of relatively few manpower resources enabled the IDF to focus on other arenas and engage in military force buildup; the number of casualties was tolerable, considering the intensity of the Egyptian firepower; the IDF succeeded in limiting the forces deployed on the Suez Canal line to the minimum necessary: along the canal line it deployed a few hundred soldiers, about 100 tanks, and five artillery battalions, as well as

engineering corps of one to two battalions. This was not the case with regard to budgets. The canal line, inclusive of its military posts, access roads, and critical infrastructures across the length and breadth of the arena were very expensive for those days; the use of the Air Force, which was not easy or inexpensive, enabled the strongholds along the canal line to survive. In relation to all matters pertaining to a political and military learning process, it is hard to point to an Israeli achievement or to substantive strategic thinking. The line of defense of the canal, from the moment it was established, constrained any other possible Israeli direction, whether at that time or in the future.

It appears that the War of Attrition was perceived by the IDF and by Israel as the last day of the Six Day War, while in Egypt, it was perceived as the first day of the next war.

After a ceasefire was achieved in August 1970, and during the three-month trial period, considerable resources were invested in preparing the line of strongholds for a resumption of the War of Attrition, and strengthening the existing line became the ultimate objective. No brainstorming was held to consider the possibility of an all-out war in the future, which differs from a war of attrition, and the future value of the existing canal line was not evaluated, which was suitable for the War of Attrition that had ended. It appears that the War of Attrition was perceived by the IDF and by Israel as the last day of the Six Day War, while in Egypt, it was perceived as the first day of the next war.

Although the aerial bombardments deep inside Egyptian territory produced immediate achievements and applied intense pressure on Egypt, they were the catalyst for Egypt's reinforcement of its anti-aircraft capabilities against the Air Force already during the War of Attrition itself and provided a significant learning process for the Egyptians, and the

harsh outcomes of that process on the IDF were evident during the Yom Kippur War. Perusal of the Bar-Lev Report and the letter of Maj. Gen. Israel Tal, Elazar's Deputy Chief of Staff, about the defense of Sinai (Tal, 1970), shows that no analytical process was initiated in the General Staff after the War of Attrition for the purpose of understanding the development of Egypt's intentions regarding a new war after its defeat. One cannot say that the IDF did not plan for war since the end of the War of Attrition, but the fixed conceptions originating in the Suez Canal line caused extreme operational problems during the Yom Kippur War.

The phenomenon evident in the War of Attrition influences the current attrition in the Gaza Strip to this day, notwithstanding the tremendous difference between the two phenomena. Israel has operated under a problematic paradigm for more than fifty years: in times of relative quiet, like after the Six Day War, or when the threat to Israeli society is not imminent, the government does not take any political and military initiative designed to moderate the conflict. The policy is to maintain the status quo: "fight and then do nothing." From Israel's perspective, the ball is in the Arab/Palestinian court and they are expected to compromise and agree to an arrangement that is desirable and comfortable for Israel. When instead of compromising with Israel, the adversary's policy is to use force, then Israel is not prepared to negotiate or to accede to policy initiatives. The past and current logic underlying this mindset and conduct paradigm is that Israel does not concede one iota, if the concession is deemed to be the outcome of the use of force by the rival, so that Israel's dominant position is not eroded. How that will end is anybody's guess. On the other hand, when the hostilities are discontinued, Israel reverts to refraining from initiating any moderating policy or from working out any arrangements. This was Israel's mode of conduct between 1967 and 1973, in Lebanon between 1985 and 2000, and today, between Israel and the Palestinian Authority

and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. This mode of conduct can be deemed the Israeli governments' security concept.

After the three-month ceasefire that began in August 1970 and the renewal of the ceasefire for another three months, Defense Minister Dayan began to change his mindset. He tried to break this cycle,⁶ but within the government he alone was of this opinion, and the IDF opposed this idea vehemently. The outcome was the Yom Kippur War, which resulted in Israel being forced to relinquish its hold on the Suez Canal. This is how the correlation between the War of Attrition and the Yom Kippur War should be understood. An analysis of the Israeli *modus operandi* suggests that only a deep and severe crisis is capable of triggering a change in the Israeli mindset. Since the Sinai Campaign and perhaps to this day, the IDF and the Israeli public have a sense of military, political, and national superiority over the hostile countries in the region. This belief was initially punctured during the War of Attribution and was uprooted during the Yom Kippur War. Nevertheless, this belief was retained by the Israeli leadership during the period of the First Lebanon War.

Conclusion

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, the state and its military have contended with wars at a frequency that could be defined as one long ongoing war. The interesting story is that the end of one war shapes the next war, and sometimes is the catalyst for the next war. Consequently, this article examines three consecutive wars: the Six Day War, the War of Attrition, and the Yom Kippur War. The question what remains relevant to us today from wars waged 52 or 46 years ago is perhaps troubling. Every war and campaign is ostensibly a new story—the reality is different, the context is different, and the people leading the state and the IDF are different—and yet it is still possible to identify similar phenomena in the Israeli context, and these should be scrutinized.

The War of Attrition against Egypt, and those against Jordan and Syria that ended at the end of 1970, provided the Israeli leadership with an opportunity to change its mindset, but it failed to do so, despite the fact that every conclusion of a round of warfare justifies and even dictates a critical examination for the future, even if and particularly when it might appear that the achievements and outcomes were favorable. During the early 1950s, a security concept and a concept of force buildup and deployment were forged that endured until the Six Day War. Subsequent to the Six Day War, a change in reality occurred—the most dramatic change since the War of Independence and the establishment of the State of Israel—but no significant change was made in the thought processes of the political and military leadership.

A senior officer who is appointed the Chief of Staff, and a commander of a territorial or functional command, prior to assuming his post, must outline for himself the current paradigm in light of the mission, in light of the IDF's structure, and the deployment approach whereby he is required to think and act, and to examine it using a new paradigm unlike the previous one.

One of the most common terms in Israeli society and in the IDF is the term “lessons.” In the tactical-combat environment, the word signifies the rectification of lapses that were discovered, or the reinforcement and strengthening of achievements already achieved. In the systemic and strategic environment, “lessons” signifies a thorough investigation of the war and its outcomes in order to ascertain what must be discarded so that it will not happen again. The thought processes during the War of Attrition, upon its end and prior to the Yom Kippur War, remained the same as those that led to the achievements of the Six Day War. This was a failure in thinking that could have been avoided.

During the three said wars, military leaders and commanders who headed the General Staff,

the territorial commands, and the functional commands travelled the entire route from the War of Independence to the Yom Kippur War. They had taken part in the design of the security concept, the military force deployment approach, and the design of the expansionist policy. It appears that this leadership failed to grasp two fundamental principles: the importance of constantly striving to prepare for the next round; and no less important, analysis of the implications of the outcomes of the previous war and those expected from a war in the future, and what changes in mindset and in actions they dictate for the future. A senior officer who is appointed the Chief of Staff, and a commander of a territorial or functional command, prior to assuming his post, must outline for himself the current paradigm in light of the mission, in light of the IDF's structure, and the deployment approach whereby he is required to think and act, and to examine it using a new paradigm unlike the previous one. He must be able to disconnect from the dominant paradigm and to create something new. This does not purport to assert that a commander who does so will actually adopt the new paradigm. He might return to a previous one or turn to a third alternative, or at least, shift his mindset. But this will be a critical, objective examination that is free of the existing mindset. This is not a rule or universal principle, but rather an insight that military and political leaders should consider and implement.⁷

The paradox of deterrence persists in our region to this day, in the battles against Hamas in the Gaza Strip and, in a different way, in Lebanon as well, where Hezbollah, which was deterred during the Second Lebanon War, later achieved a balanced deterrence strategy vis-à-vis Israel.

An investigation of the leaderships' conceptualizations during the said period finds conceptions that were prevalent then and also today, when it is very doubtful that

they offer any benefit, but instead, perhaps are rather quite damaging. The first conception is "deterrence": from the media and from listening to political leaders and even to senior military officers, we find that "deterrence" is a mantra: it must be achieved at all cost, because personal and general security ostensibly depends on it. The State of Israel and its military indeed deter neighboring countries and neighboring forces, but up to a certain point, and largely in the immediate environment. If a military operation, from all-out war to local campaigns and operations, leads to rivals losing territory or up to the point of jeopardizing their existence or even their standing, then subsequently, the deterrence dissipates. This is a familiar paradox. The injured adversary who has been beaten and defeated cannot reconcile itself with its situation of having been deterred. Therefore, it will seek a new and sometimes surprising tactic in order to extricate itself from the status of having been deterred, even if this will require time, a change in approach, and enormous effort. After the Six Day War, Egypt could not reconcile itself with its loss of the Sinai. The outcome was an overhaul of its policies, its military, and its approach toward military deployment. In its competition against the Israeli government and the IDF, the Egyptian government gained an upper hand.

The IDF's aerial bombardments deep inside Egyptian territory, which were designed to deter and had devastating repercussions on Egypt, resulted in Egypt building and operating an anti-aircraft system that three years later, during the Yom Kippur War, destroyed the Israeli Air Force's superiority. The paradox of deterrence persists in our region to this day, in the battles against Hamas in the Gaza Strip and, in a different way, in Lebanon as well, where Hezbollah, which was deterred during the Second Lebanon War, later achieved a balanced deterrence strategy vis-à-vis Israel.

The question about the relevance of a war 52 years ago is still troubling. A war of attrition has persisted for over 14 years between Israel and

the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Seemingly there is no basis for comparison. It is not the same enemy, not the same territory, not the same opposing army, and the context is entirely different. It also appears that it is also not the same Israeli society and leadership as back then. However, there are some ideas and conceptions that give rise to thought, back then and today too.

First, the expansionist culture still exists. This culture has supporters who are extremely influential in the Israeli political environment. The old term “border” as a region for expansion was gradually replaced with “Greater Israel.” In terms of security, the West Bank area is a relatively “soft environment” today, but the Gaza Strip is not. Between 1967 and 1973, Israeli expansionism hit a strong wall in the form of the Egyptian state and nation. Although the Egyptian army did not excel during the Sinai Campaign, and definitely not during the Six Day War, the Egyptian potential as a whole was very high and was incorrectly evaluated by the IDF and by Israeli governments. Viable expansionism can endure in soft regions; i.e., regions that do not belong to a country that has the potential of changing the reality forced upon it as a result of the operation of force. The chances of permanently occupying a region seized during a war will be low if it requires coping with a wall of resistance that could potentially exceed Israel’s capability of breaking it down. In the Gaza Strip, the wall is not the armed Hamas organization per se, but rather two million Palestinians, who will remain there even after the future major campaign to purify the Gaza Strip of the armed organizations that harass Israel using a strategy of wearing Israel down. Israel cannot drive out two million people; Israel cannot “educate” them to reconcile with Israel, and cannot rule over them similar to the practice in the West Bank.

Second, it appears that the General Staff today is more responsible and wiser than the General Staff during the War of Attrition.

However, the IDF’s standing in Israeli statesmanship and in participating in the design of the security concept (if one exists) and in influencing the governments was significantly weakened as a result of the Yom Kippur War, the First Lebanon War, and the subsequent 18 years in Lebanon. On the other hand, the more that at issue are broader governments, composed of a coalition of more political parties, the more contradictory approaches and modus operandi there are. There is no clear political conception, apart from maintaining the status quo. The governments’ capacity for self-learning is practically nonexistent. Consequently, the major and minor rounds of violence are not changing the picture of attrition as a whole.

Third, contrary to the War of Attrition following the Six Day War, and after the War of Attrition, the three years until the Yom Kippur War, in the Gaza Strip and on the Lebanese border, a strategy of defensive fighting has been deemed preferable to an offensive strategy, and even as essential. It appears that the IDF and the governments have comprehended that an attack, after which you go home armed with a dubious arrangement, is less valuable than strategic defensive fighting that prevents recurring rounds of violence. However, this insight has not gained general acceptance, neither by the governments nor by the public.

Fourth is the physical barrier. In the past, the Suez Canal was considered a physical barrier that affords a substantive advantage and the defensive fighting was based on it. During the Yom Kippur War, it became evident that the barrier did not provide any advantage, due to the lack of adequate Israeli defense. In the Gaza Strip, the IDF erected physical barriers: a barrier that prevents infiltration tunnels and a fence that prevents terrorists from infiltrating and prevents mass border-crossings by Gazans. In addition to these, Israel’s excellent technological capabilities of intercepting missiles and rockets are some of the best and most impressive in the world. As an alternative, the Palestinian organizations shifted to torching fields and

communities, and apparently to attack drones and to additional tactics in the future that the existing barriers cannot block. This translates into a war of attrition that continues indefinitely with recurring rounds of violence. It could be that status quo now means a war of attrition that is a dead end.

Other longstanding conceptions formulated during the 1950s and 1960s, like “a defensive strategy that is applied offensively,” “shifting the war to enemy territory,” and “security borders” were not reviewed during paradigmatic discussions after the Six Day War, which dramatically changed the reality. Moreover, the War of Attrition and its repercussions provided another opportunity for critical thinking that should have shaken up the existing conceptual system. This did not happen.

Every war that ends, actually or seemingly, requires an interpretation of the outcomes and their implications for the future. The War of Attrition was perceived by the IDF as the seventh day of the Six Day War, while Egypt perceived it as the first day of the next war.

Examination of the six year period during which three wars were waged raises the concern that Israel’s governments are not learning. They do not bother to investigate and develop knowledge that emerges in relation to security and military issues and then to set policies accordingly.⁸ Such a statement might appear odd, because prime ministers and ministers with military backgrounds and experience have served in Israel’s governments, but this does not negate this conclusion. The very existence of broad coalition governments—composed of political parties with diametrically opposed security and social conceptions—creates a situation whereby the broader and more politically stable a coalition government is, the more it spawns more vehement disagreements. The questions of what Israel’s borders should be, the fate of the Palestinians, and of the Palestinian state are at the heart of a profound disagreement that has not yet been resolved. Knowledge developed in Israel’s governments

relating to security and the military imposes heavy responsibility on the entire government and on its prime minister. Israel’s governments are not always happy about bearing this responsibility.

The outcome is that the IDF is the only entity in Israel that regularly engages in the methodical development of knowledge about possible wars and violent confrontations. The governments do not develop relevant knowledge about conflicts and wars. The customary statement that “the government decides and the IDF executes” is allegedly correct. In fact, it is absolutely devoid of content, if the government does not think about the knowledge that is used to underpin resolutions, about the IDF’s deep involvement in the decision making process, or about the influence that it has in interpreting abstract decisions regarding operating principles. That is why the governments will always be surprised, not because of any lack of intelligence warning, but rather because the government lacks any rational knowledge-based foundation, which is essential for learning and clarifies and conceptualizes an emerging reality. Under these continuing circumstances, when a crisis arises, there will always be a gap between the reality as interpreted by the IDF and the way by which statesmen interpret that reality. A gap is not a disadvantage per se, and perhaps it is an advantage, because it should prompt investigation and clarification. The question is: On which knowledge is the gap based?

The historical outcome, and the outcome that is apparently expected in the future, is the acceptance of the opinions and proposals that the IDF formulates without any appropriate political interpretation. For the most part, at least until today, the IDF lacks any guiding political thinking, because governments do not customarily inform the IDF in a timely manner and concretely about expected crises. As a result, Israel’s governments often found themselves engaging in wars and military operations, whether preemptive or retaliatory, without having clarified for themselves for what

purpose and toward what end. The situation reached the point that, in most of the wars, it was the IDF that defined the immediate and long-range objectives and took care of convincing the governments to approve the objectives that it defined.

Finally, this article also hopes to inspire additional research studies. Much has been written about Israel's security concept, and much is worthy of commendation, adding vital knowledge about national security issues. Israel has not had a security concept since 1967. There were wars and there were crises that required the use of military force and, for the most part, the governments and the IDF managed to cope. But it is highly doubtful that a security concept exists. Of course, such a statement depends on the definition of the term "security concept." Therefore, further research is in order.

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Notes

- 1 See Operation Baal Zro'a: background and planning directives, February 1980, General Staff, Operations Branch, IDF Archives. Operational plan for an IDF attack on the western front to occupy critical targets in the Sinai Desert, economic and ground targets, and to destroy the Egyptian army. "Basic assumptions about the enemy: the Egyptians breached the peace accords by deploying forces in Sinai beyond the agreed numbers. Egypt decided to join a comprehensive Arab attack, before, concurrent with, or gradually on the eastern front ... all fighting on the western front requires an important achievement to be reached during every stage, with the priorities in the following order: seizure of the sources of oil; occupation of el-Arish; destruction of the Egyptian army; occupation of a section of the Suez Canal; occupation of the entire Sinai Peninsula."
- 2 Two documents that head of the Intelligence Branch Maj. Gen. Aharon Yariv sent to the Chiefs of Staff cast doubt on the prospects of the warning of a war, the first on October 3, 1968 and the second in 1972. See IDF Archives. Regarding the second document, see Tal, *National security: The few against the many*, pp. 206-208.
- 3 Surprisingly, the Bar-Lev Report refers to the term "war" only once and not in the context of the past or the future.
- 4 Until the end of 1968, neither the Chief of Staff nor the General Staff realized that Israel was in a war of attrition in three arenas. The Intelligence Directorate, despite its achievements during that period, did not evaluate the phenomenon and failed to conceptualize it.
- 5 On July 29, 1969, Egyptians raided the Mezach armored corps stronghold, killed eight soldiers, wounded nine, and kidnapped one soldier, who died in captivity. Two tanks were destroyed. Egyptian marine commandos attacked three times through swimming and diving to the Eilat Port from a base that they received from the Jordanians at the adjacent Aqaba Port. In both

- incursions—in November 1969 and in February 1970—the Egyptians succeeded in causing damage to ships.
- 6 In 1972, after it became clear that the War of Attrition would not resume, Minister of Defense Dayan visited the armored corps command post in the Sinai and lectured to the senior officers there. At that time, there were already reports that the American government was considering an arrangement between Egypt and Israel that might obligate Israel to withdraw from the Suez Canal by only a few dozen kilometers. When one of the officers asked the Minister up to what distance was Israel willing to withdraw, the answer was: “In exchange for an unlimited ceasefire, up to one hundred kilometers east of Refidim.” In other words, two thirds of the Sinai Peninsula. I was present during this lecture.
- 7 An examination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat’s writings finds that this appears to be the process that he underwent after Nasser’s death. See Sadat, *On war and peace*.
- 8 See the report of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee’s subcommittee on the examination of Israel’s security concept, 1986. The committee chairman was MK Dan Meridor. His efforts to hold discussions on the security concept in the government during the first decade of this century, as a member of the ruling political party, were unsuccessful.



Predation and Predators in the Post-Alliance Era

François Heisbourg

At the global level and in many individual regions, the last seven decades have been an uncharacteristically structured period of history. Underwritten by the United States, the international system was grounded in economically and politically liberal values. This era is now fading, while in parallel, other processes are unfolding and hastening the advent of a post-alliance era, which will be more brutal and trickier to navigate than the outgoing order. For Israel, there are at least two implications. First, Israel will have an interest in developing further its proven skills in terms of seizing strategic opportunities and hedging, which in turn means generating ever better horizon-scanning assets. Second, there will be value in placing added emphasis on proaction versus reaction.

There never was a global Leviathan, and ever since recorded history began in the Middle East, the world has more often than not been Hobbesian. Nevertheless, elements of order have figured more or less lastingly or successfully in the struggle of all against all.

Regional or even global hegemony, transient coalitions, limited-purpose partnerships, alliances along with de facto or de jure rules concerning the waging of war or the use of the global (or non-global) commons are also as old as recorded history. Simply, some epochs and

regions have been more anarchic than others. The post-Ottoman Middle East is a prominent and longstanding example of such disorder.

At the global level and in many key individual regions, the last seven decades have been an uncharacteristically structured period of history. A combination of hegemony (American, Soviet), a dense network of global rules (from Bretton Woods to the law of the sea), and an array of American-centric non-transactional permanent defense alliances in war-riven Europe and Asia-Pacific has provided anchors to the international system and has enabled the transformative economic and social process known as globalization. Underwritten by the United States, this system was grounded at least in theory and quite often in practice in economically and politically liberal values, such as those enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

This era is now fading for well-known reasons, while in parallel, albeit at different rhythms, other processes are unfolding, the most prominent being the rise of China as an illiberal superpower; the questioning of liberal values and of globalization within democratic societies, most importantly in the US; and the unorthodox political and foreign policy practices of the leader of the world's key power.

These and other forces are hastening the advent of what I call a post-alliance era. This prospect is already deeply affecting the way Europeans and Asians are considering their future strategic, military, and diplomatic choices. Even if the early stages of the process are still halting and inconclusive, there is a broad understanding that this time, it is very different, and that the future may look more like the pre-1914 past than an extension of the post-1945 (or 1989) present. For countries operating in regions that are not structured by the alliance system underwritten by the US, the impact may not be so obvious: after all, in a perverse way, this is simply the world catching up with the Middle East's Hobbesian normal. That may be

true, but as we shall see, this new reality also shakes up the Middle Eastern strategic sandbox.

I will define the post-alliance era briefly, then draw some implications in terms of its basic operating system, which I will call "predation," and in closing draw some consequences for MENA in general and Israel in particular.

The Post-Alliance World

Several distinguishing traits have already emerged from the interaction between the system-breaking forces referred to above. First, and this is hardly an original remark, this spells the end of the liberal rules-based order as the endpoint of history as imagined by the post-Hegelians of the early 1990s. However, it does not mean the end of liberal features in the new era, since liberalism remains an intellectually and politically coherent force contending with an inchoate mix of authoritarianism and sovereignty, and it will continue to have an important following.

Second, transactionalism, which was never entirely absent in the outgoing era, will become the default mode of international relations among former allies, as between others. Each transaction is made on an independent basis and must stand on its own feet (strategically, politically, or economically, as the case may be), with the need to generate a profit from day one. Short-termism and one-offs will be the rule. This deal-making in turn places a heavy emphasis on bilateralism, given its basic simplicity. Overall, this does not entirely preclude some forms of long term purpose-designed agreement, such as the 1979 Camp David accords. But anything heftier in terms of participants and time becomes an outcome that is close to impossible to achieve. The Treaties of Westphalia or the Vienna Congress are once a century (or two) exceptions in this regard.

Third, the new era will entrench itself, even after Donald Trump leaves the White House. Once dissipated, trust is always difficult to restore. Moreover, Trump's drive to end foreign wars, his attempts to reduce foreign

commitments, especially in bloody MENA, and his focus on China are widely shared, well beyond the confines of his own electorate. Indeed, much of this evolution began to happen under President Obama, leading from behind in Libya, not abiding by his own red lines in Syria, and pivoting to Asia. If anything, the ongoing Chinese priority in Washington will be sharpened and deepened.

Finally, the reversion to a norm works with the grain of history, unlike the uphill attempt to reestablish an exceptional situation. In historical terms, it is the seventy-year era of alliances that is the exception. This point is well made every time NATO prides itself on being without precedent: yes indeed, but that is not reassuring. The norm is what prevailed in previous centuries or millennia.

Predation and Predators: Take the Money and Run

Short-termism, transience, bilateralism, and the absence of incentives for long term ventures are not absolute. Planet threatening contingencies such as an acceleration of global warming or pandemics may yet provide some space for global action, although America's decision to leave the Paris Accords does not make that case. But day-to-day and on most issues, that is what the new era will look like.

For many countries and their leaders this is hardly a change, and some may even see it as welcome since it offers new opportunities, as Putin of Russia and Erdogan of Turkey have discovered. Indeed, in a world where there are fewer rules and no permanent alliances, not only does opportunity for predation increase, but opportunism becomes mandatory: take your chances now or else...

In the outgoing era, the US was a guarantor of relational permanence and long term stability, not only toward its direct allies, but more broadly, in setting bounds to the conduct or misconduct of others. In an alliance-free world, the US will find it difficult not to become a predator in its own right. Donald Trump's

transactional approach to each and every security situation is the crude precursor of what will become habitual: the US is ready to send troops to Saudi Arabia (if KSA pays); the US will abide by NATO's Article V to defend Estonia (if it has paid its dues); the US withdraws its troops from Rojava because these 1200 soldiers and their Kurdish cohorts somehow cost too much; and so on. We should not assume that this is a passing phase, just because these mercenary quid pro quos come in the guise of the incumbent President's histrionics.

In historical terms, it is the seventy-year era of alliances that is the exception. This point is well made every time NATO prides itself on being without precedent: yes indeed, but that is not reassuring. The norm is what prevailed in previous centuries or millennia.

This is a world in which three uber-predators will dominate the scene. A strategically still cautious China has shown at the micro-level—think Angola, Maldives, Montenegro, Malaysia—that it will eventually prove to be an exceptionally unsentimental and grasping predator going after much more consequential prey. Its “century of humiliation” at the hands of the imperialist powers from the First Opium War onwards provides it with a rich playbook to draw from.

Russia, a power that has clearly expressed its dissatisfaction with post-Cold War order inside and outside of Europe, is a skilled hand at predation and a master at seizing opportunities. Its newfound political and military agility helps compensate for its limited economic and demographic base, while its size, nuclear arsenal, and location help put it in the “top three” league of predators.

The US, much more experienced than China in orchestrating all forms of power, will prove to be an exceptionally able predator once it moves beyond the chaos of the current administration: what served for the good from

World War II onwards will simply be repurposed and redirected as a consequence. This will be done all the more readily given the new forms of predation that are joining those inherited from the pre-nuclear and pre-digital age.

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Cyberspace is one such area that began to feature as a major arena for all types of operations nearly fifteen years ago, with the first big DDOS attack against Estonia in 2007. Although much of its physical and human infrastructure is substandard, the United States's technological base is at least holding its own vis-à-vis China as a source of digital research and innovation.

Less obviously, interdependence itself, which is often viewed as a pacifying element in international relations, is increasingly weaponized, to use Henry Farrell's and Abraham Newman's formula. Because the global financial and trading system is dollar-centric, hardly any cross-border enterprise can escape America's reach, including in legal terms. It took the US decades to move from a piecemeal and case-by-case approach to a tightly-integrated inter-agency policy in using its power of seigniorage, broadly defined. The potential power of an integrated onslaught became apparent early in this decade with the deployment of the full suite of primary and secondary sanctions against Iran during the nuclear negotiations of 2015-2012. Since then, the toolbox has been improved further. Despite current Iranian complaints against a European Union that fails to circumvent current American sanctions, the fact is that few Chinese or Russian firms are ready to run the risk of being cut off not only from the US market but from the world market as a whole, and Iran knows it.

America's ability to weaponize interdependence relies heavily on its cyberspace capacity to scoop up intelligence on the contenders it monitors, and on the corresponding electronic trail of money and transactions. But what lends its unique weight is the dominant position of the dollar, which happens to be both a reserve and exchange currency, as well as the ultimate property of the US government. If you are caught using it in a manner that the US objects to, no amount of complaining about the extraterritorial reach of American law will help.

This weapon is also directed as a matter of course at US allies through secondary sanctions, but allies too can become primary targets. On the intelligence side, the US consistently keeps track of European companies and states, both directly and through third parties.

The weaponization of interdependence also leads to the spread of what used to be an unusual form of international conduct between industrial powers, in the form of "legal hostages." Is there a US problem with Huawei? You see to it that Canada arrests the chairman's daughter. You have a problem with a Franco-American merger? You have DoJ put a French executive in a high-security US jail. If you are Chinese and have an issue with securing the intellectual property rights of a foreign company, in the old days (5 years ago) you extracted all the information on the computer your moles had obtained. Now you just arrest some guy and wait for the exchange. Old fashioned hostage-taking and kidnapping as practiced by terrorist groups, criminal gangs, or rogue states now has a variant in the halls of political and corporate power of the industrialized world.

In this brave new world, the countries facing the challenge of the "three predators" most acutely are America's European and Asia-Pacific allies.

Europe's problem is both value-based and structural. The EU as a collective does not simply obey the rule of law and eschew the use of force: being a peace project governed by the rule of

law is its DNA. The EU is thus poorly equipped to deal with predators in a language they can understand. Structurally, the Europeans find it very difficult on the one hand to integrate the considerable powers of the Union, notably in trade and competition policy that even Google and Facebook have learned to fear, and on the other hand, tools of sovereignty in the hands of member states: defense, diplomacy, cross-border taxation. And although France, for instance, has substantial armed forces with serious projection capabilities and the political will to use them, they are those of a country of 67 million, not of a 500-million strong continental bloc. There is no European army.

Asia's problems are more basically strategic. If Japan, South Korea, Australia, and Taiwan do not have nuclear weapons and have Western-friendly policies, it is thanks to extended US deterrence. If that deterrence is seen as fading, these countries will consider (or as in the case of the latter three, re-consider) the nuclear option and engage in China-friendly hedging, at US expense.

Hobbes in MENA

MENA will not, and indeed does not, escape the consequences of the post-alliance order, as the events of October 2019 in Syria make clear. The US dropped one set of allies, the Kurds. Toward a NATO ally, Turkey, it managed to simultaneously display weakness, exhibit subservience, and proffer grave insults. Prompting a helter-skelter US military retreat, Trump cleared the ground for Syrian regime forces, the Russian military and PMCs, and ISIS 2.0. This is not exactly an improvement over the questionable US strategic performance in MENA under Bush the son and Obama.

It doesn't get any better. MENA is famously known as a region of "frenemies," but not all frenemies are equal and alike. For Israel in particular, since 1967 the relationship with the US has been much more deeply grounded than any other: it is an alliance. And some frenemies are longstanding enemies of Israel, such as Iran,

which is viewed as the number one strategic threat since the end of the Iran-Iraq War. In the new world, in which the US is focused on China and is in no mood for MENA adventures, the "flavor" of frenemies may change more quickly than in the past. By the same token, the strategic positioning of frenemies vis-à-vis the Israeli interest will become more volatile. This evolution may be sharpened by the possible transformation of the US broad-spectrum, consensus support for Israel into a bone of partisan contention.

Developing relations with partners that may not be immediately useful may be a wise investment. Future relations with the EU and its member states should be viewed through that prism.

This carries at least two implications. First, Israel will have an interest in developing further its proven skills in terms of seizing strategic opportunities and hedging, which in turn means generating ever better horizon-scanning assets.

Second, there will be value in placing added emphasis on proaction versus reaction. Developing relations with partners that may not be immediately useful may be a wise investment. Future relations with the EU and its member states should be viewed through that prism: cultivating links for the long run rather than simply pursuing the current grumpy and sterile exchange of mutual disagreeableness. And Europe means Europe rather than dialogue with the leader of Hungary. Why? Because relations with a revisionist and opportunistic Russia are a common factor between Europe and Israel, as is the transformation of America's positioning towards its allies, and China's growing penetration of MENA, including Israel, and Europe. These common concerns may at certain moments create common interests and lead to common actions, and if they don't, nobody will be worse off for trying.

The post-alliance world will be more brutal and trickier to navigate than the outgoing order.

Precisely because so much will have to be improvised on the spur of the moment (or as a result of a wild leader's intemperate Twitter feed), upstream investment in diplomacy and an even greater emphasis on understanding the evolution of one's frenemies will be of the essence. In effect, the premium will be on

planning and preparing for the as-yet unknown and unpredicted.

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Russia and the Global Balance: A Middle East Perspective

Igor Yurgens

Contrary to what many had expected, the global balance that emerged since World War II has not evolved into a unipolar world, and a stable new balance is not apparent. The Middle East has now given Russia a chance to assert itself as a major actor, and for Moscow the region has become a testing ground for the development of its own future foreign policy. The challenge of working out a new balance is at the top of the global agenda, and Russia must necessarily be involved in addressing it. Those who want to respond to this challenge have a vested interest in Russia's participation. This is true for the United States and Europe—and true for Israel, for whom a regional tectonic split would be fraught with grave consequences.

Announcing the withdrawal of US troops from northern Syria, President Donald Trump said that he was willing to let “anyone who wants to...whether it is Russia, China, or Napoleon Bonaparte” protect the Kurds. Yet once the US military had left Manbij, Raqqa, and Kobani,

it was not the French tricolor flag but the flags of the Syrian Arab Republic—and of the Russian Federation—that were hoisted over the abandoned US military bases.

Vladimir Putin learned of the rapidly changing situation when he was away from

Moscow, on a visit to Riyadh. The rulers of Saudi Arabia, which has a reputation as the staunchest US ally in the Middle East, rolled out the red carpet for the Russian President.

Just six or seven years ago, early in Vladimir Putin's third presidential term, Russia's foreign policy appeared to be lacking direction or purpose. Russia was becoming marginalized as a global player, and its chief concern seemed to be protecting domestic stability from foreign irritants. There was reason to believe that this would be a long term trend: there seemed to be little that Russia could offer the world or demand from it. Russia lacked the kind of national goals that shape foreign policy.

Whereas from the Western perspective Russia appears to be a global enfant terrible, always ready to subvert democracy and foment trouble in order to weaken its opponents, outside of the Euro-Atlantic discourse it is regarded as a major power center.

It is debatable whether it has such goals now. However, 2014 opened a new era in Russian politics. First of all, Russia began to use the tools of foreign policy to accomplish tactical tasks. Second, even though the goals remain somewhat unclear, there is no doubt about the direction: an attempt is underway to regain the positions from which Russia withdrew in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In the West, 2014 was a year of both victory and defeat for Moscow. On the one hand, Ukrainian events clearly demonstrated that Moscow simply lacked the power to reassert full control over the post-Soviet space. Using force or successfully competing with the EU integration project is still out of the question for lack of resources. Western analysts believe, however, that the Kremlin has so far been successful in sowing doubts over any possibility of the integration of former Soviet republics in the European Union or NATO.

On the other hand, Russia has been gaining ground rapidly as a global power, albeit at the expense of relations with the European Union and the United States. Although Russia's place among the great powers has never been in doubt, this status for years remained almost a mere formality. While Russia had all the trappings, such as a permanent seat and veto power in the UN Security Council, nuclear weapons, enormous resources, and a unique geopolitical position, it did little to assert itself as a major player.

By all accounts, this has changed over the past five years. Whereas from the Western perspective Russia appears to be a global enfant terrible, always ready to subvert democracy and foment trouble in order to weaken its opponents, outside of the Euro-Atlantic discourse it is regarded as a major power center. It may not be the strongest such center, as compared to China, but it is certainly not seen as the most destructive one.

Five years ago, sensing a dead end in relations with the West, Moscow decided to look for partners and prospects in other parts of the world, declaring a "pivot to the East." As of now, this has resulted in a certain political and economic rapprochement with China. Yet it remains rather unclear how the two partners expect to benefit from it practically. Nor do they fully trust each other. Most Russians still regard China as a significant, albeit distant, threat to their country's sovereignty and control over its resources. In contrast, Russia has been much more successful positioning itself as a strong player in the Middle East and Northern Africa.

It is true, however, that these recent successes are of a less than strategic value. Indeed, while Russia's President and its Foreign Ministry have formulated their vision of the country's mission in today's world, including the goals of an equitable polycentric international system and collective cooperation in countering common threats, in practice Russia does not seem to believe that these goals can be achieved within the existing system of supranational

institutions or that this system can be reshaped into something truly equitable and effective.

The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation—a document approved by the President, with the latest version published in December 2016—has been enriched by references to the Middle East, including Syria and ISIS, and by promises to react either reciprocally or asymmetrically to “unfriendly actions” of the United States. It states that the “containment policy adopted by the United States and its allies against Russia, and political, economic, information and other pressure Russia is facing from them undermine regional and global stability, and are detrimental to the long term interests of all sides.” Indeed, this depiction of the West as a source of threats to the Russia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as to its domestic stability and power system, echoes the Russian Federation National Security Strategy, approved in 2015: “The strengthening of Russia is taking place against a backdrop of new threats to national security that are of a multifarious and interconnected nature. The Russian Federation’s implementation of an independent foreign and domestic policy is giving rise to opposition from the United States and its allies, who are seeking to retain their dominance in world affairs. The policy of containing Russia that they are implementing envisions the exertion of political, economic, military, and informational pressure on it.”

Some of the provisions contained in the previous versions were deleted from the 2016 version of the Foreign Policy Concept. Notably, the emphasis on participation in shaping a global agenda and the foundations of the international system and on developing Russia’s own vision of the global order is now absent. While not stated directly in the programmatic documents, it is apparent that Russia’s main foreign policy principle is to avoid any systemic approach that would seek to contribute to a search for global solutions. The emphasis is on problem-solving “on the ground” while working

together with interested parties capable of exerting real influence.

All actions deliberately aimed at worsening the crisis in relations with Western “partners”—the word still commonly used by Russian leaders—actually sought to alleviate Russia’s international isolation. The idea of “coercion into dialogue” seen in Ukraine was also the underlying reason for Russia’s entry in the Syrian conflict. Whereas in the first case the results have been mixed and the game, at least for now, definitely zero-sum, in Syria the situation looks much more optimistic.

Andrei Kortunov, Director General of the Russian International Affairs Council, believes that in recent years, the results of Russia’s foreign policy in Europe on the one hand, and in the historically, economically, and cognitively distant Middle East on the other, are quite paradoxical: “In the Middle East, Russia, with relatively modest initial investment, has become perhaps the most influential actor, whereas in Europe it has been politically sidelined. In the Middle East, Russia’s position is respected even by its long-time opponents; in Europe, even its traditional friends are now reluctantly distancing themselves from Russia. In the Middle East, Russia is capable of surprising its partners with bold, out-of-the box initiatives; in Europe, it has been on the defensive for several years.”

The main reason is that the Middle East is looking for an alternative external factor. The foreign policy of other outside players, particularly the United States, is inconsistent and often at odds with the interests of the region’s countries, which rarely see eye to eye. Therefore all Middle Eastern power centers want to make sure that they can seek outside support from multiple sources.

Channeling Middle Eastern developments in a positive direction requires a balance. Such a balance is more difficult to achieve with multiple actors involved. On the other hand, a multiplicity of players also gives balance a chance: there is less probability that a little push from one of them would tip the scales decisively. There

are also some other, specific factors involved here. Since the Soviet times, Russia has had important ties and a fairly positive image in the Middle East as well as a high level of expertise. Furthermore, right now proactive policies in the region do not require a substantial expenditure of resources.

Moscow has been updating its Concept of Collective Security in the Persian Gulf, promoting the idea of a regional conference on security and cooperation, a kind of Middle Eastern OSCE, with associated membership of other world powers. It is assumed that “in the future, in the context of an Arab-Israeli settlement, an organization for security and cooperation in the Persian Gulf could become part of a common regional security system for the Middle East and Northern Africa.” According to the Concept, regional cooperation should be based on military transparency, arms control

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agreements, and efforts to make the region a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

The Concept is a declaratory and in large part utopian document. In practice, however, Russia’s policy in the region is quite realistic. During the past five years Russia has proven its effectiveness both militarily in Syria, and on the diplomatic front. It has created the Astana forum—a fairly viable approach that brings together Turkey and Iran. On Syrian issues Russia has also interacted with Israel and the United States. It is due to this ongoing interaction that some conflict situations, inevitable during hostilities, were nipped in the bud.

Unlike the talks in Astana, the June meeting in Jerusalem between the heads of the National Security Councils of Russia and Israel and the US National Security Adviser did not have a high

media profile, but there can be no doubt as to its importance for a Syrian resolution. As for Netanyahu and Putin, they have had fourteen meetings in the past four years. There is of course no question of solidarity on Syrian issues, but there is definitely a mutual recognition of each other’s interests and of the right to defend them, which means quite a lot.

It is not just Syria that is in play. Moscow has taken a strictly neutral stance in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while also expressing its willingness to help in its resolution. As of now, its priority is to make sure that this conflict does not interfere with its bilateral relations in the region. Of course, Moscow has developed its own approaches to the problem, which are at odds with some of the initiatives now proposed, for example, the June 2019 “workshop” in Bahrain, another US attempt to move the Palestinian issue onto an economic track. Be that as it may, the interaction has been intense, and that is precisely why at the recent summit in Sochi Prime Minister Netanyahu was able to state that “relations between Russia and Israel have never been so strong.”

For Russia it is important that the Middle East is giving it a chance to establish and maintain positive relations with all key players—not just with its traditional allies or those regarded as “anti-American.” Russia has been working with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which the Russian President visited in mid-October, as well as with Israel. It has nurtured ties with Tehran, which enables others in the region to look to it as a potential go-between in seeking to improve relations with Iran, though President Putin has recently said that he sees no need for it. Moreover, existing and potential contradictions between Moscow and Iran, particularly on Syria, are quite significant.

For a quarter of a century, the West continued to see Russia more as a problem than as a global actor, despite objections from sober-minded observers such as Henry Kissinger, who wrote in his seminal work *Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the*

21st Century in 2001: “The United States and its allies need to define two priorities in their Russia policy. One is to see to it that Russia’s voice is respectfully heard in the emerging international system – and great care must be taken to give Russia a feeling of participation in international decisions, especially those affecting its own security. At the same time, the United States and its allies must stress – against all their inclinations – that their concerns with the balance of power did not end with the Cold War” (p. 77).

Both sides are undoubtedly to blame for the problematic situation that has evolved. Yet the Middle East region has now given Russia a chance to assert itself as a major actor. For Moscow it has become a testing ground for the development of its own future foreign policy—with clear goals and willingness to cooperate and, most importantly, to seek common interests.

It is worth paying close attention to these developments. Contrary to what many had expected, the global balance that emerged after World War II has not been transformed into a unipolar world. A stable new balance is not apparent. The trends of the past few years—the weakening of the United States, with which the US itself is trying to come to terms, the uncertainty of a united Europe’s future, and the gradual emergence of China as a new empire, relying not just on investment but also on military power—are fraught with two undesirable prospects: either chaos and a

struggle of all against all, or a tectonic splitting apart of East and West.

Donald Trump has said he doesn’t want to intervene in what’s happening “seven thousand miles away” from Washington. But the US political elite is still aware of the challenge their country faces, as formulated by Zbigniew Brzezinski in *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*: “to consolidate and perpetuate the prevailing geopolitical pluralism on the map of Eurasia,” which means, first, “to prevent the emergence of a hostile coalition” that could eventually seek to challenge the United States; then, over the medium term, to find partners to shape a broad “trans-Eurasian security system;” and “eventually, in the much longer run,” to create “a global core of genuinely shared political responsibility.”

The challenge of working out a new balance is at the top of the global agenda, and Russia must necessarily be involved in addressing it. Those who want to respond to this challenge have a vested interest in Russia’s participation. This is true of the United States, Europe, and of Israel—“the West of the Middle East”—for whom a regional tectonic split would be fraught with grave consequences.

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Shortcomings in the Appointment Process for the IDF Chief of Staff

Yagil Levy

Despite his powerful role, the IDF Chief of Staff is not appointed in a transparent process. There is thus room for a public debate prior to the appointment of the Chief of Staff, initiated by the media and agents of civil society, through which the public will be exposed to the mark left by the candidates in their previous roles and to their stances on issues over which the Chief of Staff wields decisive influence.

The IDF Chief of Staff is the most influential actor to shape Israel's military policy after the Prime Minister, and has more than once overshadowed the Minister of Defense. He has the ability to lead the government to a military escalation (for example, Yitzhak Rabin prior to the Six Day War, Shaul Mofaz with the outbreak of the second intifada, Gadi Eisenkot against Iran in Syria). At the same time, he also has the ability to stop escalations urged by the political echelon, a role that Gabi Ashkenazi, for instance, apparently played in relation to the Netanyahu

government's intention to attack Iran's nuclear facilities in 2012. Chiefs of Staff have likewise played a key role in the government's ability to confer legitimacy on military restraint (such as Moshe Levy in his support of the military's withdrawal from Lebanon in 1985, or Amnon Lipkin-Shahak in his support of the Oslo process in the mid-1990s), or to threaten such restraint (Moshe Ya'alon could have thwarted the disengagement in 2005 had he not been faced with a determined right wing government led by retired generals Sharon and Mofaz).

The power of the Chief of Staff can be illustrated well by the influence of Gadi Eisenkot, who served between 2015 and 2019. Independently, without any official national security concept endorsed by the political echelon, Eisenkot drew up a document outlining a strategy that anchors an offensive approach, and formulated a multi-year plan for the military that defined priorities for force buildup. Eisenkot was the architect of the restraint in the West Bank when the “knives intifada” broke out, and supported an arrangement with Hamas in the Gaza Strip. He was identified with the escalatory approach toward the Iranian presence in Syria and Lebanon, as well as with the approach that championed the preservation of the nuclear agreement between the Western powers and Iran. Eisenkot was also more influential than his predecessors in redesigning the IDF’s recruitment policy which, through a series of steps, may accelerate the future process of ending the draft.

The Chief of Staff’s power is not anchored in any official rules (other than those that delineate a uniform command structure for the military, led by the Chief of Staff, that has the power to silence alternative voices that may develop among the top levels of the military). This power is rooted in the high level of trust that the public places in the military as an institution, [the value accorded to military thinking](#) in Israeli political culture, and the process since the Yom Kippur War of turning Chiefs of Staff into public figures. These factors join the weakness of the elected civilians, which is divided politically over Israel’s military policy in a dispute that developed primarily after 1973. This dispute encourages the politicians to vie for the support of the military when making controversial decisions, whether in the direction of escalation or in the direction of restraint. As long as politicians need the support of the military, [the strength of the senior command will increase](#).

What is absurd is that despite his influence, the process of appointing the Chief of Staff is even less transparent to the country’s public

than the appointment of the chairperson of a large public company. This is a significant lapse. The formal process of appointing the Chief of Staff is anchored in the Basic Law: The Military (1976), whereby the Chief of Staff “will be appointed by the Government at the recommendation of the Minister of Defense.” As has been customary for many years, prior to the appointment process, the Minister of Defense holds a round of interviews, and then brings his recommendation to the Prime Minister. The two have more than once disagreed (such as the dispute between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman in 2018 that led to the appointment of Aviv Kochavi as a [compromise candidate](#)), which is then brought to the government for approval and announced to the public. Before the government gives its approval, the appointment is brought to the Advisory Committee on Public Appointments chaired by a retired judge, which examines the appointee’s fitness in terms of integrity only. The committee has never disqualified a candidate for the position of Chief of Staff, including the candidacy of Yoav Gallant, whose appointment was disqualified by the government in early 2011, despite the committee’s approval, following the disclosure of information on building violations Gallant had committed.

Is it necessary to change the official process? There is nothing essentially wrong in the official process. Even for the future, the executive branch will decide on the Chief of Staff; this is not a public vote. Nonetheless, a public debate prior to the appointment of the Chief of Staff is essential. In other words, there is room for cultural change and not necessarily legislative change, and here is where the media has an important role to play.

Prior to the appointment of the Chief of Staff, the media customarily names the candidates, who traditionally include the Deputy Chief of Staff, the previous Deputy Chief of Staff, and possibly other candidates who have not yet served as deputies to the Chief of Staff, and

even candidates who have already left the military. In the period prior to the selection of the Chief of Staff, the media tends to examine in detail the careers of the candidates and their personal qualities and social connections. They may also discuss their place in social “cliques,” such as those of former paratroopers or Golani officers. But the media tends not to talk about the mark the candidates have left in the key roles they have filled, unless their service has been highlighted by exceptional achievements or failures (such as the kidnapping of Gilad Shalit in the summer of 2006, which took place during Aviv Kochavi’s term as Commander of the Gaza Division).

The media reports even less about the candidates’ worldviews, and thus the public does not know their positions on issues where the Chief of Staff wields decisive influence, such as force buildup or combat doctrine, or their approach to the use of force, the future draft model, Israel’s future security boundaries, the issue of ultra-Orthodox recruitment, the issue of gender equality, the position of religion in the military, and more.

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sound, when a Chief of Staff is appointed, the media is full of praise for the appointment as if it were perfect. No further criticism is heard from that point in time until his first mistake. If so, what needs to change?

According to the law, the Chief of Staff is subject to the authority of the government, and is subordinate to the Minister of Defense. Under normal circumstances, the public’s interest in the appointment should be minimal, as is common in the most industrialized democracies. But that is not the case in Israel, given the exceeding power of the Chief of Staff. The public’s position therefore carries some weight. The purpose of political control over the military, according to American military historian [Richard Kohn](#), is that the nation should base its values, institutions, and actions on the popular will, and not on the preferences of military commanders. This leads to the importance of “activization” of the popular will, meaning the need to arouse arguments that will shape the collective will. Otherwise, that will cannot evolve and will remain stagnant, which will give the executive branch, and even the military itself, the power to interpret what that will is.

Activization of the popular will requires at the very least the creation of direct public interest in military activity. But this interest wanes in low intensity conflicts that are low cost and far from the center, and where the social periphery bears a significant share of the burden of combat. Thus despite the difficulty, popular interest, which illustrates “the public will,” requires public debate on the appointment of the Chief of Staff, who, as stated, lays the groundwork for policy. The Chief of Staff is appointed, as required, by politicians, but the latter is supposed to represent the public will. However, this is not the case in Israel, when the political collective has no position and the media does not help it formulate one.

A strong public debate regarding the appointment of the Chief of Staff will help inform the ministers and give them the tools to evaluate the considerations of the Defense Minister

and the Prime Minister when they present the candidate whom they have chosen for approval. If it is claimed that this is not the job of the public, then consider again the Gallant affair in late 2010. Despite the government's decision, it was a series of investigations by journalist Kalman Liebeskind in *Maariv* regarding Gallant's building violations that foiled the decision. Due to the investigations, Minister Michael Eitan asked the State Comptroller to examine the case, while the Green Movement appealed to the Supreme Court. The Comptroller's report, which was submitted to the Attorney General, indicated difficulties in defending the appointment, and the [government decided to cancel it](#). In other words, agents of civil society—the media and a nonprofit organization—acted successfully to thwart the Chief of Staff's appointment after a government decision. Integrity is a main consideration, but not the only one that will determine the appointment of a Chief of Staff. His talents, experience, and the policy he will pursue or seek to influence are also major considerations, but civil society is largely prevented from dealing with them.

What should a proper process be? First and foremost, the media must fulfill its duty and conduct in-depth investigations regarding the mark left by the candidates in previous key positions, and not just tell shallow stories about the candidates. Presumably some of the information is not available and may even be classified. But in-depth investigations, in which retired officers are interviewed, published information is collected alongside State Comptroller reports, interviews are held with members of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee who have encountered the candidates, and more, can shed light on the marks left by the candidates, and predict their success if they are appointed Chief of Staff. There is no need to seek classified information.

Second, the media must expose the candidates' worldviews. The information is available, but is not brought to the public. Consider the process that led to the

appointment of Kochavi. Kochavi's worldview emerged in the past when he developed the combat doctrine for urban areas ("going through the walls") and wrapped it in intellectual thinking relying on French philosophers. His declaration following the appointment that he "is committed to deployment of a lethal military" attracted criticism, but was consistent with views he had expressed in the past. The media should also have known quite a bit about the more restrained approach of candidate Yair Golan, and about that of Nitzan Alon who, as commander of the Judea and Samaria Division and as OC Central Command, clashed with residents of Judea and Samaria. There may be room to consider a preliminary hearing, some of which would be open to the public, within the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, so that the Knesset will also have its say. The very holding of a hearing may encourage prior exposure of the candidates' positions.

What should a proper process be? First and foremost, the media must fulfill its duty and conduct in-depth investigations regarding the mark left by the candidates in previous key positions, and not just tell shallow stories about the candidates.

Third, civil society organizations must take an active role in feeding the public discourse, and even public debate. The way to do this is not just by appealing to the Supreme Court, as the Green Movement did in the Gallant episode. This can be illustrated by the process of appointing the Chief of Staff in 2018. The Im Tirtzu organization and the Choosing Life forum of bereaved parents tried to encourage legitimate public debate of General Yair Golan's worldview, as reflected in his famous Holocaust Remembrance Day speech in 2016 and even more, in a discussion with pre-military academy students in 2006, where he shared his philosophy on ethics in war. The dilemma between risking soldiers and harming enemy

civilians is at the center of professional and political discourse in the Western world, but is barely heard in Israel. Golan expressed his view regarding situations in which soldiers risk their lives to prevent harm to enemy civilians. But the attempt to generate democratic discourse about the views of candidates for the position of Chief of Staff did not gain traction, and the criticism of Golan was silenced as illegitimate. Opposing the critics were Golan's comrades in arms, who turned a principled and essential discussion of Golan's views to a discussion that praised his courage and his achievements in the field of combat. Supportive announcements by the military and the Minister of Defense were also out of place. It is not just permitted, but essential, to critique the positions of a potential Chief of Staff.

Opposing the position is the argument that public debate will politicize the appointment process and may even encourage the candidates to influence the public discourse. Based on this concern, the Rubinstein Committee headed by Prof. Amnon Rubinstein—the Public Committee to Examine Parliamentary Supervision of the Defense Establishment and Ways to Improve it—recommended in 2014 to avoid hearings in the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee before appointing senior officials in the defense establishment. This is not an empty concern. However, the Defense Minister has the power to set rules that will limit the ability of Chief of Staff candidates to influence the discussion. To a great extent, the existing rules limiting the ability of officers to appear publicly are sufficient to prevent politicization.

Moreover, the process will not become “polluted” even if the media and civil society

organizations take on a more active role. For instance, the discussion surrounding Yair Golan's views cannot be considered such pollution. Even other forms of alleged politicization are not negative. For example, during the “lone wolf intifada” in 2016, an [unprecedented public debate](#) developed over the military's rules of engagement—a discussion that until then had been held behind closed doors. The debate intensified following the Elor Azaria affair. If the orders are derived “from both carrying out the task and our scale of values as an army,” as Chief of Staff Eisenkot argued, then there is room for public discourse to design this [scale of values](#). Insofar as the Chief of Staff and generals express a position or attempt to influence policy on matters that have political significance, granting a kind of immunity to their positions derived from ostensibly professional values contradicts democratic principles.

The time has therefore come to stop the masquerade that presents the Chief of Staff as a kind of supervising official and the appointment process as apolitical, which in turn enables an allegedly apolitical figure, the Chief of Staff, to influence national politics. If at this stage we cannot reduce the institutional power of the Chief of Staff to what is customary in other democratic regimes, the appointment process should be accompanied by transparency and public debate.

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PIXABAY

Israel's National Objectives: A Comprehensive Perspective

Dan Schueftan

Israel's unique characteristics call for an exceptionally broad perspective in the discussion of its national objectives. Israel's national objectives can be grouped into ten categories that incorporate the historic objectives of the Zionist movement and the strategic needs of the state that it established. The preconditions for realizing all the national objectives have already attained a critical mass. Today, a strong and self-confident country can deal with the main challenges, taking far less existential risk than it did at its outset. However, it is that very strength that presents a wide variety of options, and it is far from simple to make the choice.

Israel's unique characteristics call for an exceptionally broad perspective in the discussion of its national objectives. Unlike most nation-states, the contemporary Jewish state was not established as a sovereign expression of a functioning national community in a defined geographic area based on common experience, but rather, by a revolutionary

movement that strove to build—primarily on the basis of millennia of historical consciousness and memory—a modern entity almost from scratch. A movement seeking to transform the realities of a people cannot be content with the development and maintenance of existing patterns; its national objectives must be examined and defined through much more

stringent criteria. The challenge is magnified and complicated when an exceptional regional belligerence and an international environment that ranges between skepticism, criticism, and hostility join the greater picture. When all of these are heightened by the special challenges of living on the seam between divergent political cultures of East and West, the mission clearly requires a very different, distinctively complex discussion.

Israel's national objectives can be grouped into ten categories that incorporate the historic objectives of the Zionist movement and the strategic needs of the state that it established. This is not a wish list of desired ideals, but an attempt to outline a "post factum strategy" based on the internal logic that has long shaped major national decisions.

Return of the Jewish People to History as a Functioning Nation

At the outset of the modern age, the Jews did not function as a people. The attachment to Jewish history and to the Land of Israel and the resulting ethos were more in the realm of potential, and the question of their realization was in doubt until the last generation. The two main components of the nation in Israel—the Jews of Europe and the Jews from Muslim lands—essentially developed separately. Zionism's revolutionary mission was to reestablish a framework of common and functioning solidarity among the Jewish people for those who wished to reestablish a national life in their ancestral homeland.

With the establishment of the state and following the mass immigration, a kind of conglomerate was formed in Israel. The tension in the friction-saturated encounter, mainly between those from Western and Oriental origins, threatened to tear Israeli society apart along ethnic fault lines. This tension gradually dissipated to an extent that allowed for a dramatic increase in inter-ethnic marriages, which in turn pushed this volatile issue to the margins of the national scene toward

eventual dissolution. This process reached a critical mass at the end of the last century and became the mainstream political and social reality, reflecting the sovereign responsibility of a self-reliant people, thereby returning the Jewish nation to history as a functioning people. The solidarity and responsibility do not fully encompass the hard core of the growing ultra-Orthodox population, and certainly not most of the large Arab minority.

Concentration of the Majority of the Jewish People in its Sovereign Homeland

At its outset, the Zionist movement only comprised a small minority of the Jewish people. The revolutionary nature of the idea, the opposition of the rabbinic leadership, and the very difficult physical conditions in the land contributed to what was initially a small number of immigrants.

For many years, it was doubtful whether those who chose to resettle in the Land of Israel would become the center of Jewish national life. It was only in the last generation that the demographic dynamic gained the critical mass to ensure the eventual concentration of the vast majority of the Jewish people in the Jewish state. The large waves of immigration of Holocaust survivors in Europe and refugees from Muslim countries and the immigrants from the former Soviet Union, along with the dwindling of the large Jewish communities in Europe and Latin America, created the foundation. But only dramatic demographic trends in the two remaining large Jewish communities—in Israel and in the United States—ensured the concentration of most of the Jewish people in Israel: Israel has a high birth rate and negligible assimilation, while in the United States, natural increase is much lower and assimilation is very common. Currently, about half of the Jewish people worldwide lives in Israel. In the next decade, it is expected to become a clear majority.

The concentration of most of the Jewish people in its homeland places much more responsibility for its historic destiny on the leadership and society in Israel. When “most of the eggs” of the nation’s assets are lumped together “in one basket” located in a threatened state, a special effort is needed to build a state and society that the Jewish people will want to live in with a large and stable Jewish majority that carefully avoids both complacency and adventurism.

Pluralism and Open Society

A state that does not maintain and steadily cultivate a pluralistic and open social and political environment will transgress the tradition of Jewish communal life in the modern age; disappoint the constructive segment of the population that ensures its security, well-being, and prosperity; will not attract Jews from developed and democratic countries; and in the end will endanger its very existence in the surrounding hostile environment.

The open society and democratic regime in Israel are a dramatic achievement in view of the origins of the population and the circumstances of Israeli existence. The vast majority of Israel’s citizens experienced mainly authoritative regimes and patriarchal societies in their countries of origin, even when there were more open structures within their own Jewish communities. The Jewish *yishuv* in the Mandate period and the State of Israel were exposed for more than one hundred years to threats of existential dimensions, and lived in a constant state of emergency. Despite temporary difficulties and setbacks, Israel has succeeded in ensuring at every decade a more open and pluralistic social and political reality than in the previous one. In the Arab and ultra-Orthodox sectors, these standards are not generally maintained. Among the ultra-Orthodox, institutional subservience is common, with an emphasis on personal status issues, to an establishment that is mostly fossilized, radicalizing, and partially corrupt.

The main challenge to the open nature of Israel is the ultra-Orthodox sector, due to a combination of its standing in the political system, its massive natural growth, its separate educational institutions, its internal political compliance, and the impact of the values of its leadership that negate pluralism, tolerance, and openness on the traditional, mostly Oriental, population. Despite the willingness of a minority

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on the edges of this sector to integrate into the general society and adopt values of greater openness, its massive natural growth ensures that those who adhere to the values of the ultra-Orthodox rabbinic leadership will rapidly grow as a share of the population.

Security and Deterrence in a Hostile Regional Environment

Israel lives in the heart of a failed, unstable, and violent Arab region, alongside two regional powers—Iran and Turkey: the former is spearheading processes of regional radicalization, while the latter is sliding in that direction. Since its establishment as a state, Israel has confronted a violent attempt to uproot it, resting on a deep, sometimes pathological belligerence that is pervasive in Arab public opinion, even in the countries that have signed peace treaties with Israel. This hostility is handed down from generation to generation in the formal and informal education systems.

Israel must offer a credible response to active Arab belligerency not only to thwart the immediate threats. It must also present

steadfast and perpetual deterrence against its enemies, while offering its own residents dependable and effective defense at a tolerable price. Deterrence is focused on the enemy's recognition that Israel has the power, the determination, and the freedom of action to inflict unacceptable damage. It is intended to distance belligerent actions one from another and temper them in a way that will enable Israel to realize the constructive objectives that are the essence of Israel's *raison d'être*, during the relatively relaxed periods between the violent high-intensity outbreaks. The trust of its residents is necessary to reinforce national resilience, which is indispensable for Israel.

The critical anchor of Israel's position on the regional and international scene is its relationship with the United States. That relationship is based on a common ethos as well as on largely overlapping strategic interests. Contrary to its European parallel, the American ethos grants legitimacy, when necessary, to the use of decisive power, even without international consent.

In seven decades of independence, Israel managed to maintain its security and wellbeing through a combination of a strong military, determination to use power when it is called for, political freedom of action, and regional political settlements that have shortened the lines of potential confrontation and created strategic partnerships. Arab states are deterred from war, and some even cooperate with Israel. The dangerous confrontation with Iran is, for now, conducted under relatively comfortable terms, even though Israel is gradually realizing that the capability gap in its favor may narrow, as it faces a sophisticated and determined enemy that relies on its impressive society and a zealous leadership. This enemy has wisely avoided direct confrontation, and is focused on its effort to establish regional hegemony backed by a drive toward a nuclear arsenal and an immense array of missiles.

Continued Steadfastness in an Unfriendly International Environment

Other than the crucially important exception of the strategic partnership with the United States and a series of good bilateral relations with other countries, Israel lives in an unfriendly international environment. The situation in international organizations is very bad and growing worse, with a massive majority of nations pursuing a blatant, often absurd and preposterous anti-Israel policy in the UN and other bodies.

Outside the international organizations, Israel's situation is, on the whole, good and improving. The international recognition of its strength, its capabilities, and its importance is robust and getting stronger; its innovation and achievements are highly appreciated. Its standing in the United States is solid, despite significant erosion among "progressive" circles. Bilateral relations with European countries are generally good, even when unfair criticism is voiced publicly, particularly by the European Union. Relations with the countries in the east and southeast of the continent (Greece and Cyprus) are good and improving. There is lately an increasing willingness in Europe to learn from Israel, particularly from its experience in the struggle against terrorism and the integration of migrants, and even to show greater understanding of its security concerns. In China, Russia, India, and Brazil, Israel is considered an actor of a weight and significance dramatically disproportionate to its size.

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decisive, democratic state that is always pro-American. It behaves as “Sparta” toward its enemies and “Athens” internally, and shares a strategic interest with the United States in the struggle against radical actors that threaten them both. Israel is unique in its insistence on self-reliance in its defense, unlike all other allies insisting on a major contribution of American troops. This combination of ethos, overlapping strategic interests, and self-reliance explains the widespread American public support for Israel over generations. This support restricted unfriendly administrations in applying pressure on Israel, while the effective pro-Israel lobby in Washington contributed outstanding salespeople to the marketing of an excellent strategic product.

All of this must be maintained and deepened. The foundations of this support may be deeply rattled if Israel's image as sharing the values of the American mainstream erodes, or if it is viewed as manipulating the US into a war with Iran against the wishes of the American people. If Israel does not work diligently to maintain reasonable relations with most European countries, despite their biases and exasperating voting patterns in international organizations, Israel's export economy, which is geared mainly toward Europe, will suffer, as will essential scientific relations. If Israel does not take advantage of the strategic opportunities opening in Asia (mainly in India and Japan), it will not gain a place in the emerging markets of the future.

Maintaining Historical Jewish Creativity

In the early days of the Jewish *yishuv* and the state, there was concern that the creativity that had characterized the Jews during their exile would be lost under the new conditions of Jewish sovereignty. Apparently, the yield of cultural and intellectual creation in Israel has proven that this concern was, at least, grossly exaggerated. In the fields of science and technology, Israel is universally perceived as an

international hub of creativity and innovation. This should be bolstered further and cultivated, not just because it is extremely beneficial, but also because it reflects and upholds traditions that have characterized Jews for millennia.

The freedom of creative thought and expression in the Israeli mainstream is challenged from the margins: the religious-right and the “progressive”-left. The ultra-Orthodox and the militants in the national religious sector are increasingly adopting rigid practices and strive to impose them by means of their political power and separate educational systems. In the “progressive” wing, the freedoms of creative thought and expression are in danger, purportedly in defense of diversity and pluralism, through the “thought police” of political correctness. The risk from those margins comes from the demographic surge of the ultra-Orthodox and national religious right, and from the disproportional weight of the purists among the cultural and academic elite.

Combining “Sparta” toward Enemies with “Athens” Within

Facing extreme external threats on the one hand, and cognizant of the essential requisite of maintaining the values of an open and pluralistic society on the other, Israel must carefully examine the complex balance between their conflicting requirements. For the purposes of deterrence, it must project an image of a society that can act like “Sparta” when it is threatened. Toward its own citizens and friends, it must show the openness and flexibility of “Athens” whenever possible. “Sparta” when necessary, to ensure life itself; “Athens” when possible, to make life positively meaningful to civilized people. Israel has little to learn from the experience of other open and pluralistic societies, since none have dealt with the dilemmas of a struggle of existential proportions, generation after generation for over a century.

The sense of security among mainstream Israelis is the decisive factor in the society's

willingness to take major risks. The gradual liberalization was, to a large extent, a product of the transition from the sense of fragility in the early years of the Jewish state, through the sense of security following the 1956 Sinai Campaign and the sense of “normalcy” of the 1960s. It grew stronger with the perception of Israeli power following the Six Day War and even more so, despite the trauma of the Yom Kippur War, after the peace agreement with

The strategy of Israel’s enemies seeks either to paralyze its ability to act fearing its values would be compromised, or cause it to lose control and undermine its values, and consequently, its ethical foundations. To avoid both unacceptable alternatives, the healthy balance between security needs and the commitment to an open system of values requires perpetual examination involving trial and error.

Egypt. This self-confidence also explains why the continued control over a belligerent population of millions, major terrorism in Israel’s civilian population centers, and the murder of more than a thousand people during the “second intifada” did not lead to the adoption of a lifestyle of hard oppression that spills over into Israeli society. Rather, the democratic and pluralistic imperative was strong enough to deflect the damages of the perpetual confrontation, despite the continued emergency situation, four major wars, countless large and small military operations, and thousands of missiles on the home front. The sense of security enabled the tightening of the value restrictions on the means the Israeli society accepted as permissible for the security forces to employ in its name to ensure its main existential and deterrent needs.

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Combining Individualism with “Tribal” and National Solidarity

The resilience of the society and the sense of home that keeps the vast majority of the constructive elements in Israel are a product of a combination between a modern, dynamic, and individualistic society with the warmth of family and solidarity of most of the Jewish “tribe.” Popular clichés about a “split society” do not distinguish between fierce disputes (mostly constructive), and a deep and functioning solidarity among the non-ultra-Orthodox Jewish core and whoever chooses to join this circle. The hard core of the ultra-Orthodox shares only some of this solidarity, and the Arab population shares none of its core.

What Israelis say about themselves in public opinion surveys that place Israel in the top tenth percent of the “happiness index” alongside relaxed, wealthy, and homogeneous countries is reflected in two crucially important issues: the number of children per family, and their attitude toward military service. Israel is apparently the only country in the Western world where it is common for educated and well-to-do families to raise close to three children per family—twice the average in Europe and about one-third more than in the United States. This practice is not associated with the kind of pressure on the individual to conform to primordial loyalties exerted by the extended family, so common in traditional cultures that often suppress liberties and pluralism. Israel is also the only democratic country that has conscription to its armed forces for men and women, where the military is consistently involved in wars and violent confrontations at all levels. Most mainstream Israelis not only enlist willingly; they view their military service as a formative and positive experience.

Alongside the recognition of the importance of creativity, freedom of thought, individualism, daring, a touch of constructive aggressiveness, rebelliousness, and *hutzpah*, there is broad national consensus in the mainstream on fundamental issues. Despite lively and even rending arguments in the political sphere, society can function through solidarity toward realizing common objectives. In the most recent three election campaigns, issues of security, society, and economy were only perfunctorily mentioned against the backdrop of broad agreement on the principles, while the discussion focused mainly on personal issues and the struggle over positions of power.

Prosperity and Quality of Life

The importance of prosperity based on integration in the global economy, and quality of life based on the rule of law and tolerance and on well-functioning education, healthcare, and welfare systems is almost a self-evident national objective. It is particularly necessary in a country under threat that is forced to devote a share of its GDP to defense that is four or five times that of most democratic countries and needs to mobilize most of its population for a perpetual struggle. Everyone agrees that without far-reaching progress in all these, Israel would not have survived in the past, and without constantly cultivating them it will not be able to withstand the future. The main impediment to Israel's economic prosperity is the pervasive culture among large parts of the ultra-Orthodox and Muslim populations. Israel has a variety of other problems, chiefly low labor productivity and an unjustifiably high cost of living, but the structural element concerns these sectors.

The country has an interest in integrating the ultra-Orthodox population into the modern economy and strengthening this sector, but this sector's leadership has enough political power to foil this effort. The positive phenomena of integration in this community are losing a significant portion of their contribution in face of the volume of ultra-Orthodox natural growth.

In the Muslim population, the main socio-economic obstacles are a low rate of female participation in the labor force, a traditional way of life resting on the clan structure, pluralism deficiency, and a high level of crime and violence. These characteristics have failed most Arab societies in the region in meeting the challenges of the 21st century. In both sectors, there is also a major problem concerning the rule of law.

Recently a concerted effort in the proper direction has been underway in the Arab sector, offering preference to Arab local government and massive investment to promote the integration of Arab society in the country's economy, chiefly by Government Decision number 922 of December 2015 to transfer NIS 13.5 billion over five years to advance minority population groups. Despite positive trends in Arab society concerning the education of women and a lower birth rate, expectations of a dramatic turnaround in the near future should be contained.

Maintaining the Constructivist Ethos

The impressive success of the Zionist enterprise and the State of Israel in critically important domains should be largely attributed to their constructivist imperative. This means placing nation and society building at the top of the national priority list, at the expense of maximizing national rights, at the expense of short term promotion of the economic well-being of the population, and even at the expense of important defense requirements. The Zionist enterprise is intended to redeem the people, and the redemption of the Land of Israel is subservient to that supreme objective. That is what dictated the restrictions of Zionist settlement during the Mandate period, the extent of Israel's conquests toward the end of the War of Independence, the withdrawal from Sinai in exchange for the peace treaty with Egypt, the disengagement from Gaza, the absorption of mass immigration, and Israel's restraint in the face of international pressures.

With the perspective of more than a century, one can appreciate the magnitude of Israel's achievement in adopting these priorities and express concern about the future. This relates to the impasse on a very decisive issue—undesirable control over millions of Palestinians—that has been a burden in this context on the Zionist enterprise over the past half-century. This is not about the “solution to the Palestinian question” or “peace,” but about the cost of control of the Palestinians at the expense of investing most of Israel's national resources into the Israeli society.

The only response to this combination of the absence of agreed solution and the unviability of the existing situation is a strategy of unilateralism. This means unilaterally determining the border to encompass a strategic belt and the settlement blocs that are home to 80 percent of the settlers, evacuating those outside of these blocs—either voluntarily or by force—and resettling them in the Galilee, the Negev, the Golan, or the blocs.

Regarding this national objective, unlike the other nine discussed here, it is not enough to strengthen existing trends and to correct secondary errors. Needed here is a national strategy based on the mainstream's willingness for a historic compromise, even painful, disappointing, and unsatisfactory in terms of the sense of justice or the self-assurance concerning Israel's strength. This strategy must accept with serenity that at this stage there is no realistic agreed-upon solution, mainly because the Palestinian national movement has become addicted to its concept of justice and its narrative of victimhood. It systematically foils any attempt at compromise and demonstrates by its persistent conduct its unwillingness to take responsibility for a sovereign state and opt for a constructive national building effort.

The existing situation distorts the Zionist priorities of Israel, since it devotes a significant share of its political, economic, and military

resources to the Palestinian issue, and because Israel is perceived, in the eyes of its own citizens, as responsible for the destiny of the Palestinians living in the West Bank. Israel faces a dramatic upsurge in the risk to its constructivist orientation. Direct control for generations raises the concern of political integration that will eventually ruin the Jewish democratic state from within. Such an integrated state will not have the resources for long to maintain its constructive calling, without which Israel has no future.

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Conclusion

The preconditions for realizing all of the national objectives—the coalescence of a functioning people, the establishment of a strong territorial base, and the rejuvenation of the national language—have already attained a critical mass. It is important to expand the circle of solidarity to include the hard core of the ultra-Orthodox population and it is desirable to include most of the Arab population in an appropriate civil framework, but the core exists, strong and irreversibly secure, even if these are achieved only gradually and partially. The concentration of the majority of the Jewish people in its historic homeland has succeeded beyond any realistic expectations, and the direction of the demographic processes ensuring the fortification of this achievement seems stable. The pluralistic characteristics and the democratic regime are robust. They are

challenged primarily from two directions: one is the perpetual emergency and war, chief among them the control over millions of Palestinians, and the second is the ongoing attempt by religious circles to exert their authority over more sectors and walks of life. Both are currently under control, but a keen awareness of their danger, and close and constant monitoring are required so that they do not spiral out of control in the future.

Israel's situation is complex. It is under greater threat than any other democratic country, and for generations has been dealing with challenges with existential dimensions; almost certainly it will continue to confront these challenges for generations in the future. From the outset the national objectives of the Zionist enterprise and the Jewish state were to re-establish a people in its historic homeland. They are now to fortify it, increase its well-being, and realize the constructivist needs of the Jewish people and all its citizens who are actively willing to participate in building and defending the Jewish and democratic state.

The challenges today may be much more complex than those that required a response three or four generations ago, but the response itself is far less difficult to realize. In the past, it was much easier to decide what to do, since the options at the outset were so few. But because of Israel's weakness at that time, it was very hard to do what was necessary. Today, a strong and self-confident country can deal with the main challenges, taking far less existential risk than it did at its outset. However, it is that very strength that presents it with a wide variety of options, and it is far from simple to make the choice. In other words, Israel suffers from "problems of the wealthy": many assets with dilemmas concerning how best to invest them.

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PIXABAY

Artificial Intelligence and Policy: A Review at the Outset of 2020

Liran Antebi and Inbar Dolinko

Among the rapid technological changes marking the contemporary era is the notable leap in the development of artificial intelligence applications that pertain to many areas of life, and hence the need to formulate policy in the field. Recent years have seen a major increase in policy research in the context of computing technology and artificial intelligence. Studies deal with a range of fields such as security and international affairs, arms races and the balance of power, cyber, ethics, and more. A number of leading research institutes in the world have already published studies and policy papers in the field, as have universities, government entities, and even commercial groups. While Israel is a leader in artificial intelligence development, its policy research in the field is relatively limited. This article contends that despite the difficulty for policy research to keep up with the pace of technology development, in part because of budgeting difficulties, it is clear that the field is fertile ground for ongoing research regarding the challenges and opportunities that demand personal, social, political, and international preparation.

In the current era, technological changes occur at the fastest pace in history, influencing countries, businesses, and people. In recent years, a notable leap has been made in the development of artificial intelligence applications that pertain to many areas of life, and hence the need to formulate policies that concern issues affected by this technology. This has prompted the emergence of many policy studies in the context of artificial intelligence and computing technologies that draw from different perceptions and approaches. This review looks at some of these studies and examines the trends in artificial intelligence policy research at the outset of 2020.

Artificial Intelligence is a subset of computer science, which initially was a subset of higher mathematics. According to one accepted definition, artificial intelligence is a “programmed ability to process information” (Launchbury, 2017), but a more widespread definition is “the science of making machines do things that would require intelligence if done by men” (Geist & Lohn, 2018). This ability could have far reaching effects on numerous levels, including personal, social, state, and of course, international. In view of the understanding of the importance of this technology and its inherent capabilities, some have even argued that an arms race has recently been launched in the field between different countries, led by the United States and China (Pecotic, 2019). In fact, it seems most world leaders have already realized the importance of the field, and are willing to invest in it to try to create or maintain their national leaderships in the field, and thus in the international arena. This is evident, for example, in Russian President Vladimir Putin’s statement: “Whoever becomes the leader in this sphere will become the ruler of the world” (Sayler & Hoadley, 2019).

After a long period of reduced funding and lack of progress in artificial intelligence research—what has become known as an “artificial intelligence winter”—there is a renaissance in the field, thanks to advances in computer science research and technological changes in

hardware and software and in computing and communications, as well as the emergence of new fields such as cloud computing and big data. Along with advances in artificial intelligence, there has also been progress in related subsets such as multi-layered neural networks and deep learning. Today, deep learning is seen as almost synonymous with artificial intelligence, as many applications are based on this paradigm.

Deep learning algorithms seek to mimic cognitive human tasks by recognizing patterns about them through analysis of large amounts of related data. The algorithm “trains” on existing data and creates its own statistical model so that it can perform the same task in the future on new, unfamiliar data (Sayler & Hoadley, 2019). The difficulty raised by the use of artificial intelligence stems, *inter alia*, from the fact that artificial intelligence algorithms are in effect “black boxes”—we cannot reproduce the process taking place within them and understand why they have recommended a particular decision rather than another. This element is problematic in cases where we want to allow artificial intelligence to take actions that have far reaching consequences, such as in the security field. This becomes increasingly important as more artificial intelligence-based applications emerge from the confines of the computer into the “real world,” such as advanced robotics and autonomous cars.

Parallel to the development of the technology, publications, reports, and research on the impact of artificial intelligence on a wide range of areas of life are increasingly common, with some of these studies initiated by countries themselves and aimed at helping to shape policy in the field. The purpose of this review is to introduce readers to current developments in the field of artificial intelligence policy research.

The Global Impact of Artificial Intelligence

According to various studies, the list of fields in which artificial intelligence has a global impact is only growing. They include:

International relations and security:

The development of artificial intelligence affects international relations and global security, as well as arms races and arms control. Technological developments such as autonomous weapon systems have sparked discussions in international forums about their use and how they could undermine global stability or violate human rights (Antebi, 2019). Furthermore, there are concerns about the possibility that artificial intelligence systems will increase the likelihood of the use of nuclear weapons, even if they are not directly connected to nuclear weapons launchers, due to a change in the balance of power that has guaranteed stability in the arena to date (Geist & Lohn, 2018). There are also concerns regarding “hyper war,” a conflict situation in which human decision making is almost non-existent, and thus responses are immediate and potentially destructive (Sayler & Hoadley, 2019).

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World order, “arms race,” and balance of power: Many countries in the world have realized the potential of artificial intelligence and have begun work to develop the field. Among the superpowers, most prominent is the “arms race” between the United States and China, which are struggling for supremacy in the field. The two countries have national programs that encompass civilian and security aspects. The scope of the budget for artificial intelligence is not public knowledge in China, but it is estimated at \$150 billion, by far surpassing the US budget, which stands at several billion dollars (Future of Life Institute, 2019; Hunter et al., 2018). The two are not the only countries investing in the field, understanding its importance; other countries such as Israel,

Russia, France, and Germany can be counted among those working toward advances in the field. Given the vast capabilities that this field enables, the race could undermine the world order and change the existing balance of power. It is also likely to increase the gap between developed countries and failed states.

Cyber security: As with other computing systems, dependency on artificial intelligence systems increases the exposure of their users to attacks by rivals. In the cyber context, increased use of artificial intelligence systems increases the amount of “hackable things,” including systems that if hacked could have a fatal impact (Future of Life Institute, 2019; Hunter et al., 2018).

Ethics: Within the debate over ethical and moral aspects of the use of artificial intelligence, questions arise about the systems’ decision making process and the values considerations that are taken into account. The decision making of artificial intelligence systems can lead to bias and discrimination against groups in society. In addition, the ethical debate includes reference to the use of artificial intelligence for military purposes, the issue of responsible and safe use, and in the future, even the rights of robots.

Regimes in general and democracy in particular: The 2016 US presidential election brought into the spotlight the use of various artificial intelligence-based tools to disseminate false information, influence public opinion, and enable foreign interference in the internal elections of other countries. These tools grow all the time, raising concerns among lawmakers about the stability of democracy (Horowitz et al., 2018). Inter alia, concern arises from the use of “deep fake” algorithms that allow for very high level falsification of images, sound, and video files, which may affect public opinion and create distrust of government.

Artificial Intelligence in Global Research

In the world’s leading research institutes, most of which are in the United States, including the

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the Wilson Center, and others, the prominent school of thought is that research in the field of artificial intelligence should be expanded. One of the first institutes to invest in extensive research of the subject over the past decade is the Center for a New American Security. The center has a comprehensive research program called Artificial Intelligence and Global Security Initiative, comprising a team of people from industry, former senior government officials, and academic experts. The aim of the program is to explore a range of issues related to the impact of the artificial intelligence revolution on global security, interstate power relations, the nature of conflicts, and crisis stability. The program also examines the safety of artificial intelligence and possible international collaborations (Center for a New American Security, 2019).

One of the most prominent authors at CNAS is Paul Scharre, who has been involved for some time in researching a variety of advanced technologies. His book *Army of None: Autonomous Weapons and the Future of War*, published in 2018, addresses the potential implications of using artificial intelligence and autonomous tools by the military. The book presents many benefits of this technological process, but also warns against complete transfer of judgment and decision making to machines. Bill Gates named the book one of the five books he loved in 2018, writing, “I agree with Scharre that we have to guard against becoming ‘seduced by the allure of machines – their speed, their seeming perfection, their cold precision.’ And we should not leave it up to military planners or the people writing software to determine where to draw the proper lines. We need many experts and citizens across the globe to get involved in this important debate” (Gates, 2018).

The Brookings Institution has also become involved in research in the field over the past two years, and as a result of extensive investment in research has been able to close the gap. Most

Brookings research seeks to connect artificial intelligence to related fields such as education, economics, and of course, national security. The institute has a number of programs dealing with artificial intelligence in particular and technology

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in general, including the Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies Initiative; a series of articles on artificial intelligence published by the institute under the name *A Blueprint for the future of AI*; and a book published in August 2018 called *The Future of Work: Robots, AI, and Automation*, which examines the effects of the transition from industrial economies to digital economies (West, 2018). Among those who have published on the subject are the head of the institute, General John Allen, who participated in some of the outstanding studies in the field published by the institute.

The RAND Corporation research institute deals extensively with the topic of artificial intelligence. The think tank began publishing on the topic as early as the 1960s, but then it focused mainly on the technology itself. In recent years, it has begun to expand to other areas—education, ethics, the employment market, privacy, and national security. Inter alia, RAND has a multidisciplinary project called Security 2040, which aims to understand how security will be affected in the future by technology, ideas, and people, and how security policy should be designed accordingly (RAND Corporation, 2019). The think tank presents a rather pessimistic view of the potential implications of this technology and deals extensively with its negative aspects—from inherent biases in algorithms that may lead to discrimination or be detrimental to equality (Yeung, 2018; Osoba et al., 2019), through the ability of individuals to generate wide-scale

destruction (Clarke, 2018), and the link between artificial intelligence and nuclear weapons in a way that may accelerate nuclear response, due to automation (Geist & Lohn, 2018).

Researchers at RAND were not the only ones concerned about the possible impact of this technology on security. Prior to institutionalized research on artificial intelligence, most research was focused on autonomous weapon systems. This topic has been studied in depth for several years, both in academia and research institutes and by human rights organizations or various initiatives that work to restrict the development and use of systems that are capable of deciding on a lethal strike without human involvement, based on the decision of an algorithm. Since 2014, the issue has also been discussed at the United Nations, but in fact, other than marginal discussion at the United Nations of the broader issues of artificial intelligence, the organization deals almost exclusively with the issue of autonomous weapon systems, under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). This is very problematic because many studies by reputable institutions point to the challenges of the broader technological sphere and the need to regulate it internationally. In addition to the institutions mentioned here, there are many other institutions that have published in the field over the past two years, some of which are listed in the recommended reading at the end of this review.

Research in Israel is relatively limited given Israeli leadership in the field of artificial intelligence, for example, in the number of companies and start-ups involved in the field.

Alongside research institutes and universities, it is evident that the issue has also received the attention of public opinion shapers and decision makers, past and present, and they have begun to engage in the subject in various ways, from forums to position papers. Notable persons involved in

the field include former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who holds regular meetings on artificial intelligence, as indicated in a March 2019 fireside chat at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he claimed that almost all of the assumptions we developed in the past [with regard to arms control] will be overturned or will have to be changed because of artificial intelligence (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2019).

In an attempt to create a general division between the different research approaches, it appears that the main studies in the field are divided between those that argue that great dangers are inherent in artificial intelligence and that we must act to prevent those dangers or be prepared to deal with them, and those who believe that there is a need to invest in certain directions in artificial intelligence in order to gain a leading position in international competition and to maintain diplomatic standing. Most of the studies mentioned here represent relatively balanced approaches, with Brookings and CNAS in particular seeking practical approaches to policymaking that will boost the field, improve ecosystem collaboration with security and government needs, and enable America to gain a lead in the field. CNAS has also thoroughly examined Chinese policy in the field, in order to fully understand the actions to be taken in the “arms race” challenge currently faced by the United States.

Artificial Intelligence and Policy Research in Israel

In parallel with international developments in the field, research has also begun to appear in Israel in recent years on the effects of artificial intelligence on different areas of life, as well as policy-driven research. This research is relatively limited given Israeli leadership in the field of artificial intelligence, for example, in the number of companies and start-ups involved in the field: as of 2018, there were an estimated 950-1150 start-ups engaged in artificial intelligence, whether in development

of core capabilities or implementation (Press, 2018; Calcalist, 2019). Notable among the first policy studies is a study by the Knesset Research Center, written in 2018 at the request of then-chairman of the Science and Technology Committee MK Uri Maklev. The short document describes the field and seeks to point out areas where policy is needed (Goldschmidt, 2018). Another study by the Samuel Neaman Institute for National Policy Research, commissioned by the National Council for Research and Development, examines Israeli activity in the fields of artificial intelligence, data science, and smart robotics. The study reviews a wide range of areas of influence as well as the state of research and extensive activity in Israel in these areas (Getz et al., 2018). In addition, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has appointed a committee headed by Prof. Isaac Ben-Israel and Prof. Eviatar Matanya, with the aim of formulating a comprehensive national program to promote artificial intelligence in Israel and thereby influence issues such as health, finance, transportation, and industry, and contribute to Israel's economic and security prowess (Berkowitz and Shahaf, 2018).

The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) has been involved in the field of artificial intelligence since 2013, including through research on autonomous weapon systems and the cyber realm. In 2015, INSS published a memorandum focused on a comprehensive study on military robots. A major part of the study deals with artificial intelligence-based autonomy, the effects on the future battlefield, and the military forces that will operate in it, and presents policy recommendations for Israel. Today, in parallel with the study of various advanced technologies, INSS has a research program examining the link between artificial intelligence and national security. As part of the study, there is an advisory committee of experts from various fields consulting on a memorandum that is scheduled to be published in the coming year.

It seems, therefore, that the technological advances in the field of artificial intelligence and other computing technologies are fertile ground for challenges and opportunities that require personal, social, political, and international preparation in a variety of fields. Research institutes and universities find it difficult to keep up with the pace of technology development and to carry out research and policy research—inter alia because of the enormous budgets invested in the field by companies and countries that are accelerating technological change. However, it is evident that many elements, including academia and research institutes, can and want to help both the general public and decision makers understand the technology and its potential impact on various areas of life, and enable decisions and policies that will create a better future and allow us to benefit from artificial intelligence.

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Inbar Dolinko, a Master's student at the School of Political Science, Government, and International Affairs at Tel Aviv University, is a research assistant at INSS working on advanced technologies and national security.

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- Scharre, P. (2018). *Army of none: Autonomous weapons and the future of war*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Recommended viewing

Fridman, L. Youtube channel. Fridman, an MIT researcher, interviews various researchers about artificial intelligence. <https://www.youtube.com/user/lexfridman>

How the enlightenment ends: A conversation. Interview with Henry Kissinger, MIT. (2019). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTyleMuUavo>

Recommended sites

Artificial intelligence for the American people: A U.S. government website providing information to the public about AI. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ai/>

Future of Life Institute: an organization supporting research and initiatives that ensure safe use of artificial intelligence and reduce risks connected to the use of the technology. <https://futureoflife.org/>

OpenAI: an organization whose mission is to ensure that Artificial General Intelligence benefits all of humanity. <https://openai.com/>

Futurism: a website publishing global news and updates in the technology field. <https://futurism.com/>

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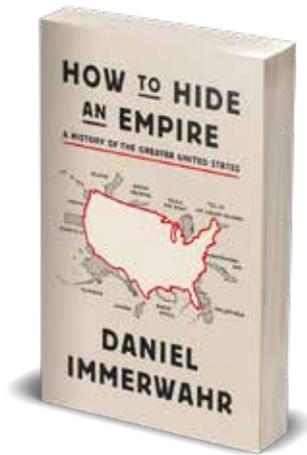
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How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States

by **Daniel Immerwahr**

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019

528 pages

David A. Levy

When one thinks of the age of colonialism, one generally thinks of the British Empire, the French colonial empire, Spain and Portugal, and perhaps even imperial Germany and Japan. However, Daniel Immerwahr, in *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*, discloses and examines the mostly overlooked empire of the United States.

How to Hide an Empire recalls the United States' history of colonialism and its transition to a "pointillist empire" (p. 56). The book is arranged in two parts: The first part, "The Colonial Empire," encompasses 12 sections recalling the history of US colonial expansion on the continent from the Louisiana Purchase to annexation of Native American lands. It then incorporates the history of US colonization overseas: the Philippine Islands, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Alaska, and the changes in these places brought about by World War Two. The second part, "The Pointillist Empire," details the transition from a colonial to a pointillist empire. In nine sections, Immerwahr explains the impact of WWII on the establishment of

US military and logistical bases worldwide, the global standardization of manufacturing, and the spread of English as a lingua franca. In addition, he draws the connection between new technologies in chemistry, plastics, aviation, and radio, and discusses how these enabled the US to decolonize its overseas territories, while still maintaining a strategic presence.

The literature on colonialism and postcolonialism is prolific. Much has been written on the topic, from Edward Said's "othering" in *Orientalism* to the arrested economies of the developing world, explained in Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Immerwahr adds to this conversation, recounting the US westward expansion and its colonization of the Philippines and Puerto Rico with imagery and new insights. Furthermore, Immerwahr illuminates the new imperial system of military bases and strategic access that the US enjoys throughout the world. David Vine, Catherine Lutz, and others have written on the topic of US foreign bases, but those texts were highly critical of US policy. Immerwahr is more nuanced. Without undue bias or nonchalance, he recognizes the benefits of the system in promoting regional stability as well as local economies; however, Immerwahr is also quick to point out that foreign bases bring unwanted US culture, unruliness of off duty soldiers, and an outsized influence on the hosting countries' foreign policy due to the security relationship.

Immerwahr, an associate professor of history at Northwestern University in Illinois, reminds us that most Americans don't know the history of the United States as a colonial empire. More to the point, Americans believe that the United States, though the global superpower since WWII, does not seek an empire status. Immerwahr may agree, but with caveats. After WWII, the US was no longer a colonial empire, having given up the Philippines; granted Hawaii and Alaska statehood; and eventually put in place partial self-rule for Guam, the Northern Marianas, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico

with elections of their own respective governors under the President of the United States as head of state. However, after WWII, the United States, transformed from a territorial empire into a hegemonic empire, with over 800 military bases around the globe and strategic access for military bases, seaports, and airfields in tens of partner nations. This is a veritable empire of points without most of the political pitfalls or any of the economic costs of colonies. The United States had become something new in world history, what Immerwahr calls a pointillist empire.

Immerwahr introduces us to the “logo map” of the United States (p. 3). The familiar map is a representation of the forty-eight contiguous states sometimes with Alaska and Hawaii displayed in corner boxes. It does not include Puerto Rico, Guam, the US Virgin Islands, or the hundreds of mostly uninhabited islands under US auspices. When the US colonial portfolio was at its largest and included the Philippine Islands, the territories *not* represented on the logo map had a population of over 135 million people.

America’s colonial goals often conflicted with the racial chauvinism popular at the time. After the Mexican-American War, some in Congress wanted to annex Mexico. However, many argued, including South Carolina Senator John C. Calhoun, that the United States should not incorporate “any but the Caucasian race” (p. 77). They found a compromise and annexed only the low populated areas of today’s America’s southwest, leaving the rest of Mexico for Mexicans.

At one time the United States had claims to over 100 Pacific and Caribbean Islands. Many of these islands were acquired under the 1856 Guano Island Act, which allowed US citizens to lay “peaceful” claim to uninhabited islands not claimed by another government and containing large guano deposits. Guano was needed for its nitrogen, a key ingredient in fertilizer. These Islands fell short of becoming territories. They became, according to the act, “considered as

appertaining” to the United States (p. 51). Immerwahr shares a personal connection to the narrative when he tells the story of his great grandmother, Clara Immerwahr—the wife of Fritz Haber, of the Haber-Bosch process—a German-Jewish chemist whose work in synthesizing ammonia directly from air eliminated the need for nitrates from guano islands. However, the US did not relinquish claims to these islands, which became invaluable during WWII, as many of these islands acquired airfields essential for the US island hopping strategy.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Spain’s wealth and colonial control were in decline. Several Spanish colonies, including Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico, were in open revolt against the metropole. The US debated interfering in the conflict and decided to send the *USS Main* to Havana as a show of resolve. The *Main* exploded mysteriously, perhaps an engineering disaster, but it was blamed on Spain and became a *casus belli*. The Spanish American War was won quickly by the United States. The outcome was that Cuba received independence, and the US gained sovereignty over Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine Islands.

The US also received the insurgency movements underway in Spain’s former territories. Believing that the US would give independence to the Philippines, Filipino nationalists were soon disappointed. The conflict that followed, the Philippine–American War, is almost unknown in the continental US and never taught in schools. The war resulted in at least 200,000 civilian deaths, and as all Filipinos were US nationals, this was the worst war for non-combatants in US history. In the end, the US prevailed over its colony. Immerwahr describes how the American colonial administration brought architecture and city planning, educational standards, particularly in nursing, and military basing to the islands, but not American style democracy. That was reserved for the homeland.

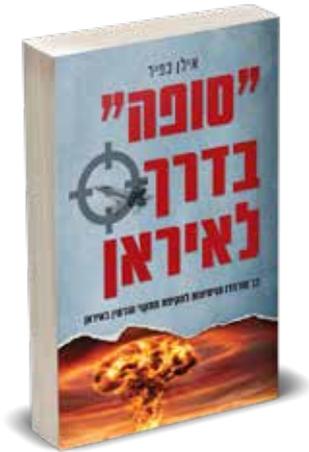
Part of the United States' contemporary hegemony is in global standardization. Starting in WWII and continuing in the reconstruction that followed, the US established global standards for engineering, logistics, communications, and materials. Necessitated by the war effort, these standards were required by any nation participating in manufacturing for the US defense establishment, a massive market that established logistical bases globally. The drive to standardize continued in the reconstruction after the war and was the precondition that led to today's global markets.

English, too, became part of this standardization. A global market required a *lingua franca* to facilitate it. In the post-colonial era, many states pushed national languages; some went so far as to ban English from the classroom. However, as Immerwahr writes: "For those who speak English as a foreign language, the reasons are clear. English is the language of power. Speaking it means going to better schools, getting better jobs, and moving in more elite circles. A study commissioned by the British Council of five poorer countries (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Rwanda)

found that professionals who spoke English earned 20 to 30 percent more than those who didn't" (p. 334). English has become the most common "second language" spoken globally. "If the Chinese...rule the world someday," the linguist John McWhorter has written, "I suspect they will do it in English" (p. 333).

How to Hide an Empire is an important and relevant book strongly recommended for foreign policy decision makers as well as armchair historians. There is a nascent but growing literature not on specific empires but empire in general: categories of empire, and analysis of the different ways they form, how they sustain themselves, and why they fall. Immerwahr adds to this conversation while at the same time provides a clear picture of US imperial history, and paints a detailed and more attractive future for the United States' hidden pointillist empire than its complicated and often ugly colonial past.

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“Storm” toward Iran

by **Ilan Kfir**

Yediot Ahronot Publishing, 2019

243 pages [in Hebrew]

Eldad Shavit

In his new book, “*Storm*” toward Iran, Ilan Kfir describes at length and in great detail Israel’s policy in 2009-2019 on the Iranian question. The focus of the book is the author’s assertion that three times in 2009-2012, Israel was on the verge of launching an air attack on the nuclear sites in Iran, but due to a host of different considerations—some of them pertinent and others not—the IDF plan was not carried out.

The book contains many particulars (sometimes too many) about the policy of the Israeli and international leadership on the question of Iran and other closely related issues during this period. It is clear that the author did a thorough job of gathering facts and conducting research, and was successful in obtaining new primary source information. Furthermore, the extensive information that he assembled enabled him to portray in minute detail the complexity of the decision making processes in Israel, including how the difficult relations between Prime Minister Netanyahu and United States President Barack Obama influenced these particular decisions. At the

same time, the claim that much of the book’s information and insights are published here for the first time is exaggerated, given that in recent years many details about the differences of opinion on the handling of the Iranian nuclear question, both between different decision makers in Israel and between Israeli decision makers and the American administration, were already made public.

Of all the details in the book about the events that accompanied Israel’s policy toward Iran during the years in question, most important are the insights relevant to the main issues that affected and/or were at the center of the many discussions conducted by the state’s leadership at various levels during those years. These insights are also likely to be of major influence in the decision making processes regarding the Iranian question in the future. This is especially so in view of Iran’s current measures to renew its uranium enrichment program in response to the American withdrawal from the nuclear agreement and the renewed sanctions imposed on it.

Certain issues are particularly noteworthy, led by the complex, and sometimes both close and difficult relations within Israel’s political leadership. In the book, readers are exposed in great detail to the dynamics between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and then-Minister of Defense Ehud Barak, who championed the militant stance toward Iran and, according to the book, wanted to go ahead with an attack on its nuclear facilities. This dynamic fluctuated between close cooperation and coordination and concern about underhanded actions designed to promote personal agendas. While leaving psychological analyses and Israel’s unique situation aside, it is clear that a move with historic effects on the nation’s security, and consequently on the status and legacy of a leader, influences the behavior of decision makers, even leaders with smaller egos than those of Netanyahu and Barak. In Israel’s coalition system, this fact is also likely to have implications for future considerations

of decision makers, under the assumption that regardless of who the leader is, he will find it difficult to separate his professional assessment from the effect on his personal future.

A second issue concerns the position of the defense establishment. How Israel deals with the threats resulting from Iran's conduct—and as shown by the responses to other threats, illustrated well in the book—clearly relies on the assessments and opinions of the leaders of Israel's defense establishment. The blurb on the book's back cover states that the book “describes the persistent efforts by Prime Minister Netanyahu and Minister of Defense Barak to carry out Operation King Solomon's Palace—the name of the proposed operation—and how every such effort was thwarted by the heads of the defense establishment.” However, the use of the word “thwarted” (which also appears in the book's Hebrew subtitle) seems inappropriate, given the negative connotation of the stance attributed to the heads of the defense establishment.

From my experience, and based on the confidence I have in the leaders of the Israeli defense establishment, there are no grounds for attributing unprofessional motives to them. As such, it can be safely assumed that their views rely solely on considerations derived from the staff work typical of organizations like the IDF and the Mossad, and reflect a profound professional understanding, in this case, taking into account arguments for and against the attack and the expected ensuing consequences.

In any case, the details in the book clearly show what is also clear today, and will probably also be clear in the future—that Israeli leaders will find it difficult to go ahead with military operations that can have fateful consequences for the security of Israeli citizens without the support of the IDF chief of staff, and in many cases also that of the other defense establishment leaders.

Due to the many complicated defense issues facing the country, and under the reasonable assumption that the actions taken by the

defense agencies in Israel are professionally motivated and taken for the sake of the country, even if Israel is a democracy with separation between the political and military/defense leadership, it is important for the defense agencies to serve as watchdogs by preventing political and personal considerations from affecting decision making by politicians on defense issues with far-reaching consequences.

The book emphasizes the weight attributed to the evaluation of the consequences and response to an attack, and to the decision itself whether to attack. The cost-benefit considerations of a military action are taken into account, even if it is clear that there is an essential need for the attack in order to halt the enemy's technological progress. In the current case, it should be considered in all seriousness whether a regional war liable to develop following an attack that will result in hundreds of thousands of casualties and substantial damage liable to be caused to strategic infrastructure are essential prices that must be accepted. This consideration is even more critical when it cannot be determined in advance (as in the case of an attack against the nuclear facilities) that the result will be immediate and certain, and will last for many years. Israel has carried out hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of operations against enemy targets. These were executed when the decision makers were presented with possible scenarios derived from an assessment of the other side's intentions and capabilities, and Israel's ability to deal with them.

A further issue concerns the position of the United States. Kfir discusses the American role in Israeli decision making processes at length. The book justifiably focuses on the difficult relations between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Barack Obama, and on their mutual suspicions about the other's intentions, as well as on the effect that these misunderstandings had on decision making in Israel and the relations and trust that prevailed between Netanyahu and Ehud Barak.

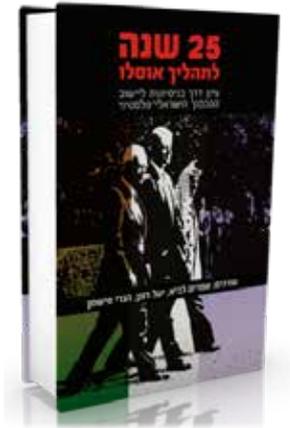
The author emphasizes how critical the American position is and the extent to which this must be factored into Israel's decisions, certainly on defense matters of great significance. Even if Israel wants to maintain the independence of its decisions and refrain from putting itself in a position in which it will have to report, and certainly in which it will have to obtain the American administration's approval for an action, it will still have to assess the administration's intentions carefully. This is very clear in the book's description of the discussions that took place in Israel at decision making nodes, and the emphasis by the defense agencies of the need to ensure American support in advance as a condition for their supporting the action. Following any significant military action, especially one with as many consequences as an attack against Iran, American support is important, whether in the event of complications during the operation itself or in subsequent developments. In most cases, the United States has better military capabilities, and can help complete missions begun by Israel, if necessary. In the past, American administrations took care to give Israel breathing room to complete its maneuvers, especially in the effort to reject the international community's attempts, including in the UN Security Council, to halt Israel's actions. It was also important to coordinate political steps with

the administration necessary to make sure that the military achievements on the battlefield would be translated later into political steps that would serve Israel's purposes and goals.

Overall, Kfir rises to the occasion—to attempt to reveal the dynamic and intrigues that accompanied the decision making process in Israel during the critical years, when Israel was closer than ever to carrying out a large scale attack against Iran. The possible result could have been major deterioration, to an extent and with results that likely could not be predicted in advance.

At the same time, in an interview with *Israel Hayom* on July 18, 2019, in an answer to the question of whether “we were very close to a military action,” Netanyahu answered, “We were very serious. It was not a bluff.” But even the many details related in the book are not enough to convince the reader that there is a way to “penetrate” the minds of Netanyahu and Barak and understand whether the two of them together, or each of them separately, truly intended to order an attack, or whether it was clear to them from the outset that an attack would not take place, certainly without ensuring American backing in advance, and that all the processes led by the two were designed mainly to achieve other purposes.

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The Oslo Peace Process: A Twenty Five Years Perspective

edited by **Ephraim Lavie, Yael Ronen,**
and **Henri Fishman**

Carmel, 2019

724 pages [in Hebrew]

Yossi Kuperwasser

This edited volume seeks to help Israeli readers understand the historic attempt of the Oslo process to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and to analyze the reasons for its failure. The editors, and Prof. Shimon Shamir in his preface, insist on the importance of this effort, so that if and when the parties return to serious negotiations, they will be able to learn lessons from the failure and achieve a more successful result. Based on this analysis, the book also presents concrete proposals for what most of its authors regard as a desirable solution.

Shamir does a good job in the preface of summarizing the ideas of the entire book. In an afterward, Joel Singer, the legal advisor to the Israel delegation at the Oslo talks, describes the arrangements for the Palestinian Authority self-administration in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in the framework of the Oslo process. The other 32 articles in the book, some of which were written specifically for the book and some of which were previously published, are grouped under eight headings: “The Attempts

to Settle the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”; “The Policy and Leadership Failure at Oslo”; “Responses in Israel to the Oslo Accords”; “Legal Aspects”; “Processes in the Negotiations for a Permanent Settlement”; “The Negotiations for a Permanent Agreement from the Perspective of the Negotiation Leaders”; “Has the Oslo Vision Reached its End?” and “A Look to the Future.”

A large majority of the essays in the book repeat the familiar mantras of the Zionist left from various perspectives (the articles are written well, though buttressed by sources from the same ideological camp). They attribute the Oslo failure to a list of (sometimes contradictory) factors. The leading explanation is the lack of a strategic decision on both sides to agree to divide the land, followed by the way the negotiations were conducted (most of the criticism is directed to the principle that “nothing is agreed until everything is agreed,” which prevented real progress on the ground); the lack of prior agreement on the framework for a permanent settlement (an agreed political horizon), which in turn motivated the parties to establish facts on the ground; the lack of an agreed ethical code and legal basis for discussing and handling complaints by the parties; and on the other hand, the attempt to force the parties, especially the Palestinians, to reach agreement on a framework for a permanent settlement before the conditions were ripe for acceptance of the concessions that this will require.

Both parties are accused of not taking sufficient steps to implement the agreement and bolster peaceful values among their respective publics. Israel, especially during the period of Prime Ministers Barak and Netanyahu, is castigated for continuing construction in Judea and Samaria in full force, and for refusing to carry out the third withdrawal in order to avoid carrying out the agreement, thereby undermining Palestinian trust in the process. The Palestinians are accused of failing in their war against terrorism, and of encouraging terrorist attacks, especially during the second

intifada, thereby undermining Israeli trust in them and in the process itself. An attempt is made in some of the articles supportive of Oslo to attribute Palestinian terrorism to the massacre in the Tomb of the Patriarchs; it is asserted that there were no terrorist attacks before the massacre. The facts, however, are completely different. Between the signing of the agreement on September 13, 1993 and the massacre on February 25, 1994, the Palestinians committed 23 deadly attacks in which 29 Israelis were murdered.

The articles also attempt to highlight the advantages of the Oslo process and the situation it created. The Oslo process is portrayed in this context as a historic effort to establish Israel's borders on the basis of the 1967 lines (Rabin, of course, opposed this, but it appears that this is how the Israeli team at Oslo understood the process). It is argued that Oslo led to acceptance of the principle of a peaceful solution of the conflict; political backing to the principle of a Palestinian state alongside Israel; mutual recognition (an expression of the failure to understand the Palestinian position); the alleged positive effects on relations with Jordan and Egypt, and with other countries; and the improvement, as the writers see it, in the security situation until and after the second intifada resulting from security cooperation with the Palestinians (this argument is also highly problematic).

What is true in this context is that the interim situation of the Oslo process, which was not designed to last indefinitely, became the reality for the parties. An entire generation has known no other reality. There is no doubt, as stated by the authors of several of the articles, that the arrangements established in the Oslo Accords were not designed to serve as a basis for a prolonged interim situation that is in effect a permanent state of affairs. This created lacunae and major contradictions that led to conflicts and frustration, with the threat of further conflicts.

The book also contains a small number of articles that express different opinions (by Efraim Karsh, Alan Baker, Tal Becker, and Shmuel Even). These articles highlight the lack of political wisdom in the Oslo process, which saved the PLO and Arafat from decline and oblivion following their support for Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War, and sought to achieve a settlement with an enemy that had not changed its basic attitude (as Karsh put it, peace is made with enemies who have seen the light). The sole article to express a more complete view of the depth of the problem, and which does not absolve the Palestinians of the need to truly change, is the one written by Amal Jamal. His article, however, contains many abstruse terms, which make it difficult to read. In my opinion, his is the most interesting article, and the one that comes closest to understanding the roots of the conflict.

All in all, the book reflects the problems that researchers and politicians dealing with relations with the Palestinians in general, and the Oslo Accords in particular, face in trying to contend with these issues. It appears to be very difficult, indeed, almost impossible, for anyone engaging in this effort to separate scholarly insights from political views. The analysis therefore often appears to be based not only on facts, but also on hopes and aspirations, and on mistaken beliefs, interpretations, and mantras.

None of the writers who were involved in the process accept any responsibility for the failure. None of them say, "I was wrong," or "We made a major mistake in understanding the views of the Palestinian side and the extent of its commitment to a narrative that denies the very existence of the Jewish people and its right to a state in the Land of Israel, and that, even after the Accords, regards the struggle against Zionism as a right and duty of every Palestinian, including the use of terrorism and violence, if necessary." Most of the writers believe that everyone is at fault, above all the Israeli leadership. While the Israeli group that created

the process and the agreements indeed made mistakes, the basic assumption that there is a Palestinian partner for a permanent settlement is not questioned, while the statement by Prime Minister Barak after the Camp David summit that there is no partner is severely criticized.

Even though all of the writers agree that the Oslo process failed, the book does not attempt to probe seriously why it failed, or what should be done now, and instead presents to its readers the familiar themes of the Israeli Zionist left. The impression from the book is that its authors believe that anyone who thinks differently represents either a dangerous religious-end-of-days-messianic trend liable to bring disaster on rational political Zionism, or is entrenched in an outmoded concept of security that perpetuates a dangerous status quo, which will almost certainly lead to disaster.

According to most of the writers, the way to escape these dire straits is for Zionism to abjure any claim to the territories over which Israel gained control in 1967 (nowhere in the book does the term “Judea and Samaria” appear; only the “West Bank”—even though UN Resolution 181 refers to these areas as Judea and Samaria, and even though these areas are the core of the Jewish people’s heritage in the Land of Israel). From the book’s perspective, Area C is not a disputed area, as Israel contends; it is territory promised to the Palestinians at Oslo, which is to be the basis of the Palestinian state. In essence, the authors believe that the failure of Oslo is that it did not establish such a state, because founding this state quickly is the most important national goal of Israel and the Palestinians, and the problem is that the leadership on both sides, particularly the Israeli leadership, has not acted according to this principle.

The Palestinians and the current Palestinian Authority (PA) are portrayed as a viable partner for a settlement, and are consequently depicted as a Western-like society with which any agreement will be fulfilled as written. Palestinian terrorism is mentioned occasionally, usually while belittling its importance and without any

thorough analysis of its motives and origins. It is almost always presented as a method of action that the Palestinians had to adopt because Israel did not fulfill its agreements. The ongoing incitement by the Palestinians and their habit of paying salaries to terrorists is mentioned only once. The book generally depicts the Palestinians as people whose sole desire is a state within the 1967 borders (not lines, as they actually were) with East Jerusalem as its capital (the question of Jerusalem and the Holy Basin is also discussed very little in the book), with agreed territorial exchanges and a solution for the problem of the refugees based on the right of return.

The demand for return of the refugees is cast as a difficult problem, and the writers ask the Palestinians not to insist on it, but several of them express understanding for this demand, and one author even regards it as the equivalent of Israel’s demand that the Palestinians recognize Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people. He argues that the two sides should simultaneously concede these demands in order to make it possible to reach a settlement in which the other Palestinian demands will be fully granted in a manner that will solve the 1967 problems, while postponing the 1948 problems for the future. The view of most of the writers in the book is that the apparent alternative among those who do not agree with them is one state, probably a binational state, that will be either an apartheid state or not a Jewish state (there are some—As’ad Ghanem and Dan Bavly—who recommend this), and will jeopardize the rational Zionist vision. They adhere to these views even though the actual likelihood of this happening is negligible, and only a few people imagine Israeli control of the territories currently under Palestinian control (the Gaza Strip and Areas A and B under PA control).

The feasible option of continuing the status quo with gradual improvements is portrayed in the book as extremely dangerous, but is not seriously analyzed (except for Yair Hirschfeld,

who realizes its importance, but immediately recommends adopting the proposals of the other articles). They take this position even though this option more or less reflects Rabin's vision for a permanent settlement, and even though it enables Israel to reduce to a very large extent its involvement in the control over the Palestinians. It provides the Palestinians with self-rule and a higher quality of life than that enjoyed by their Arab neighbors, while postponing the discussion of their demands and expectations that are unacceptable to Israel, based on de facto Palestinian acceptance of concessions that they are incapable and unwilling to make de jure. The need for such an analysis is clear, because it appears that the two sides are unable to agree on any other option. Despite the argument that this situation cannot persist for long, it has already existed for nearly 25 years, notwithstanding the threats made intermittently by various groups and a number of unilateral efforts to make a substantial change in it. It is, in fact, the only way to utilize the time to prepare people and generate readiness for a future settlement.

The book suffers from additional lapses. First, it almost completely ignores the essence of the Oslo process as a trial period. Within a short time, it became obvious that the Palestinians were incapable of meeting the terms of the trial period, and did not want to do so (the Hamas takeover in the Gaza Strip was conclusive evidence of the Palestinian failure in this test). This was the reason why Israel refrained from surrendering additional territories to PA control and had to change its security policy in the field (the security separation fence, roadblocks, armed incursions into Area A, arrests, and more). Disregard of the dismal results of the test leads many of the writers to recommend returning to it under even more dangerous conditions, and forming a Palestinian state without the Palestinians making the slightest change in their actions. It is implausibly assumed that a more substantial response to their demands will induce a transformation that will enable them

to run an orderly country that will not become a failed state or one controlled by extremist groups, and which will live in harmony with Israel.

In many cases, the writers give the impression that had Rabin not been assassinated, he would have led the process toward a settlement that in their opinion he intended, i.e., a two-state solution. There is no factual basis whatsoever for this hypothesis. In the October 1995 Knesset debate about the Oslo II Accord, Rabin explained that in his concept of the permanent settlement, the Palestinian entity would be less than a state, a united Jerusalem would be the capital of Israel, and the Jordan Valley, in the broadest sense of the term, would be Israel's eastern security border. Note that the Oslo Accords contained no commitment to establish a Palestinian state, let alone one along the 1967 lines. The article by Alan Baker, who was a legal advisor on the negotiation team, does a good job of illustrating this point. Rabin remained very suspicious of the Palestinians and Arafat, and his view of future relations with the Palestinians reflected constant hesitation. In actuality, at first Rabin did not consider the narrative of the Palestinian view in depth (he later tried to correct this mistake), erred by not involving professional staff (military, intelligence, and legal personnel) in the process from the beginning, and committed a political error by proceeding with the agreement without broad political support.

In the book it is argued that Israel erred by making security demands a condition for a permanent settlement, because security-military thinking is shortsighted. It is contended that the demand for defensible borders is excessive, and that the border should be based on the 1967 borders/lines. The writers dismiss the argument that defensible borders are required in order to make it difficult for what happened in the Gaza Strip after the disengagement from recurring in Judea and Samaria. They ignore the necessity of preventing the penetration of Iran and radical groups into

areas of crucial importance to Israel—the center of the Land of Israel—given the instability in the region and the growing influence of these elements. The writers who do mention this problem, especially Omer Tzanani, believe that the settlement itself will convince the Palestinians to provide security, because the more their requests are granted, the more they will have to lose. Were the settlement to be accompanied by Palestinian recognition of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people, there would have been some kind of logic in this way of thinking, but the prevailing view in the book is that this demand should be conceded. It is therefore difficult to understand exactly on what the writers rely.

The issue of recognition of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people, a theme pervading the book, is addressed directly in two of the articles (by Tal Becker and Matti Steinberg). Steinberg notes that already in 1977, Begin stated that Israel was not seeking such recognition of its right to exist. Steinberg therefore regards the demand for recognition as problematic. In practice, during Netanyahu's term as prime minister (Steinberg presents a comprehensive and mainly accurate review of the evolution of the Israeli demand in this context), Israel did not demand that the Palestinians recognize the right of the Jewish people to its own nation state in the Land of Israel, but merely recognition of the fact that Israel is the nation state of the Jewish people. Contrary to what is stated in a number of places in the book (Steinberg is correct on this point), Israel made this demand a condition for a settlement, not a condition for beginning negotiations. The Obama administration recognized the justice of this demand (President Obama's speech at the Jerusalem Binyanei Haumah Convention Center in March 2013). For his part, Secretary of State John Kerry made it clear that the second principle of his peace plan is to ensure the fulfillment of the vision of Resolution 181, whereby there will be two states, one Jewish and the other Arab, with mutual

recognition between them, and with equal rights for all their citizens. In my opinion, the formula proposed by Kerry is inadequate from Israel's perspective (according to Steinberg, it is designed to bypass the Israeli demand, and I am inclined to agree with this interpretation), but it was completely unacceptable to the Palestinians, and they therefore rejected the entire plan. Abu Mazen did not answer Obama directly, but he made it clear in his speech in Ramallah upon his return from Washington that the Palestinians were adhering to the promise and the covenant, and that there would be no concession on the deposit—Palestinian codes that signify a commitment to achieving sovereignty in all of Palestine and a refusal to recognize Israel as the Jewish nation state. Steinberg and other writers state that Israel did not make this demand of Egypt and Jordan, and regard this as evidence of the negative intentions behind the presentation of the demand. They ignore the enormous difference between the cases; Egypt and Jordan have no demands regarding Israel's territory. The entire Palestinian narrative, however, negates Israel's existence as the nation state of the Jewish people, and affirms the commitment to Palestinian sovereignty in the entire territory of Palestine. Without recognition of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people, therefore, a stable and permanent peace between the two sides cannot be achieved.

The book boasts an impressive list of contributors, and includes several of the people who were involved in the process and played key roles in it (Pundak and Hirshfeld, for example), but it is quite one-sided. In the absence of any explanation of how the writers were selected, it is unclear why the book contains no articles written by residents in the Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria, those who led the negotiations with the Palestinians on behalf of the Likud governments (Yitzhak Molcho, for example), prominent Likud members and officeholders in the Likud governments (Yaakov Amidror, for example), or on the other

hand, people who are clearly left wing, such as leaders of the organizations campaigning for an immediate end to Israeli rule in Judea and Samaria (although their opinions are mentioned in the book). In particular, the absence of those who changed their opinion over the years, such as Moshe “Bogie” Ya’alon and Yuval Steinitz, stands out. Instead, the book contains three articles by Omer Tzanani that more or less repeat the same message.

The book occasionally contains information that is definitely of interest (most of it not new), and provides an excellent opportunity to understand the thinking on the Zionist left, which regards disengagement from the

Palestinians, an end to Israeli control of Judea and Samaria, and establishment of a Palestinian state as quickly as possible—while postponing the discussion of 1948 problems until the future—as essential measures for ensuring the ability of Zionism to realize its destiny.

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All of Israel's Borders

by **Shaul Arieli**

Books in the Attic, 2018

442 pages [in Hebrew]

Anat Kurz

Drawing on extensive research and based on a wealth of data and testimony, this book by Dr. Shaul Arieli explores the debate about Israel's borders as a process developing over time in light of “the reciprocal influence between geopolitical changes in the international, regional, and above all local system, and changes in the demographic-populated space.” The book consists of three main sections: the first discusses the definition of the term “border” in its practical application and includes related historical examples; the second part analyzes the various plans that have shaped the borders between Israel and Arab countries, and the territorial conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, with the focus on the rounds of talks between the parties and unilateral actions taken by Israel in this context; the third part is devoted to an analysis of the current status of the territorial conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, which is summarized by stressing “the need [for Israel] to separate from the Palestinians by unilateral or agreed actions in

order to preserve Israel as a democratic state with a Jewish majority.”

Indeed, Arieli's decisive political-territorial conclusion is that separation from the Palestinians is the way to establish a border for Israel—preferably in the framework of an agreement, which will help stabilize the border. While adoption of the principles required for territorial negotiations is currently considered very unlikely given the political reality, both in Israel and among the Palestinians, it should nevertheless be recognized that a division of the disputed territory between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River that factors in security, demographic, and economic considerations will enable the State of Israel to implement the narrative and ethos underlying its establishment. In fact, Arieli contests the idea that after more than a century of conflict involving waves of violence and numerous victims, significant expansion of Jewish settlement in the West Bank territory, further erosion of the already low level of trust between the parties, repeated failure to finalize or implement any framework toward separation, and more than a decade of political stagnation, the parties have exhausted all possible ideas that can be formulated, put on the agenda, and deliberated about how to achieve a breakthrough in the relations between Israel and the Palestinians and promote physical separation.

A key term is “partition.” Once the borders between Israel and Egypt and Jordan, and in effect also between Israel and Syria and Lebanon, became clear and in some cases were even agreed and drawn in theory and in practice, the outstanding question refers to the partition of Mandatory Palestine, namely, the border between Israel and the West Bank. An accompanying term that explains why the borders between Israel and the Palestinians have not been demarcated until now (excluding the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip) is “dispute.” And the dispute continues, despite very significant changes in the attitudes of Israel

and the Palestinians regarding a desirable border.

Although it is doubtful whether the formula presented by Israel in the Annapolis Process (2008) is still relevant for the Israeli political scene of 2020, then there was clear acceptance by Israel of the territorial component—the 1967 lines—as the basis for a border with some territorial swaps, in other words “based on the 1967 lines.” It is not by chance that the “barrier”—the separation fence—was built on this basis, incorporating political considerations (UN Resolution 242), demographic considerations (specifically Israeli settlements on and to the east of the “seam line”), and security considerations (the need to protect these settlements, and the whole of Israel, from attacks). For their part, the Palestinians—and particularly the mainstream of the PLO/the Palestinian Authority, which in principle is Israel’s partner for any future/renewed talks—are no longer clinging officially to the “all or nothing” position, and this traditional stance has been replaced with the demand for a state within the 1967 borders.

The analysis of partition proposals and the controversies in the Israeli-Palestinian context follows a discussion of the concept of “border” between states and the considerations that throughout history have shaped borders according to historical, ethnic/demographic, and economic motifs; each case is presented with examples with their respective emphases. Like the analysis of the Israel/Palestinian conflict, this overview is formulated at an instrumental level, lacking any emotional or ideological element and stressing the multi-disciplinary and practical value of separation between distinct and hostile communities. Although the theoretical-historical survey does not go into details of the singular nature of the Israeli-Palestinian issue as a conflict between a state and a non-state entity over occupied territory, this is not a shortcoming, since Arieli’s research is dedicated specifically to this uniqueness.

The scope of the discussion on the Palestinian perspective toward the border issue is also fairly limited, mainly focusing on historical related changes at least at the declarative-political, if not the strategic level. However, the book describes nearly all of the Palestinian positions as reactive, in a way that rightly reflects both the gap in the balance of power between the parties and the author’s analysis and subsequent conclusions on the Israeli viewpoint and interests. Here too this is not a lapse but the expression of a conscious, reasoned, and methodological choice.

Although the text is comprehensive, readers will have to search for clarifications or turn to other sources to learn more about a number of topics. In the discussion of Jewish settlement in the West Bank, for example, the concept of “state land” is mentioned. It is precisely because of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and without the application of Israeli law and the political/legal annexation of the territory or parts of it that the question arises: which state?

Moreover, while there is a border between Israel and the Gaza Strip, the political and institutional link between the Strip and the West Bank has undergone far reaching changes in recent years. It is not just a question of implementing a “safe passage” (which is reviewed specifically in the context of the Israeli proposal at the Annapolis talks), but also the actual ability to normalize relations between the rival camps in the Palestinian arena—Fatah and Hamas. In recent years it has seemed as if it is the geographical gap between the Strip and the West Bank, or in other words, Israel’s physical position in the middle, that has prevented bloody clashes between them.

Other key issues that must be resolved before any Israeli-Palestinian arrangement can be reached include the future of Jerusalem and the question of the Palestinian refugees. However, these are beyond the dilemma of the physical/functional border that is Arieli’s focus. He is aware of their importance, and

they are mentioned in the epilogue under the heading “How to Get out of the Mess.” The same goes for the question of security arrangements. Indeed, the entire book is in part a reply to the question of which comes first—security arrangements before borders, or borders that take into account security considerations and imperatives.

It is possible to reject the idea of a separation between Israel proper and territories conquered in 1967—which at present means the West Bank—with the argument of Israel’s ancestral right to the land or for reasons of strategic/security depth. The distinction between Israeli control of land in the West Bank as on the one hand deterministic and the manifestation of an advanced stage of a historical process, and on the other hand, as a response to a security need, is clarified very well in the first part of the book, before Arieli turns to a review of the plans regarding Israel’s border proposed over the years. Moreover, the fusion of the two different points of view is what has garnered significant support and hence shaped the political and practical preferences of many Jewish Israelis over recent decades. However, while to a large extent this dual focus explains the Israeli contribution to the ongoing political freeze, it does not nullify the logic underlying

Arieli’s argument in the book’s conclusion, supported by the insights interwoven in its chapters. According to this argument, any proposed outline of an eastern border for the State of Israel has the clear potential to shape an improved national, security, political, and economic reality, and recognition of this fact should effect a change of attitudes in Israel, which is a condition for taking steps toward separation.

The delineation of the border is just one topic—though a critical one—among all the issues that Israel and the Palestinians must resolve if they wish to promote a negotiated agreement. However, in the efforts toward partition of the disputed area, the suggestion proposed by Arieli could be of great help. Its advantage is that it takes into account the demographic developments in the territory itself as well as the developments recorded in the relevant geopolitical arena in recent decades. No less significant is that it is guided by an effort to limit as far as possible any possible damage to the fabric of life and the welfare of people living on both sides of the border, in both the short and long terms.

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Call for Papers for *Strategic Assessment*

The INSS journal *Strategic Assessment* has assumed a new shape and form, and the editorial board invites authors to submit articles for issues to be published in the updated format. Proposals for special themed issues are also welcome.

Strategic Assessment, a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary journal on topics related to Israel's national security and Middle East strategic issues, was launched in 1998 and is published quarterly in Hebrew and English by the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) at Tel Aviv University. *Strategic Assessment* serves as a platform for original research on a spectrum of issues relating to the discipline of national security. The purpose of the journal is to spark and enhance an informed, constructive debate of fundamental questions in national security studies, using an approach that integrates a theoretical dimension with policy-oriented research. Articles on topics relating to Israel, the Middle East, the international arena, and global trends are published with the goal of enriching and challenging the national security knowledge base.

The current era has seen many changes in fundamental conventions relating to national security and how it is perceived at various levels. As national security research evolves, it seeks to adjust to new paradigms and to innovations in the facets involved, be they technological, political, cultural, military, or socio-economic. Moreover, the challenge of fully grasping reality has become even more acute with the regular emergence of competing narratives, and this is precisely why factual and data-based research studies are essential to revised and relevant assessments.

The editorial board encourages researchers to submit articles that have not been previously published that propose an original and innovative thesis on national security with a broad disciplinary approach rooted in international relations, political science, history, economics, law, communications, geography and environmental studies, Israeli studies, Middle East and Islamic studies, sociology and anthropology, conflict resolution, or additional disciplines.

In the spirit of the times, *Strategic Assessment* is shifting its center of gravity to an online presence and availability. While INSS will continue to print issues on a quarterly basis, articles approved for publication, following the review and editing process, will be published in an online version on the journal's website in the format of "initially published online,"

and subsequently included in the particular quarterly issues.

As part of the revamping of the journal's content and format, *Strategic Assessment* will now publish articles in five categories:

Research Forum – academic articles of a theoretical and research nature on a wide range of topics related to national security, of up to 7,000 words in Hebrew or 8,000 words in English (including APA-style footnotes). All articles are submitted for double blind peer review.

Policy Analysis – articles of 1,500-2,000 words that mainly analyze policies in national security contexts. These articles will be without footnotes and use hyperlinks to refer to sources, as necessary.

Book Reviews – book reviews of 800-1,500 words on a wide range of books relating to national security.

Professional Forum – panel discussions on a particular topic, or in-depth interviews, of 2,000-3,000 words.

Academic Survey – a survey of 1,000-2,000 words of the latest professional literature on a specific topic relating to national security.

Writing Guidelines

Articles intended for the Research Forum, Book Reviews, and Academic Survey should follow APA (6th edition) guidelines. Footnotes should be kept to a minimum, and included only if the material is necessary for an understanding of the text. Articles intended for the Policy Analysis and the Professional Forum should not include footnotes or endnotes. To refer to sources, a list of relevant literature can appear at the end of the article, or links that refer to sources can be incorporated within the text.

Submitted material should be paginated, edited, and proofread carefully and meet the requested length requirements. Articles will be sent for double-blind review, and therefore authors must be careful not to disclose their identity in the course of the article.

Articles should be submitted electronically to editors-sa@inss.org.il while indicating the category of the attached article. The submission should include three separate documents: the article with no personal details or indications about the author in the article itself, an abstract of 150-200 words, personal details including a short bio, current affiliation, and contact details. You may also use this e-mail address for questions or additional information about the journal.



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