

Strategy Research Project International Fellow

Updating Israel's Security Strategy in an Era of Uncertainty

by

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United States Army War College
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Abstract

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During the first three decades since its establishment, the State of Israel struggled against tangible threats to its survival. In the culmination of three decades of wars, it seemed that there was a dramatic strategic turnabout in favor of Israel. The Israelis thought that the question of the existence of Israel, as a sovereign Jewish state in the Middle East was not in doubt anymore. It seemed that Israel's security concept had been implemented very successfully, so the threat to Israel's existence was gone. However, in recent years, the question of Israel's existence has resurfaced again. Basic assumptions of the Israeli security concept are not valid anymore. Powerful and unexpected processes have shaken the world, and continue to dramatically influence Israel's security condition. The purpose of this article is to try to bridge the gap that was created between the common Israel security policy and the complex new challenges that face Israel. The objectives of this document are to characterize the global and the regional processes that influence Israel's security and to provide recommendations to the policymakers. This article will focus on the period from the early 1970's until 2020.

Updating Israel's Security Strategy in an Era of Uncertainty

During the first three decades since its establishment, the State of Israel struggled against tangible threats to its survival. In the culmination of three decades of wars, it seemed that there was a dramatic strategic turnabout in favor of Israel. Israel signed peace agreements with its avowed enemies, Egypt and Jordan. The reconciliation process between Israel and the Palestinians was most successful in the implementation of the Oslo Accords. The Israelis thought that the question of the existence of Israel, as a sovereign Jewish state in the Middle East was not in doubt anymore. It seemed that Israel's security concept had been implemented very successfully, so the threat to Israel's existence was gone. However, in recent years, the question of Israel's existence has resurfaced. Basic assumptions of the Israeli security concept are not valid anymore. Powerful and unexpected processes have shaken the world, and continue to dramatically influence Israel's security condition. Many books and articles that have been written about Israeli security during the 21st century instantly became irrelevant, because they could not have predicted these changes in the strategic environment during the past few years.

The purpose of this article is to try to bridge the gap that was created between the common Israel security policy and the complex new challenges that face Israel. The objectives of this document are to define and characterize the global and the regional processes that influence Israel's security. In order to provide recommendations to the policy makers as to how to strengthen Israel's ability to deal with those threats, I will analyze the implications of the processes, and evaluate the potential risks to Israel in the near future. This article will focus on the period from the early 1970's until 2020.

Background

On November 19, 1977, President of Egypt, Anwar Sadat's aircraft landed at Ben-Gurion Airport in Israel. This was after his surprising public announcement about his intention to visit Israel. Prime Minister of Israel Menachem Begin, responded positively to the Egyptian President's announcement. A short time after that, a peace negotiation, under the sponsorship of the United States, between these two countries started, and finished in March 1979 with the signing of a historic peace treaty. It was the first sign of dramatic turnabout in Israel's strategic condition as a legitimate and valid state in the Middle East. In the framework of the peace treaty with Egypt, Israel agreed to negotiate with the representatives of the Palestinian people in order to solve the Palestinian problem.¹ Indeed, between the years 1993-95 a few agreements were signed between Israel and the P.L.O. The purpose of those agreements that are called the Oslo Accords was to enable the Palestinians to establish autonomy in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip territories, and by doing so to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the framework of those agreements, the Palestinians established authorities to manage the civil aspects of the Palestinians' lives in broad areas in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Those warm relations between Israel and the Palestinians helped to melt the relationships with the kingdom of Jordan.

On July 25, 1994 Hussein King of Jordan and the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin met in Washington, D.C. On this day, they announced together with President Clinton the end of the state of war between the two countries. A few months later on October 26, 1994 a peace treaty between the state of Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan was signed.

Those processes of reconciliation between Israel and its neighbors were in sharp contrast to the warfare that engulfed Israel during the first three decades of its establishment, between 1948-1978. During this period Israel was compelled to fight and win four wars to defend its existence. However, the peace processes between Israel and its neighbors were not accidental. According to Israel's unwritten security policy in this period, achieving peace with the surrounding Arab countries was a vital interest to the state's security.

From the day of its establishment,² Israel stood against one central military threat. This threat was the occupation of Israel or parts of it by the Arab countries' regular armies. In fact, the main reference scenario that Israel prepared for was an all-out coordinated Arab surprise attack.³ However, in the early 70's a new threat was added: the missile threat. The Arab countries understood that the cheapest and the simplest way to counter the Israeli Air force's deep penetration capability to their territories was by gaining missile capabilities.⁴ Only a few years later, this threat increased and became a non-conventional threat. This threat replaced the all-out coordinated Arab attack as the most dangerous threat to Israel and is far more likely because of the proliferation of missile technology. Thus, missiles became the most significant threat to Israel's security, its leader claimed.⁵

In its early days, Israel assumed that the only way to secure its physical existence in the hostile space of the Middle East was by achieving decisive victories on the battlefield. However, the security reality showed differently. The military defeats did not dissuade the Arab countries from trying repeatedly to rout Israel in the battlefield every several years.

The Fundamentals of Israel's Security Concept

In order to cope effectively with its complex strategic situation, Israel developed a joint security concept.⁶ The purpose of this concept was to thwart Israel enemies' intentions of its eradication and to assure its existence for years. The Israeli security concept is based on five basic principles. The first and the most important principle is striving to achieve stable and valid peace with its enemies. Israel recognized that signing peace treaties with its neighbors was a vital interest for its survival and development.⁷ This principle uttered in the declaration of establishment of the state of Israel, "WE EXTEND our hand to all neighbouring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighbourliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation, and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East."⁸ Today, there are four agreements between Israel and its neighbors:⁹

- The separation of force between Israel and Syria (1974).
- The treaty of peace between Israel and Egypt (1979).
- The declaration of principles on interim self-government arrangements with the Palestinians (1993).¹⁰
- The treaty of peace between the Israel and the kingdom of Jordan (1994).

The second principle was established to gain international support and to create alliances and partnerships with global superpowers and key countries in the region. From the day of its establishment, Israel tried to gain support from as many countries as possible while leaning on a global superpower. At first, France was the power that provided diplomatic support and weaponry to the State of Israel. However, in 1967, at

the eve of the Six Days War, France retreated surprisingly from its support of Israel and became a pro-Arab country. During the Six Days War and afterwards, the U.S. started to tighten its relationships with Israel. As the years went by, the U.S. became the closest ally of Israel. This alliance became the cornerstone of Israel's security concept. The recognition of the high importance of the U.S. to Israel's security became a consensus within the political system in Israel.¹¹ U.S. security, economic and diplomacy support provided Israel unique strategic advantages in the Middle East. This advantage enabled Israel to cope successfully with its security challenges. The U.S.-Israel alliance strengthened Israel's deterrence capability against its enemies. The special position of the U.S in the Middle East, as an honest broker and as a supplier of financial and security aid ensured the strength of the peace treaties between Israel, Egypt and Jordan.

However, at the same time while strengthening the special relationship with the U.S., Israel tried to establish partnerships with additional key countries. The central country to establish partnerships with was Turkey. After the end of the Cold War, the security interests of Turkey and Israel suddenly became aligned. From the late 1980's, those two countries started to approach each other, until in 1991 their bilateral relationships updated to complete diplomatic relations. Those relations even tightened in the years after. A series of agreements were signed between the sides. Among others, there were cooperation agreements between their navies, their air forces, and their intelligence branches. In the framework of those agreements, the Turks had access to intelligence data produced from the Israeli satellite – 'Ofek.¹² In addition, the Turks acquired military technology from Israel worth hundreds of millions. In return,

Israel benefited from Turkish diplomatic support in the international arena, especially, in Islamic forums.¹³ However, the most important component of those relations was the establishment of a strategic dialog mechanism on the highest levels. This Turkish-Israeli partnership vastly strengthened Israel and Turkey's deterrence in the region.

The third principle was achieving and maintaining Israel's military technological superiority over its enemy.

The fourth principle that developed at the eve of the first Gulf War, was passive protection of the state's citizens from conventional and non-conventional high-trajectory weapons. During the first Gulf War, when there was concern over Iraqi non-conventional weapon attacks on Israel, the State of Israel provided gas masks and atropine syringes for all its citizens. As a lesson from the war, the Israeli parliament legislated in 1992, a law that obligates every person that builds a new house to construct an apartment protected space (APS). This APS should be protected from high explosive and impervious to toxic gases. In this way, the State of Israel ensured that in case of missile attack, all its citizens are protected at suitable levels.

The fifth principle is direct confrontation against emerging nuclear threats. On June 7, 1981, Israeli fighter aircrafts struck the Iraqi nuclear facility in Osirak. This attack was so successful that it stopped the Iraqi nuclear program.¹⁴ This operation was executed by new F-16 that were manufactured in the U.S. and supplied to Israel a short time before the operation. Still, the Israeli attack was executed without any coordination with the government of the U.S., which caused strong anger in the Reagan Administration leading to a temporary suspension of American weapon supply to Israel.¹⁵ Israel's former Prime-Minister's decision to strike without coordinating with the

United States, leaned on the Israeli approach that in existential matters, Israel should trust itself solely.

Twenty-six years later, the Israeli air force struck the Syrian nuclear facility in Deir ez-Zor region and destroyed it. This time, the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, tried to convince U.S. President, George W. Bush to strike the Syrian nuclear facility with the U.S. Air force. After Bush's refusal, Prime-Minister Olmert decided to strike the nuclear facility without asking for a 'green light' from the United States.¹⁶ Those occurrences demonstrate Israel's determination to operate directly and independently against nuclear threats, even if it can damage the special relations with its most important ally.

These five fundamental principles of Israel's security concept enabled Israel to deal with significant threats properly during the first 60 years of existence. However, in recent years, the basic assumptions of this concept have been undermined, which compels Israel's leaders to update this concept and to design new ways of confrontation with its new strategic environment.

Dramatic Changes in Israel's Strategic Environment

A series of dramatic events occurred in the world and within the Middle East that undermined in a very short time all five of Israel's security concepts. On January 14, 2011, the president of Tunisia, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, escaped from his country following violent riots that called for a regime change. Those riots kindled the so-called 'Arab spring' in many Arab countries. The riots spilled over into Egypt and caused within a few weeks the deposition of the old president of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak. A few months later, Muslim Brotherhood member, Mohamed Morsi, became the new president of Egypt. Since the regime change in Egypt, there are significant voices calling to

reexamine the peace treaty with Israel. One of the main arguments in favor of the reexamination is that the peace treaty has never been approved by the Egyptian people, but was dictated by the previous regime.¹⁷ In his article, "The Future of Israel's Agreements with its neighbors," Oded Eran claims that because of Egypt's inability to enforce its sovereignty in the Sinai Peninsula, Israel should be prepared for an Egyptian demand to renegotiate the military annex of the peace treaty.¹⁸ At present, it seems that one main factor still binds Egypt to the peace treaty with Israel, the generous American aid given to Egypt every year. Egypt's economic situation worsened following the Arab awakening, and it seems that it needs U.S. assistance more than ever. However, there are four other factors that may push Egypt to change its attitude toward Israel in a negative matter. First, the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology is hostile to Israel and denies its existence.¹⁹ Second, the Egyptian regime might want to change its image as a faithful servant of the United States,²⁰ especially after President Obama's speech made it clear that he does not see Egypt as an ally.²¹ Third, the Egyptian army, which was a positive factor in preserving relations with Israel lost its power and its influence.²² Finally, most of the Egyptian public opposes the peace treaty with Israel, so there is a possibility that the Egyptian administration will have to consider its opinion.²³ Those tendencies might become stronger in the medium to long term and lead to cancellation of the peace treaty.

The peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, was also signed based on the personal decision of King Hussein, despite severe objections of its population. It can be assumed that the future of the peace treaty with Egypt will influence the future of the peace treaty with Jordan.²⁴

However, not only the peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan are in danger, the *de facto* truce between Israel and Syria might be undermined as well. While Assad's future is unclear, and many predict his falling in the near term, it is likely that Syria will remain a center of regional instability for the next years. It is likely that terror groups will try to take advantage of the breakdown of security in Syria to conduct terror attacks against Israel. If this becomes reality, the 40-year Israeli deterrence against Syria will not exist anymore. In addition, also in the Palestinian issue, it seemed that new tendencies are developing that might cause instability in the area. These trends include the strengthening of Hamas in Gaza and in the West Bank, the deterioration of the economic situation in the Palestinian Authority and the lack of prospects for a political solution on the horizon.

Today, the substantial basis of the agreements between Israel and its neighbors are not as stable as they were in the past. In light of that, Israel should reexamine its policy regarding possible erosion of those agreements.

In the meantime, the second pillar in the Israeli security concept is also being undermined. There are signs that Israel's ability to rely on the U.S. has recently been weakened. This fact is very bothersome to Israel's leaders. In addition, the strategic partnership between Israel and Turkey does not exist anymore. The relationship between Israel and the U.S. started to build after the Six Day War in 1967, evolving into the current special relationship. Those relations reached their peak after the terror attack in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. However, in the last few years, there are new trends that might harm U.S.-Israel's relations. One of the negative factors is the estrangement of some American Jews from their unconditional support of

Israel.²⁵ This estrangement arises from the Israeli domestic dispute about the question of recognizing the reform and conservative movements of Judaism²⁶ as legitimate movements.²⁷ This trend has a significant influence on the U.S.-Israeli relations because the fewer American Jews that support Israel, the less pressure they put on their government to act in favor of Israel. An additional factor is the demand of influential groups in the American political system to focus on domestic issues while reducing U.S. involvement in foreign affairs.²⁸ Nevertheless, above all is the erosion of the U.S. position in the Middle East. The U.S. failures in Iraq²⁹ and Afghanistan³⁰ are arousing domestic demands to reexamine its interests in the region.³¹ In addition, it seems that the U.S. has made a strategic decision to deepen its involvement in Asia Pacific at the expense of its presence in the Middle East.³² In an interview for the publication of his new book, 'From Truman to Obama', the Israeli researcher Abraham Ben Zvi, suggests a bold assumption that within a decade the U.S. and China may reach mutual agreements at the expense of Israel.³³

Nevertheless, even if the U.S.-Israeli special relationship will be significantly damaged it will take years, unlike Turkish-Israeli relations. Recep Erdoğan became the Prime Minister of Turkey, following the political upheaval that occurred on November 3, 2002. Following these elections, the warm relations between Israel and Turkey began to disintegrate rapidly and steadily. At that time, Turkey began to strengthen its ties with Syria and cool its ties with the U.S. At the same time, Turkey began to publicly criticize Israel's policy regarding the Palestinians. In December 2008, Erdoğan sharply criticized Israel about its decision to undertake operation 'Cast Lead' in the Gaza Strip.³⁴ He even

called in the General Assembly to expel Israel from the UN as long as it does not respect the UN Security Council resolution to cease-fire.

In 2009, Turkey cancelled Israel's participation in the joint air exercise planned for the year. A year later, when Israel realized that Israel-Turkey's relations were not as they were in the past, it froze all the arms sales transactions to Turkey. Those relationships reached a negative peak after the Gaza flotilla affair. In May 2010, six ships carrying Turkish flags sailed from the shores of Turkey loaded with food and medical equipment on their way to break the blockade imposed by Israel on Gaza. With the entry of the ships into the territorial waters of Israel, the Israeli Navy seized the ships. During the takeover of the largest ship, the Mavi Marmara, Israeli soldiers encountered fierce resistance. As a result of the battle on the ship, nine people were killed and twenty were wounded by the Israelis, most of them were Turkish citizens. This event expanded the rift between Israel and Turkey dramatically. Immediately after the incident, Turkey called its ambassador in Israel back to Ankara. A month later, Turkey canceled all the security agreements with Israel. In addition, Turkey demanded that Israel apologize and pay compensation for the killing of Turkish citizens. However, despite American pressure exerted on it, Israel refused to apologize. This has exacerbated the tension with the United States, because Israeli-Turkish relations are not bilateral relations but part of a triangle that includes the United States.³⁵

Unfortunately, not only the erosion of alliances and peace treaties weaken Israel's strategic situation, the potential existential threat from Iran also poses a new challenge to Israel. First, unlike the nuclear facilities in Iraq and Syria that were concentrated in one area above the ground and could be destroyed by a relatively small

number of accurate strikes, Iran's nuclear facilities are distributed across many sites throughout Iran, and part of them are secured below the ground or deep in the mountains. This poses a real challenge to operational planners contemplating attacking Iran's nuclear facilities. Second, unlike previous times, this time the dispute between Israel and the United States is a public debate. In this situation it will be difficult for Israel to act against the position of the United States, after it announced many times publicly its opposition to an independent Israeli action. Third, Iran has armed proxies near the borders of Israel – Hamas and Hezbollah. In the case of an Israeli attack on Iran, Hamas and Hezbollah might respond with massive rocket fire into Israel. Fourth, the widespread deployment of the Iranian nuclear program and the advanced stage of this program make it so that even an effective American or Israeli attack will not stop Iran's nuclear program, just delay it for several years. This situation presents complex dilemmas for Israel, both because of the operational difficulty to obtain sufficient effects through military action, and because of the concern about being drawn into a crisis with the United States in the event of an Israeli attack contrary to U.S. opinion. But above all is the Israeli fear of an existential threat from an extremist Muslim country calling for its destruction.

The fourth principle of Israeli security concept, which requires fresh thinking, is the need to preserve Israel's qualitative advantage over its enemies. Traditionally Israel's military advantage over its enemies leans on technological advantage. The IDF is highly advanced technologically, having the ability to destroy enemies' armored formations within a short time. However, it is likely that in the near future, the IDF will not have to face in battle against Syrian or Egyptian armored formations. As part of the

change in the nature of the global armed conflicts, the nature of the conflict between Israel and its enemies has changed as well. In recent years, Israel is dealing mainly with terrorist organizations operating against it by trying to limit the IDF's ability to demonstrate its military superiority. Today, the main terrorist organizations against Israel are Hezbollah and Hamas. These organizations have analyzed the sources of Israeli military power and developed methods of warfare to neutralize it. Israeli military strength rests on three main pillars: one, a technological superiority, second, armored ground maneuver capabilities in open area, and the third, fighting in light of humanitarian moral values. In order to erode the benefits arising from these elements, those terror groups have developed methods based on three opposite principles, using simple and cheap weapons such as rockets and mortars of home production against population centers. Fighting in small teams using anti-tank missiles and fighting from population concentrations make it difficult for the IDF to respond effectively. At the same time, with the understanding that they cannot defeat the IDF by maneuvering; these groups have greatly expanded the high trajectory fire threat to Israel. Even today, different ranges of rocket launchers from Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and Gaza cover all of Israel's territory. As shown, Israel's strategic environment has changed dramatically in recent years and has worsened Israel's security situation. On the one hand, the threat of conquest of Israel by an Arab military force does not exist today. On the other hand, four major threats have strengthened:

- A nuclear existential threat on Israel from Iran.
- Continuation of the Israeli - Palestinian conflict. The continuation of this conflict threatens the security of Israel because it is constantly nibbling the legitimacy

of Israel as an occupying force. In addition, demographic aspects of the conflict threaten the state of Israel's character as a Jewish democratic state. According to the CIA assessment for 2009, Arabs within the State of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza might outnumber Jews in these areas.³⁶ The strengthening of this trend could lead, in the near future, to a situation in which a Jewish minority rules over an Arab majority. The significance of this reality is the end of democracy in Israel.

- Threat of harming the country's citizens and its infrastructures by terrorist acts from the unstable borders with Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon.
- Threat of harming the country's citizens and its infrastructures by conventional and non-conventional rockets and missiles fire.

Israel's New Security Concept

For the first time in its history, Israel is dealing with a series of dramatic changes that occur in a short time and may adversely affect its strategic situation. Therefore, Israel is required to reformulate the principles of its security strategy and find new solutions to security challenges facing it. Here are six proposed principles for a new security concept:

Peace Treaties

First, Israel must strive to preserve the peace agreements with its neighbors. In case Egypt or Jordan will cancel the peace agreements unilaterally, Israel should demand that the United States implement the sanctions specified in the peace agreements related to the breach of the agreement. Continuation of American aid to the state that violates the agreement means allowing the breach of the agreement. Regarding Egypt, Israel should demonstrate flexibility and understanding for the

Egyptian need to put more troops on the Sinai Peninsula to exercise its sovereignty and act effectively against global terror cells operating in this area.³⁷ This flexibility signifies Israeli acceptance to renegotiate the military annex to the peace treaty. However, Israel should place red lines and insist on reasonable and proportionate expansion of Egyptian military forces in Sinai in a way that will not allow a massive surprise attack against Israel.

Unlike Egypt, Jordan does not constitute a significant military threat against Israel. However, the peace treaty's existence is a vital interest of Israel. Israel should expand economic cooperation with Jordan, mainly by joint investment in infrastructure, and thereby strengthen the common interests in the continuation of the peace process.

Despite Israel not having a peace treaty with Syria, the developments in Syria provide many risks as well as opportunities. Israel should keep its overt silence about what is happening in Syria. Nevertheless, behind the scenes it should try to embroider secret relations with the main opposition leaders. The future reality in Syria will force Israel to redefine its relationship to Syria; therefore, Israel must prepare to build relationships and understanding with the future Syrian leadership.

Alliances and Partnerships

First, Israel must toil to strengthen the strategic ties with the U.S. Israel should understand that despite the special relationship and the shared values between the two countries, this alliance should not be taken for granted. Israel should help the American government to achieve its goals in the Middle East. However, the main problem of Israel's attempts to please the United States is that often the American interests and the Israeli interests are not identical. For example, the U.S. government attaches great importance to the establishment of two states, Israel and Palestine, in the area between

the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. In Israel, however, many believe that the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel will place Israel in a worse security position. Another example is the struggle against the Iranian nuclear program. From the U.S. perspective, like the Israeli one, Iran should not obtain a nuclear weapon. However, still this is not an existential threat to the U.S as it is for Israel. From Israel's perspective, a nuclear Iran poses a direct threat to its very existence. After all, Israel cannot give up the essential interests of its existence for the interests of the United States. Therefore, aside from the effort by Israel to strengthen the strategic alliance with the U.S., it should be prepared for a situation where it will not work. Israel has experienced abandonment of a close ally at a critical juncture in its existence. At the Eve of the Six Day War when Israel feared its annihilation by the Arab militaries, France, its major ally in those days, suddenly announced that it supported the Arabs, and if Israel would initiate an attack, France would not support Israel. This severe event caused Israel to realize that at the end of the day it might find itself alone in the battle for existence. Therefore, Israel should consider creating a foundation for a future possible partnership with China. This partnership may be based on the historical ties between the two nations as well as Israel's contribution to the technological development of China. The approach between Israel and China may soften the tension between Israel and the Arab countries, given the fact that China has a special status among many Muslim countries. It is clear that strengthening ties with China – the United States' adversary – may increase tension between Israel and the U.S., and may weaken the strategic alliance between them. One needs only to mention the acute tension created between the Clinton Administration and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, over the

Israeli attempt to sell an intelligence plane known as 'Falcon' to China in 2000.³⁸

Therefore, Israel should deepen its relations with China gradually, systematically and quietly, in order not to shock its relations with the United States.

Management of the Israeli - Palestinian Conflict³⁹

Although 60% of the Israelis support the 'two-state solution',⁴⁰ it seems that this solution is not attainable. There are several key reasons for this:

- The Palestinians have rejected generous Israeli offers to promote a peace agreement on the basis of transferring most of the West Bank territories to the Palestinians several times in the past.
- The Palestinian Authority opposes recognition of Israel, opposes giving up 'the right of return'⁴¹, and refuses to declare the end of the conflict.
- The Palestinian education system teaches its children to hate Israel.⁴²
- Security of the PA government is unstable and there is concern that after the establishment of a Palestinian state, there will be a coup, which might lead to Hamas control as happened in Gaza after the IDF withdrawal in 2005.

These reasons show that one cannot expect a lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians in the near future. Therefore, it is required that Israel abandons the two-state solution and adopt the conflict management approach.⁴³ This approach is based on the assumption that not every prolonged conflict has an immediate solution and on the principle of minimizing the costs of armed conflict and the promotion of freedom of political maneuvering. The goal is to buy time until the conditions will ripen to resolve the conflict through negotiation. The main components of this concept are: Palestinian terrorism prevention, conducting strategic coordination with the United States,

expanding public diplomatic efforts and paying attention to the public opinion in Israel. Along with fighting Palestinian terrorism, Israel must allow and encourage the growth of the Palestinian economy and expand the Palestinians' freedom of movement in the West Bank.⁴⁴ Implementing this approach ensures an adequate level of security for the citizens of Israel, while encouraging the Palestinians to maintain a state of security calm.

Continuing to Reinforce the Qualitative Military Advantage of the IDF

Strengthening the technological military advantage of Israel will be based on three main components:

- Developing and acquiring accurate weapon systems, in order to improve the IDF's ability to harm terrorists while avoiding casualties among noncombatants.
- Developing and strengthening IDF intelligence capabilities of all its components, while providing special reference to human intelligence.
- Making changes in the IDF's "building the strength" processes, by increasing infantry units, accurate weapons units and special operations units while reducing the high amount of armored formations.

Development of a Comprehensive Solution to the Threat of High Trajectory Fire into Israel

The missile threat against Israel is composed of four types: Short-range mortars from the Gaza Strip, medium-range rockets from Gaza and Lebanon, surface-to-surface missiles from Syria and ballistic missiles from Iran. The missile threat against Israel is rapidly increasing. The uniqueness of the high trajectory threat is that for the first time in Israel, the threat on the home front⁴⁵ has increased compared to the frontier lines. As a

result, in case of war, the families on the home front will not worry about their loved ones at the front, while the soldiers will be concerned for the fate of their families living on the home front. Following the Second Lebanon War, Israel decided to develop and obtain the "Iron Dome" system, with generous U.S. assistance. The "Iron Dome" is an active defense system against mortars and medium range rockets. During Operation 'Pillar of Defense,'⁴⁶ this system proved its effectiveness.⁴⁷ In addition, Israel has developed another system, the "Arrow" system, also with the generous assistance of the United States. This system was designed to protect Israel from ballistic missiles. Israel should continue developing multi-layer defense systems to provide protection for population centers from all types of rockets and missiles. The main disadvantage of this central defensive component is the high cost of its missiles.⁴⁸ However, the advantage of these systems is providing the political and military leaders significant flexibility⁴⁹ to decide about the timing and the extent of the reaction to missile attack on Israel. Without those active protection systems, a severe hit⁵⁰ on Israel would require immediate response even if it would not be the right time to do so for its interests. The second pillar in responding to the high trajectory threat is the offensive pillar. Israel should gather continuous qualitative intelligence and form ordered attack plans beforehand to gain the ability to destroy the enemies' missile sites. Fortunately, as far as the missiles are standard and long-range it is easier to detect and destroy them. Another component of the offensive element is the constant pursuit of the commanders of the rocket units.

In conclusion, it is required to collect continuous quality intelligence and form operational plans to be carried out on command. Executing an integrated response

based on active multi-layered defense systems and on offensive components against the missile units and their commanders, might provide a comprehensive solution to this threat.

Preventing Iran from Gaining Nuclear Weapons

A nuclear Iran is an existential threat that Israel cannot accept.⁵¹ The campaign against Iran should be a multi-dimensional campaign. As noted, unlike the Iraqi and Syrian reactors, it is impossible to stop the Iranian nuclear program by one aircraft flight striking a single target. Therefore, an effective campaign against Iran should include several key components.

Political Campaign

The best development from Israel's perspective in this context is that the Iranian nuclear project would be stopped by international activities without any Israeli involvement. Therefore, Israel must operate behind the scenes to expand the U.S.-led global efforts to stop Iran's nuclear program. Israel should refrain from publicly leading the global fight against the Iranian nuclear program because the Israeli interest is not to present this problem as an Israeli problem, but as a global threat to world stability.

A Covert and a Cyber Campaign

This domain led by Western intelligence and cyber agencies, should be done with coordination and cooperation among all those agencies. However, it should be understood that this covert campaign could only delay the program's implementation pace but not completely stop it.

Independent Israeli Strike as a Last Resort

As stated, the potential consequences of this threat for Israel are different from other countries. Therefore, If Israel reaches the conclusion based on its intelligence that

the 'window of opportunity' to strike Iran is closing and the Western countries led by the United States are not planning to attack Iran, then Israel should strike by itself. It is clear that an independent Israeli strike will cause strong diplomatic and military reactions against Israel. Anyway, a number of independent war games recently performed in Israel, provide the understanding that the Iranians' response to an Israeli strike will be tolerable in terms of the number of military and civilian casualties and the damage to the state's infrastructure, proving that Israel can afford it.

Conclusions

For the first time in years, Israel must reconsider its national security concept. Dramatic and far-reaching changes are threatening its strategic advantage in the Middle East. In order to deal successfully with this complex reality Israel must take decisive actions in five key areas. Israel should:

- Strive to preserve the peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan, while being willing to open negotiations on the military annex to the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.
- Strengthen the strategic alliance with the U.S., while building infrastructure for future optional alliance with China.
- Abandon the 'two-state solution' with the Palestinians and adopt the conflict management approach for the foreseeable future.
- Preserve the qualitative military advantage of Israel, while making adjustments in its structure in light of future conflict characteristics.
- Develop a comprehensive solution to the threat of missiles and rockets on Israel based on the development and placing multi-layer active protection

systems, while building offensive readiness to destroy the missile infrastructures.

- Stop Iran's nuclear program, preferably led by the international community and as a last resort by an Israeli military operation.

Implementing these actions will significantly enhance Israel's security posture and preserve its strategic advantages through the next decade. Continued vigilance and reassessment will enable Israel to maintain its security well beyond 2020.

Endnotes

¹ The Camp David Accords, The Framework for Peace in the Middle East, September 1978, <http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/campdavid/accords.phtml> (accessed January 29, 2013).

² Only a few hours after its establishment, in the eve of May 15, 1948, six Arab armies of Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia attacked the state of Israel.

³ Uri Bar-Joseph, "Introduction," in *Israel's National Security Towards the 21st Century*, ed. Uri Bar-Joseph (Frank Cass Publishes, 2001), 2.

⁴ Dore Gold, "Middle East Missile Proliferation, Israeli Missile Defense, and the ABM Treaty Debate," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, May 15, 2000, <http://jcpa.org/il/jl430.htm> (accessed January 29, 2013).

⁵ Yiftah S. Shapir, "Non-Conventional Solutions for Non-Connectional Dilemmas?" in *Israel's National Security Towards the 21st Century*, ed. Uri Bar-Joseph (Frank Cass Publishes, 2001), 147.

⁶ This concept has never been written and publicized. See, Gadi Eisenkot, Israel security in the 21st century: risks and opportunities, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks, Pa. : U.S. Army War College, March 20, 1997), page 1, <http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA326679> (accessed January 29, 2013).

⁷ Bernard Reich, "Israeli National Security Policy: Issues and Actors," in *Israeli National Security Policy: Political Actors and Perspectives*, ed. Bernard Reich and Gershon R. Kieval (Greenwood Press, 1988), 1.

⁸ The Declaration of Establishment of State of Israel, May 14, 1948, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Declaration%20of%20Establishment%20of%20State%20of%20Israel> (accessed January 31, 2013).

⁹ Oded Eran, "The Future of Israel's Agreements with its neighbors, "Strategic assessment", *INSS, Tel Aviv university*, volume 15, no. 1, April 2012, page 43, [http://www.inss.org.il/upload/\(FILE\)1337250378.pdf](http://www.inss.org.il/upload/(FILE)1337250378.pdf) (accessed January 27, 2013).

¹⁰ Today, after the Palestinians appealed to the U.N for recognition the Palestinian Authority as a non-member state, the status of this declaration of principles is not clear. According to political factors in Israel, this unilateral action actually caused the cancellation of the declaration of principles. However, for now, there is no Israeli official resolution announcing that this agreement has been cancelled.

¹¹ Reich, "Israeli National Security Policy: Issues and Actors," 16 & 17.

¹² Efraim Inbar, *Israel National Security: Issues and challenges since the Yom Kippur War* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 162.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ It should be noted that in the long term, this attack also had negative implications. The most significant negative impact was the lesson implemented by Iran in developing its nuclear program. For example, scattering its nuclear facilities at many sites in the country and constructing them underground or deep in mountains, making it difficult to strike Iranian nuclear facilities effectively.

¹⁵ Charles Stuart Kennedy, "Interview with Ambassador William Andreas Brown," November 3, 1998, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mfdip:@field\(DOCID+mfdip2007bro03\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mfdip:@field(DOCID+mfdip2007bro03)) (accessed January 27, 2013).

¹⁶ George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Crown, 2010), 422.

¹⁷ Eran, *The Future of Israel's Agreements with its Neighbors*, 46.

¹⁸ Ibid., 48.

¹⁹ Ephraim Kam, "The Future of the Peace between Israel and Egypt," in *Strategic Survey for Israel 2012-2013*, Anat Kurz and Shlomo Brom, Editors (Tel-Aviv University, Israel, Institute for National Security Studies): 156, [http://cdn.www.inss.org.il.reblazecdn.net/upload/\(FILE\)1360059203.pdf](http://cdn.www.inss.org.il.reblazecdn.net/upload/(FILE)1360059203.pdf) (accessed February 28, 2013).

²⁰ Ibid., 158.

²¹ Shawna Thomas, "Obama: Egypt not an ally of US, but not an enemy," First read, September 12, 2012, <http://firstread.nbcnews.com/news/2012/09/12/13836414-obama-egypt-not-an-ally-of-us-but-not-an-enemy?lite> (accessed February 27, 2013).

²² Kam, "The Future of the Peace between Israel and Egypt," 156, 157.

²³ Ibid 157, 160.

²⁴ Ibid 49.

²⁵ Avi Ben-Zvi and Benny Miller, "From Truman to Obama," January 18, 2011, *The Academic Channel*, University of Haifa, streaming video, 6:03, <http://actv.haifa.ac.il/programs/Item.aspx?it=2039&lang=en-US> (accessed January 27, 2013).

²⁶ As of 2012, 35% of the American Jews are Reforms, 29% 'just Jewish', 26% Conservatives and only 8% of them are Orthodox. See, Jewish values survey 2012 public religion research institute February 23 – March 5, 2012, <http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Jewish-Values-Topline.pdf> (accessed February 28, 2013).

²⁷ The State of Israel does not separate religion from the state. For historical reasons it was determined that the Israeli establishment represents the Orthodox Judaism.

²⁸ Ben-Zvi and Miller, "From Truman to Obama," 7:44

²⁹ See, Eamonn Gearon, "The U.S. Failure in Iraq," *Middle East* 378, (May 2007): 22-24, in ProQuest (accessed March 3, 2013).

³⁰ See, Winston Gee, "The Failure of the United States in Afghanistan," *The Harvard International Review*, April 10, 2011, <http://hir.harvard.edu/the-failure-of-the-united-states-in-afghanistan> (accessed March 3, 2013).

³¹ "Israel's National Security Concept is Irrelevant," The Reut Institute, January 15, 2007, page 6 <http://www.reut-institute.org/data/uploads/PDFVer/20070115%20-%20Israel's%20National%20Security%20Concept%20is%20Irrelevant.pdf> (accessed July 23, 1996).

³² Jonathan Pearlman, "US will shift focus from Middle East to Asia Pacific, Barack Obama declares," *The Telegraph*, November 17, 2011, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/barackobama/8895726/US-will-shift-focus-from-Middle-East-to-Asia-Pacific-Barack-Obama-declares.html> (accessed January 29, 2013).

³³ Ben-Zvi and Miller, "From Truman to Obama," 24:22.

³⁴ Operation "Cast Lead" was a three-week armed conflict in the Gaza Strip between Israel and the Hamas organization during the winter of 2008–2009.

³⁵ Oded Eran and Gallia Lindenstrauss, "Between Resignation and Apology: Israel-Turkey Relations and the Silent Revolution" *INSS Insight* No. 272, August 2, 2011, page 2, [http://www.inss.org.il/upload/\(FILE\)1312460212.pdf](http://www.inss.org.il/upload/(FILE)1312460212.pdf) (accessed January 28, 2013).

³⁶ Jim Zanotti, *Israel and the Palestinians: Prospects for a Two-State Solution* (Washington, DC: U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, January 8, 2010), 13.

³⁷ Eran, *The Future of Israel's Agreements with its Neighbors*, 48.

³⁸ David Essing, "Israel-U.S. Clash Over China Arms Sale," December 28, 2004, <http://www.isracast.com/article.aspx?id=663> (accessed March 7, 2013).

³⁹ Inbar, *Israel National Security: Issues and challenges since the Yom Kippur War*, 191.

⁴⁰ The Peace Index – December 2012, The Israel Democracy Institute, Tel Aviv University, January 2, 2013, <http://www.idi.org.il/media/2050464/The%20Peace%20Index%20Data%20%E2%80%93%20December%202012.pdf> (accessed January 29, 2013).

⁴¹ Inbar, *Israel National Security: Issues and challenges since the Yom Kippur War*, 200.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 205.

⁴⁴ Inbar, *Israel National Security: Issues and challenges since the Yom Kippur War*, 202-203.

⁴⁵ “Home front” means the most populated areas of the country, such as Tel-Aviv and Haifa.

⁴⁶ Operation Pillar of Defense was a seven-day Israeli operation in the Gaza strip against the Hamas organization, in November 2012.

⁴⁷ During the operation, around 500 rockets were fired into urban territories, 461 of them were intercepted by the ‘Iron Dome’ system.

⁴⁸ The cost of one “Iron Dome” missile is approximately \$100,000; the cost of one “Arrow 3” missile is approximately \$3,000,000.

⁴⁹ Ehud Barak in Shir Aharon Bram and Michal Weissbrod, “Iron Dome Developers Win Security Award,” *Israeli Air Force website*, September 4, 2012 <http://www.iaf.org.il/4386-39429-en/IAF.aspx> (accessed February 5, 2012).

⁵⁰ For example, a rocket hit a kindergarten and causing the deaths of dozens of children.

⁵¹ Shmuel Bar, “Israel Can Live With A Nuclear Iran,” January 16, 2013, *Intelligence² debate*, streaming video, 6:03 <http://intelligencesquaredus.org/debates/past-debates/item/793-israel-can-live-with-a-nuclear-iran> (accessed February 5, 2013).

