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Israel's Struggle Against Hamas

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Introduction

The PhD research, 'Israel's Struggle against Hamas: Strategic Culture, Adaptation and War', studies the impact of cultural factors on the Israeli counter-insurgency vis-à-vis Hamas in the period comprised between 1987 and 2005, analyzing to what extent the peculiar traits of the Israeli approach to security and military affairs account for the shaping of a distinct 'way of war' and for the successes and failures of the Jewish state in countering the Islamic Resistance Movement's insurgency.

The concept of '*counter*-insurgency' is logically contingent on that of 'insurgency', to which it applies. Being insurgency a protracted struggle to control a contested political space conducted by one or more popularly based non-state challengers[1], 'counter-insurgency' could be defined as all those measures through which elements of national power are applied for the purpose of suppressing an insurgency. From this definition it appears clear how the concept constitutes an analytical paradigm through which scholars and practitioners approach asymmetric warfare (or war against 'irregulars', 'partisans' or 'guerrillas'), that is struggles between non-state and state actors.[2]

Although old as human civilization, asymmetric warfare rose to prominence after 1945, coming to represent the norm, rather than the exception, of war.[3] The end of the Cold War and the last two decades seemed to confirm the ascendancy of this specific kind of warfare over 'conventional' or 'symmetric warfare' and the setting of a pattern that will probably continue for some time.[4] Counter-insurgency represents therefore a topic worth to study not only by virtue of its prominence in the history of warfare, but also in light of the nature of the conflicts confronting the international community, either currently and possibly also in the near future.

Sir Michael Howard has authoritatively emphasized how the military profession is one of the most demanding, not only in light of the fact that military organizations episodically have the opportunity to practice the business for which they have been established, but even more by virtue of the

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[1] Gordon H. McCormick, Steven B. Horton and Lauren A. Harrison, 'Things Fall Apart: The "Endgame Dynamics" of Internal Wars', *Third World Quarterly*, 28/2 (2007), 321-367.

[2] C.E. Callwell employs the term 'small wars' to denote 'operations of regular armies against irregular forces', C.E. Calwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1906), 21; Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2010), 388; for more recent definitions see William S. Lind, Keith Nightengale, John F. Schmitt, Joseph W. Sutton, Gary I. Wilson, 'The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation', *Marine Corps Gazette* (October 1989).

[3] K.J. Holsti, *The State, War and The State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 22-24; Christopher Paul et al., *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2010), xiii.

[4] John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (London: Vintage Press, 1994), 221; Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: Free Press, 1991) 36-37; Lawrence Freedman, 'The Revolution in Strategic Affairs', *Adelphi Papers*, 38/318 (London: Routledge 1998) and 'The Counterrevolution in Strategic Affairs', *Daedalus*, 140/3 (Summer 2011), 16-32.

very nature of the profession of arms.[5] Of all human endeavors, war confronts men and women with the greatest physical demands and psychological pressures, combining complex material and intellectual challenges of different nature with the constraints of time. Success in war remains inextricably linked to the ability of military organizations to face these challenges to understand the actual conditions of combat and to overcome the tactical, operational and strategic challenges that war presents through a 'a rapid, complex, and continuous process of competitive adaptation'.[6]

Although war has remained fundamentally unchanged in its nature, the twentieth century, and even more the first years of the 21st, have witnessed an increasing sophistication of this phenomenon.[7] Successful adaptation to the realities of combat has in fact increasingly required from military organizations more than only physical endurance and mental stamina. The application of sophisticated technologies (especially Information Technologies - IT) to military affairs, the pervasiveness of the media in theatres of war and the consequent descent of political concerns down to the level of actual combat, have rendered mastering of technology, cultural and political awareness essential elements of the effectiveness of military organizations.[8] Moreover, the expansion and growing multidimensionality of the 'battlespace' has posed new daunting intellectual challenges for the military in terms of elaborating sound operational schemes and military strategies as well as adjusting concepts and doctrines to the reality of the strategic environment.[9]

Thus 'war disciplines militaries' and forces them to adapt to the complexities of the battlefield,[10] to modify organizational structures, abandon proved equipment, techniques, tactical and operational configurations, not to mention shared strategic beliefs, in favor of untested and sometimes risky military and political alternatives.

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[5] Michael Howard, 'The Use and Abuse of Military History', *The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin*, 6/2 (Summer 2003), 21.

[6] Williamson Murray, *Military Adaption in War*, Institute for Defense Analysis Paper P-4452 (June 2009); David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (New York: Oxford UP, 2010), 2; David Kilcullen, 'Counterinsurgency *Redux*', 2, http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/kilcullen1.pdf

[7] Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy* (New York: Oxford UP, 1999), 17-47; 'How Has War Changed since the End of the Cold War?', *Parameters*, 35/2, (Spring 2005), 14-26; 'Clausewitz, History, and the Future Strategic World', Strategic and Combat Studies Institute Occasional Paper No. 47 (Shrivenham,: Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, 2004), 1-24.

[8] Williamson Murray and Robert H. Scales Jr., *The Iraq War, A Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 251.

[9] Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (London: Frank Cass, 1997),8-10; Barry D. Watts and Williamson Murray, 'Military Innovation in Peacetime', in Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett (eds.), *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996); Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, 'Lessons of War', *The National Interest* (Winter 1988).

[10] James A. Russell, *Innovation Transformation and War: Counterinsurgency Operations in Anbar and Ninewa Provinces, Iraq, 2005-2007* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2011); Robert T. Foley, Stuart Griffin, Helen McCartney, "Transformation in Contact': Learning the Lessons of Modern War', *International Affairs* 87/2 (2011) 253–270.

The Puzzle of Israel's Approach to Counter-insurgency

Asymmetric warfare can be defined as such on the base of two kind of asymmetries.[11] The first concerns the very nature of the actors: a confrontation between a state and a non-state opponent necessarily presupposes an asymmetry in the legal and political status of the belligerents. The second focuses upon tactics and methods of operations: conventional operations by regular armies are usually confronted by 'unconventional' methods such as civil disturbances and low-level violence, terrorism and guerrilla by people in arms (but not in uniform).[12]

Beyond variations taking place within the limits of distinct environmental, cultural, political and geographical factors, the above described asymmetries have consistently and repeatedly determined for counter-insurgents analogous conundrums at each level of war.[13] At the tactical level, counter-insurgency requires to transform the organizational structures and operating patterns of conventionally-oriented military organizations in order to adapt to the mode of fighting of a weaker side whose forces counter mass by mobility, taking advantage of superior local knowledge and invisibility, as well as of environments that hinder the effective use of precision firepower.[14]

At the operational level, counter-insurgency is essentially concerned with the nature of the insurgency itself. The main challenge remains therefore to displace the insurgents' influence from the social networks among which they operate, countering 'the issues' that drive the insurgency (frequently called simply 'grievances') isolating and marginalizing them from the outer concentric circles of the civilian population, whose allegiance and assistance they seek.[15]

Finally, at the level of strategy and policy, counter-insurgency poses two distinct categories of problems. Conventional war presupposes the settling of political disputes in battle followed by some kind of political agreement through which a body responsible for the wielding of authority over the forces of the losing side accepts the verdict of the battlefield. In asymmetric warfare, the absence of this authority in one of the belligerents prevents the possibility of such a settlement, making sure that war will possibly last until a sufficient portion of the population of such entity accepts the new political equilibrium. The need for persuading a conspicuous portion of the civilian population of the opponent (rather than simply a government) renders of paramount

[11] Gray, Colin S., 'Irregular Warfare: One Nature Many Characters', *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Winter 2007, 42.

[12] C.E. Calwell, *Small Wars,* 21; Steven Metz, *Learning from Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), v.

[13] Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy*, 419-437; Eliot Cohen et al., 'Principles, Imperatives and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency', *Military Review*, March-April 2006.

[14] C. E. Callwell, *Small Wars*; David Galula, *Contre-Insurrection : Théorie et pratique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008); Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (Westport: Praeger, 1966).

[15] Thomas A. Marks, 'Counterinsurgency and Operational Art', *Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement*, 13/3 (2005), 168; David Kilcullen, 'Counter-insurgency Redux', *Survival*, 48/4 (2006), 117.

importance on the part of counter-insurgents the denial of the insurgents' political goals through the shaping of a new sustainable form of political order. As Beatrice Heuser and Colin Gray have noted, although desirable, military defeat of the insurgent forces is not essential, as it is their political defeat, their delegitimation among the strategic 'centre of gravity' represented by the non-combatant population which is crucial. Thus, 'persuasion' rather than the clausewitzian imposition of one's will upon the enemy, would be at the core of strategic success in asymmetric warfare.[16]

As a consequence, counter-insurgency poses great difficulties with regard to the coordination of military operations with policy objectives. Whereas conventional warfare allows, at least to a certain extent, a linear and sequential functioning of the *bridge* between policy and operations in which strategy consists (à la Von Moltke), in asymmetric warfare the working of the strategy-making process in a circular way, with policy and operations proceeding in a sort of loop, is of the utmost importance.[17]

As a form of 'counter-warfare',[18] it is not possible to identify a constant set of tactics and operational techniques in counter-insurgency. The history of war witnessed in fact the shaping of countless different approaches through which counter-insurgents attempted to adapt to the challenges posed by irregular foes, ranging from the brutal roman decimation to the sophisticated mathematical-based models developed by the RAND corporation and deployed by the US armed forces in Vietnam.[19] Yet, with some *caveats* it seems possible to discern a trend in the western practice (and discourse) since 1945.

The period of the colonial wars of national liberation witnessed in fact an intellectual (and to a limited extent practical) convergence in counter-insurgency practices[20] and the development of a consensus in the West towards the effectiveness of defined sets of 'prescriptions' for its conduct outlined for the most part in a number of publications today commonly referred to as 'classics'.[21] According to this line of reasoning, chief objective of military organizations conducting counter-insurgency operations was gaining some form of loyalty, respect, trust from the local civilian population, something which in turn required the framing of military force within a

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[16] Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy*, 419-437.

[17] Richard K. Betts, 'The Trouble with Strategy: Bridging Policy and Operations', *Joint Force Quarterly*, Autumn/Winter 2001–02, 23; Russell F. Weigley, 'The Political and Strategic Dimensions of Military Effectiveness', in Allan R. Millet and Williamson Murray (eds.), *Military Effectiveness* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1988), 341.

[18] Loup Francart & Jean-Jacques Patry, 'Mastering Violence: An Option for Operational Military Strategy', *Naval War College Review*, 53/3 (Summer 2000), 144–84.

[19] Edward N. Luttwak, 'Dead End: Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice', *Harpers' Magazine*, February 2007; Austin Long, *On Other War: Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2006).

[20] Stephen T. Hosmer & Sibylle O. Crane, *Counterinsurgency: A Symposium, April 16–20, 1962* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2006).

[21] Key theorists included David Galula, Robert Thompson, Frank Kitson, Bernard Fall, Mao Zedong, Che Guevara and Vo Nguyen Giap. These works extensively influenced the interpretation of earlier theorists like T.E. Lawrence, Louis Lyautey and C.E. Callwell, see David Kilcullen, 'Counter-insurgency *Redux*', 115.

broader strategic paradigm including a wide array of non-military measures.[22] Often via the intellectual reception and prescriptive application of 'received wisdom' derived by exegesis from the 'classics' this understanding of counter-insurgency has further consolidated in the last decade.[23]

On these premises, the approach adopted by Israel in countering Hamas' insurgency appears somehow puzzling. Structural conditions analogous to those of several colonial insurgencies should have lead the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to adopt a counter-insurgency approach quite in tune with the 'classic' model as developed in the West. Conversely the IDF, though structurally, technologically and doctrinally analogous to many western armies, as well as expression of a society under many respects culturally akin to the West, has given birth to an approach to counter-insurgency rather detached from the model consolidated in the western theory and practice from the second half of the 20th century, persistently neglecting features commonly considered of paramount importance.

Such evidence generates the main questions to which this research intends to provide an answer: Is it possible to identify a distinctive Israeli 'way of war' in counter-insurgency, distant from the western model as historically consolidated? To what extent Israel managed to adapt its 'way of war' to the challenges of countering Hamas' insurgency between 1987 and 2005? Was such an approach ultimately effective in countering the Islamic Resistance Movement?

Conceptual Framework

'Cultural' approaches to strategic studies have existed in various forms for hundreds of years. The argument that culture, broadly conceived to include shared beliefs and social institutions,[24] influences under many respects military activity and war is grounded in classic theoretical and historical works, including the writings of Thucydides, Sun Tzu and Von Clausewitz.[25]

The existence of 'ways of war', that is of specific modalities of waging warfare peculiar to nationally or culturally distinct communities was present already in classic writings on strategy. The theme was resumed in modern times, among others, by Jacques Antoine Hyppolite de Guibert in his *Essai Général de Tactique*.[26] Formally however, it was in the 1930s of the 20th century that

[22] Michael F. Fitzsimmons, 'Hard Hearts and Open Minds? Governance, Identity and the Intellectual Foundations of Counterinsurgency Strategy', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 31/3, 337-365; John A. Lynn, 'Patterns of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency', *Military Review* (July-August 2005), 22-27.

[23] David Martin Jones & M.L.R. Smith, 'Whose Hearts and Whose Minds? The Curious Case of Global Counter-Insurgency', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33/1 (2010), 81-121; John A. Nagl & Brian M. Burton, 'Thinking Globally and Acting Locally: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Modern Wars - A Reply to Jones and Smith', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33/1 (2010), 123-138; David Martin Jones & M.L.R. Smith, 'Grammar but No Logic: Technique is Not Enough - A Response to Nagl and Burton', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33/3 (2010), 437-446; John Mackinlay & Alison Al-Baddawy, *Rethinking Counterinsurgency* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2008); Frank G. Hoffman, 'Neo-Classical Insurgency?' *Parameters* 37/2 (Summer 2007), 71–87.

[24] Marc Howard Ross, *The Culture of Conflict* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1993), 21.

[25] Jeffrey S. Lantis, 'Strategic Culture and National Security Policy', *International Studies Review*, 4/3 (Autumn, 2002), 93.

[26] Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy*, 19.

the concept of national 'ways of war' was articulated by former British army officer Basil H. Liddell Hart in his *The British Way in Warfare* of 1932.[27]

Although in the following years the historical literature came to pay increasing attention on the influence of cultural factors on foreign relations and military activity within national communities,[28] after Liddell Hart scholarly attention on national ways of war temporarily declined, resurfacing only in 1973 in *The American Way of War,* by military historian Russell Weigley.[29] Though influential, the quarter-century following Weigley's study witnessed only a limited use of this concept. In fact during in this period it remained limited to the renewal of debates regarding the peculiarities of the British approach to warfare.[30]

The second half of the 90s witnessed a 'cultural turn' in the historical study of war. Military historians turned their attention to the social construction of military reality, arguing from different perspectives that collective memoirs and imagination shape the way nations experience, prepare for and conduct war.[31] These studies provided credible analyses of how memory and imagination regarding national communities' war experience contribute to shape the states' approaches to warfare.[32] This trend intensified at the turn of the century, with a wide range of books, articles, and papers employing the concept and ascribing specific ways of war to different countries, ethnic or religious communities.[33]

The late 1970s saw the introduction of the concept of 'strategic culture' in political science.[34] In the years to come, the evolution of studies in strategic

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[27] Basil H. Liddell Hart, *The British Way in Warfare* (London: Faber & Faber, 1932).

[28] As early as 1937 Alfred Vagts was exploring the cultural roots of militarism, Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism* (New York, 1937; rev. ed., 1959); Adda B. Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1960).

[29] Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1973); B. M. Linn, 'The American Way of War Revisited', *Journal of Military History* 66 (2002), 501-533.

[30] Michael Howard, 'The British Way in Warfare: A Reappraisal', in M. Howard (ed.) *The Causes of War and Other Essays, (*London: Unwin, 1984).

[31] John A. Lynn, 'The Embattled Future of Academic Military History', *Journal of Military History*, 61 (1997), 782, 787; Jeremy Black, 'War and the World, 1450–2000', *Journal of Military History*, 63 (1999), 669; Jeremy Black, *War: Past, Present and Future* (Stroud: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 1.

[32] Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000); Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000); Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000); Aaron L. Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America's Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000).

[33] Dennis Showalter, 'From Deterrent to Doomsday Machine: The German Way of War, 1871-1914', *The Journal of Military History,* 64 (2000), 679-710; R.W. Harrison, *The Russian Way of War: Operational Art, 1904-1940,* (Lawrence, KS: Kansas UP, 2001); Peter Layton, 'The New Arab Way of War', US Naval Institute *Proceedings,* 129/3 (March 2003), 62-65; Antulio Echevarria, *Toward an American Way of War* (Carisle: US Army War College: 2004); Andrew Bacevich, 'The Islamic Way of War', *The American Conservative,* 5/17 (2006); Thomas Mahnken, *Technology and The American Way of War since 1945* (New York: Columbia UP, 2008); Keith Neilson & Greg Kennedy, *The British Way in Warfare: Power and the International System, 1856-1956* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

[34] Jack Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Nuclear Options* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1977), R-2154-A.

culture would have passed through at least three generations of scholars each of which conceptualized strategic culture in its own way.[35]

Works by Ken Booth and Colin Gray focused on the connections between cultural factors and security policy choices, suggesting that distinctive 'national styles' in strategic affairs were based on historical and anthropological roots. Incorporating technology, geography, traditions, historical and strategic practices, political culture and psychology, the idea of a 'national style' in strategic affairs adopted by Gray appeared under many aspects reminiscent of the concept of 'national way of war' as employed by historians.[36]

Gray further refined the concept of strategic culture in 1999, defining it as 'the persisting (though not eternal) socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind, and preferred methods of operation that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security community that has had a necessarily unique historical experience'. Strategic culture incorporated beliefs, attitudes and behavioral patterns integral to the body politic independently from the circumstances of particular conjunctures, thus representing the context, 'the milieu within which strategy [wa]s debated'. [37]

The second and third waves of scholarly work on strategic culture developed throughout the 1990s, intersecting with the rise of 'constructivism' in International Relations (IR). Criticizing the contextual all-encompassing definition of strategic culture elaborated in the first wave of cultural studies, and emphasizing its subjectivity and difficulty of operationalization, constructivist scholars attempted to refine the methodological tools elaborated by the first generation as well as to provide clearer and more parsimonious concepts.[38] At the same time the analytical focus moved from the presentist realm of Soviet and American nuclear doctrines and strategies, which during the Cold War had represented the main scholarly focus of security studies, to approach the study of the organization and conduct of warfare in different historical periods and areas of the world.[39] This new wave of 'culturalist' work showed how state action regarding military force is

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[35] Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Thinking about Strategic Culture', *International Security*, 19/4 (1995), 36–43.

[36] Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1981); Colin S. Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National Style* (Lanham: Hamilton Press, 1986), 35-37; Colin S. Gray, 'National Style in Strategy: The American Example,' *International Security*, 6 (1981), 21–47.

[37] Colin Gray, 'Strategic culture as context: the first generation of theory strikes back', *Review of International Studies*, 25 (1999); and 'Out of the Wilderness, Prime-Time for Strategic Culture', *Comparative Strategy*, 26/1 (2007), 1-20.

[38] Among the most influential works Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia UP, 1996); Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Thinking about Strategic Culture', 32-64.

[39] Stephen Peter Rosen, *Societies and Military Power: India and Its Armies* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1996) and 'Military Effectiveness: Why Society Matters', *International Security* 19/4 (Spring 1995), 5-31; Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997).

shaped by beliefs collectively held either by policymakers and military elites (strategic culture) and by military organizations (organizational culture).[40]

As historian Lawrence Sondhaus has stressed, the authors of the foundational works of the literature on national ways of war and strategic culture introduced these concepts decades apart, for different audiences, inspired by different motives. And yet through the years no significant 'contamination' between the two field of study took place. Military historians largely ignored works on strategic culture by political scientists; similarly, works by strategists and political scientists only lately acknowledged the relevance of related historical works, incorporating works on 'national ways of war' in their sources.[41]

In the mid-90s cross-disciplinary studies began to breach the wall between these two mutually exclusive bodies of scholarship.[42] In the following years the conceptual analogies between the two were stressed in several works discussing the 'cultural' perspective in war studies, with the prevalent conclusion that the idea of distinct strategic cultures pertaining to different geographically-based communities could be viewed as a sort of refinement of much older idea of 'way of war'.[43] More precisely these works came to acknowledge that the concepts of 'way of war' and 'strategic culture' are complementary inasmuch as a country's way of war could be viewed as both a subset and a product of its overall strategic culture.[44]

Research Objective

This research studies how cultural factors contributed to shape a distinctive Israeli 'way of war' in counter-insurgency and analyzes to what extent Israel managed to adapt it in order to cope with the challenges posed by Hamas' insurgency. Expanding on previous scholarly research on both the Israeli strategic culture and the conduct of counter-insurgency warfare, the research intends to provide a portrait of the Israeli 'way of war' in counter-insurgency; trace the interaction of the various material and cultural variables in the evolution (and adaptation) of the Israeli practice of counter-insurgency in the period 1987-2005; provide an analytically informed historical account of the conflict between Israel and Hamas.

In the last years the scholarly literature on counter-insurgency, has produced several contributions focused on the nexus between cultural factors and approaches to the conduct of counter-insurgency operations. These scholarly works, often adopting a comparative perspective, showed how, although it is possible to discern certain organizational, tactical, operational and strategic

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[40] Theo Farrell, 'Constructivist Security Studies: Portrait of a Research Program', *International Studies Review*, 4/1 (Spring 2002), 53.

[41] Lawrence Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of War* (London: Routledge, 2006), 3.

[42] Alan Macmillan, 'Strategic Culture and National Ways in Warfare: The British Case', *RUSI Journal,* 140 (1995), 33-8; Lawrence Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of War*, 2.

[43] Jeremy Black, *War and The Cultural Turn* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012), 3, 158, 164.

[44] Colin Mclnnes, *Hot War, Cold War: The British Army's Way in Warfare, 1945-95* (London: Brassey's, 1995), 3.

features independently from the agent, political actors ultimately give birth to different 'models' of counter-insurgency, placing distinctive emphasis on particular aspects and operational configurations.[45]

Analogously, this research will be based on an interpretive employment of the framework of 'strategic culture'. It will not limit itself, paraphrasing Peter Katzenstein, to place the unique Israeli approach to counter-insurgency in the equally unique Israeli strategic culture,[46] but rather it will make use of the frameworks of 'way of war' and 'strategic culture' as analytical tools to develop a sense for 'the architecture' of the historical evolution of the Israeli counter-insurgency vis-à-vis Hamas. Culture will be thus employed as an ideational set allowing to filter and correctly interpret empirical data in the study of the Israeli approach to asymmetric warfare.[47] This will in turn provide a better understanding of the features, rationales and goals of the distinctive Israeli approach to counter-insurgency as deployed to fight Hamas, as well as the changes intervened in it in adapting to the challenges of war.

Theory will be employed as an 'engine of research', to develop an analytical perspective fruitful for describing, explaining and understanding through empirical research the problem this study is concerned with.[48] As Colin Gray has concluded, the utility of the concept of 'strategic culture' lies mainly in how it can help us understand observed behavior in the present. It follows that for the historian of war such concept offers a useful framework for understanding the recent (as well as the more distant) past.[49]

On the base of this approach the research will refer to the definition of strategic culture provided by the so-called 'first generation', that is the context, the ideational milieu or sphere of debate of strategic action, as consolidated through formative periods within a particular geographically-based community.[50]

Culture not only expresses 'comparative advantage', that is contribute to define the complex of preferred means and methods of waging warfare

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[45] John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Richard Downie, *Learning from Conflict: the US Military in Vietnam, El Salvador and the Drug War* (Westport: Praeger, 1998); Robert Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror: Military Culture and Irregular War* (Westport: Praeger, 2006) and 'Russia in Afghanistan and Chechnya: Military Strategic Culture and the Paradoxes of Asymmetric Conflict' US War College Strategic Studies Institute Monograph, February 2003.

[46] Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, NY Cornell University Press, 1996), 7-8.

[47] Colin S. Gray, 'In praise of strategy', *Review of International Studies*, 29/2 (2003), 294; Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana Press,1993), 5.

[48] Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006), 32-33.

[49] Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 132-3, 135-6; Lawrence Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of War*, 13.

[50] Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley, 'Introduction: On Strategy', in Williamson Murray, Mcgregor Knox, and Alvin Z. Bernstein (eds.), *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States and War* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1996), ch. 1; Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy,* 131; Jeremy Black, *War and The Cultural Turn* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012), 117; Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004) 17-18; In cultural approaches to strategic studies the concept of 'strategic culture' is employed for the national level of analysis, that is in reference to beliefs about the use of force shared by a national community of military and civilian leaders, see Theo Farrell, 'Culture and Military Power', *Review of International Studies*, 24 (1998), 407–416.

characteristic of a specific community, affecting actual warfighting, but influences also the process whereby a certain military conduct is perceived as appropriate, specific principles and objectives are prioritized over others, the political aims which may be achieved through the agency of war are defined and the very concept of victory understood. At the same time, culture operates as context 'all the way down' and continually gives meaning to material factors.[51] Military and policy-makers are therefore not indifferent to variations in structure and external conditions, but they perceive them in their specific cultural way. Culture guides and influences the very perception of material changes from the wider strategic environment down to the battlefield, and the very responses provided by military organizations to the contingencies of war.[52]

Scholarly studies emphasized how employing strategic culture as analytical framework entails some difficulties.[53] Historian John A. Lynn has in fact stressed how the cultural approach may lead to replace facts with a powerful, seductive and inescapable logic, in this way rewarding speculation.[54] Similar concerns were echoed by Jeremy Black, who claimed that the clarity of analysis provided by the employment of this framework has not always been associated with awareness in historical knowledge gaps, or understanding of the variety and nuance that should characterize academic work.[55] *Caveats* were voiced also in the realm of political science, where growing awareness of the inadequacy of single analytical paradigms has lead several constructivist scholars to advocate the search for common ontological, epistemological and methodological grounds with realism.[56]

In order to avoid a deterministic use of the concepts of 'culture' and 'way of war' and account for the complexity and subtleties of the historical period under scrutiny, the research will consider 'strategic culture' as an intervening variable and will interrelate it with the process of adaptation to the challenges of war on the part of the military.

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[51] Stuart Poore, 'What is the Context? A Reply to the Gray-Johnston Debate on Strategic Culture', *Review of International Studies* 29/2 (2003), 279–284; Colin S. Gray, 'In praise of strategy',293.

[52] Jeremy Black, *War and The Cultural Turn*, 164; Williamson Murray, *Military Adaption in War,* 6.Theo Farrell, 'Improving in War: Military Adaptation and the British in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006-2009', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33/4 (2010), 567- 594.

[53] John Shy, 'The Cultural Approach to the History of War', The Journal of Military History, 57/5, Proceedings of the Symposium on "The History of War as Part of General History" at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton, New Jersey, (October 1993), 13-26.

[54] John A. Lynn, 'Problems and Complexities of A Cultural Approach to Military History', Paper presented at the 118th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, January, 10, 2004.

[55] Jeremy Black, 'Determinisms and Other Issues', *The Journal of Military History*, 68/4 (October 2004), 1217-1232; Patrick Porter, 'Good Anthropology, Bad History: The Cultural Turn in Studying War', *Parameters*, 37/2 (Summer 2007), 45-58.

[56] Jennifer Sterling-Folker 'Realism and the Constructivist Challenge: Rejecting, Reconstructing, or Rereading', *International Studies Review*, 4/1 (Spring 2002), 73-97; J. Samuel Barkin, 'Realist Constructivism', *International Studies Review*, 5/3 (September 2003), 325-342; Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, Daniel H. Nexon, Jennifer Sterling-Folker, Janice BiallyMattern, Richard Ned Lebow, J. Samuel Barkin, 'Bridging the Gap: Toward a Realist-Constructivist Dialogue', *International Studies Review*, 6/2 (June 2004), 337-352; John Glenn, 'Realism versus Strategic Culture: Competition and Collaboration?' International Studies Review (2009) 11, 523–551.

No thorough definition of the concept of 'adaptation' in wartime exists in strategic studies or military history. The process of wartime adaptation has in fact been prevalently analyzed as a component of broader top-down military changes, mostly military innovations.[57] By contrast, when analyzed as a bottom-up process, it has borne a distinctly tactical focus.[58]

Drawing inspiration from a recent publication by military historian Williamson Murray,[59] this research will make use of a broader concept of 'adaptation' encompassing all the levels of war. As employed in biology and anthropology, the concept of 'adaptation refers to an 'organismic or systemic response to parametric variation which acts to maintain homeostasis'.[60] Crucial to such definition are structural or behavioral modifications in response to pressures from the environment in order to fit changing external conditions.[61] Thus, transposed in the realm of war, adaptation concerns adjustments in practices, processes, or structures on the part of military organizations in anticipation or response to external changes.[62] In fact, military policies are processed through national and organizational cultures, but ultimately subject to constraints posed by material capabilities and inhibited or advanced by external factors (and actors).[63] Consequently 'ways of war' are not static, but malleable: they are 'in a continual state of self-evaluation', and are constantly adapted to external pressures through a certain level of 'fine-tuning'.[64]

This research calls therefore for a systems perspective envisioning material conditions and cultural patterns as affecting each other through complex

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[57] Adam Grissom, 'The Future of Military Innovation Studies', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 29/5 (2006), 920-924. Historical studies of military adaptation includes: Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics on the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack, 1916–18* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP 1994); Michael D. Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy: How GIs Fought the War in Europe, 1944–1945* (Lawrence: UP of Kansas 1994). Studies of military innovation and top-down changes: Theo Farrell and Terry Terriff (eds.), *The Sources of Military Change* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner 2002); Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP 1991); Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP 1984); Deborah D. Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP 1994); Peter Trubowitz, Emily O. Goldman, and Edward Rhodes (eds.), *The Politics of Strategic Adjustment: Ideas, Institutions, and Interests* (New York: Columbia UP 1999).

[58] Eliot A. Cohen, 'Change and Transformation in Military Affairs', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 27/3 (2004), 400-401; James A. Russell, *Innovation Transformation and War*, 29; Theo Farrell, 'Improving in War: Military Adaptation and the British in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006-2009', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33/4 (2010), 567- 594; Philipp Rotmann, David Tohn, and Jaron Wharton, 'Learning Under Fire: Progress and Dissent in the US Military', *Survival* 51/4 (Aug.–Sept. 2009), 31–48; Gian P. Gentile, 'Learning, Adapting and the Perils of the New Counter-insurgency', *Survival* 51/6 (Dec. 2009–Jan. 2010), 189–93; Robert T. Foley, Stuart Griffin, Helen McCartney, "Transformation in Contact': Learning the Lessons of Modern War', *International Affairs* 87/2 (2011) 253–270.

[59] Williamson Murray, *Military Adaptation in War: With Fear of Change* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2011).

[60] Alexander Alland Jr., 'Adaptation', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 4/1, (October 1975) 59-73.

[61] Alexander Alland Jr. & Bonnie McCay, 'The Concept of Adaptation in Biological and Cultural Evolution', in John J. Honigman (ed.), *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (Chicago: Rand Mcnally College Publishing Company, 1975), 44.

[62] John C. Tillson, et al., *Learning to Adapt to Asymmetric Threats* (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses 2005), 5.

[63] Colin Gray Out of the Wilderness 7-8.

[64] Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 17-18, 48; John Glenn, 'Realism versus Strategic Culture', 541.

feedback relationships: culture shapes material goals and influences choices and practices, and material conditions and constraints shape in turn culture and ways of war. The deep functional interdependence of war, material capability and culture make sure that the effect determined by each element can be understood only in the context of the system as a whole.[65]

Gaps of Knowledge

In the last years the literature on the Israeli approach to asymmetric warfare has known significant development, albeit in comparison with the literature on Israel's 'conventional' wars it is still a somehow under-researched topic and much still remains to be scrutinized. An examination of the literature on the topic under scrutiny underlines gaps of knowledge in both the study of the Israeli strategic culture and the conduct of counter-insurgency operations in the period 1987-2005.

With regard to the study of the Israeli strategic culture, although much has been written and scattered remarks on culture are present in the most relevant analyses of the Israeli strategy and military operations, only a single systematic study of the Israeli strategic culture exists and it is not directly related to the actual conduct of warfare. By the way, none of the studies on the topic has systematically reviewed the impact of strategic culture as the key variable accounting for the Israeli conduct of counter-insurgency operations.

Even more conspicuous are the gaps concerning the study of the Israeli counter-insurgency. Scholarly works on the topic did not concern specifically Hamas and by contrast had a general approach, mostly aimed at discussing the Israeli counter-insurgency during the two Palestinian uprisings (1987 and 2000) or, in the case of those concerning the Oslo years, aimed at examining how Israel conducted counter-terrorism against the background of the peace accords. By contrast, the choice to focus the analysis on the sole Hamas over an extended period of time will help to better appreciate the key aspects of the Israeli approach, particularly at the strategic level, as well as to more accurately assess the long-term impact of the Israeli counter-insurgency.

Moreover, the Israeli approach to counter-insurgency has never been thoroughly examined through any theoretical prism. In fact, compared to other contexts of asymmetric warfare, the Israeli conflict with the Palestinians has been considered almost invariably an *unicum*, a case with several peculiar features which render it not properly amenable to a theoretically-informed study. Cognizant of the undeniable peculiarities of the Israeli case, this research is nonetheless based on the assumption that they do not suffice to qualify it as unique. By contrast, a persuasive case can be made that the conflict between Israel and Hamas shares several distinct characteristics with many other historical examples and as such it is amenable, with appropriate changes, to an analysis based on the paradigm 'insurgent/counterinsurgent'.

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[65] Jack L. Snyder, 'Anarchy and Culture: Insights from the Anthropology of War', *International Organization*, 56/1 (Winter 2002), 12.

Consequently, categories and ideal-types drawn from theoretical studies of counter-insurgency will be employed to provide analytical guidelines in the cadre of an integrated 'actor-centric' theoretical framework, helpful in framing the case within the broader scholarly debate, while at the same time cautious in deriving general sets of prescriptions ultimately inapplicable to it.[66]

Methodology

Studies in strategic culture lack a well-defined methodological design. Security communities may in fact share beliefs, have established mechanisms and procedures that, though consolidated, do not play a key role in the implementation of security and military policy. Moreover, in light of the often contested character of national interests, the range of debates on national security and the employment of force, and the roles of politics and contingency, strategic culture must be assumed as dynamic and is best analyzed by referring it to particular periods.[67]

Coherently with the most relevant literature, in order to identify the parameters of strategic culture, the research will draw from three main pools: national culture; characteristics of policy-making mechanisms and institutional dynamics in the field of security and military affairs; organizational cultures of defense institutions.[68] The first pool incorporates collective memory and experiences, common values and accepted norms of behavior. As with regard to the second 'pool', it is concerned with how the institutional structure and dynamics of decision-making could influence the way the actors involved interact and define the degree of power that different groups of actors have over security and military policy.[69] This is of particular relevance to the study of asymmetric warfare in light of the fact that civil/military relations tend to strain in the course of counter-insurgency campaigns. Finally the research will draw on the literature about military organizational culture, as 'a system of knowledge, of learned standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting'.[70]

As often underlined, the employment of strategic culture as analytical framework entails the analysis of primary sources. For this purpose the

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[66] Kelly M. Greenhill and Paul Staniland, 'Ten Ways to Lose at Counterinsurgency', *Civil Wars*, 9/4, 403-406; David J. Kilcullen and Sebastian L. Gorka, 'An Actor-centric Theory of War: Understanding the Difference Between *COIN* and *Counterinsurgency*', *Joint Force Quarterly*, 60 (2011), 14-18.

[67] Jeremy Black, *War and The Cultural Turn*, 86.

[68] Jeanie Johnson, *Strategic Culture: Refining the Theoretical Construct* (Defense Reduction Agency Advanced Systems and Concept Office, October 2006). 7-11.

[69] Kimberly Zisk, *Engaging the Enemy: Organization Theory and Soviet Military Innovation*, 1955-1991 (Ithaca: Cornell, 1993); Deborah D. Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1994).

[70] Edgar H. Schein, 'How Culture Forms, Develops, And Changes', in Ralph H. Kilmann, Mary J. Saxton,And Roy Serpa (eds.) *Gaining Control Of the Corporate Culture*, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1985); Edgar H.Schein, 'Organizational Culture', *American Psychologist*, 45/2 (1990), 112 Andrew M. Pettigrew, 'On Studying Organizational Cultures', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24/4 (1979), 574; Yvan Allaire and Mihaela Firsirotu, 'Theories of Organizational Culture', *Organization Studies*, 5/3 (1984), 198.

research will make use of a selection of publications from the IDF professional journal *Maarachot* and related publications from the security community. Members of the intelligence community, senior and high ranking IDF officers, including Chief of Staffs and future prominent politicians currently writes on this publication. This, in conjunction with the fact that the military establishment plays a central role in formulating the Israeli security and military policy, make the consultation of *Maarachot* essential.

As with regard to the re-enactment of the adaptation process, the research will partition the period under scrutiny (1987-2005) into three different phases, each characterized by shifts in the strategic environment: the 1987 intifada (1987-1991), the Oslo peace accords period (1992-2000) and the al-Aqsa intifada (2001-2005). For each single period the dynamics of interaction between material conditions and cultural patterns and the relative feedback relationships will be analyzed at the three levels of war (tactical, operational and strategic). In this way the research aims to draw the analysis of each period under scrutiny into a more complex model that allows for broader inferences and conclusions.

This kind of research design suggests as particularly appropriate the employment of the 'process-tracing' methodology. Process-tracing involves 'theoretically informed historical research to reconstruct the sequence of events leading to an outcome'.[71] This methodology provides a middle ground for historians interested in historical explanations and political scientists who are sensitive to the complexities of historical events but are also interested in theorizing about categories of cases. In fact, in order to explain particular outcomes the researcher is required to point 'to the inherent complexity and contingency of processes of change in which human subjects are involved',[72] and to take into account complex forms of causality identifying the outcome as flowing from 'the convergence of several conditions, [...] variables or causal chains'.[73] Primary sources in Hebrew will therefore be corroborated by memoirs, personal accounts and interviews of people directly involved in the events under examination. Whenever primary sources are not directly available the research will take advantage of the opportunity to elaborate on secondary sources, particularly those relevant with regard to primary Hebrew sources.

The research will be structured in five chapters: the first will illustrate the Israeli approach to war and the use of force, the conceptualization of the conflict with the Palestinians and the relevant features of the Israeli strategic culture. The second, third and fourth chapters will provide historically informed analyses respectively of: the 1987 intifada, the Oslo years, the al-

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[71] Theo Farrell, 'Constructivist Security Studies', 61-62; Lawrence Freedman, 'International Security: Changing Targets', *Foreign Policy*, Issue 110 (Spring 1998).
[72] Colin Hay, *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002) 48.
[73] Alexander George & Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 214; Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994), 226-227.

Aqsa intifada. The research will conclude with an overview of change and continuity in the Israeli approach and a balance of the effectiveness of the Israeli counter-insurgency as implemented in the fight against Hamas.

The Israeli Strategic Culture

The level of analysis to be adopted in cultural approaches to strategic studies, or more simply the issue of where exactly culture can be located and seen in action, represents a paramount concern of scholarly studies adopting such a framework.[74]

In a relevant study of some years ago, Stephen Peter Rosen demonstrated the key role played by military organizations, rather than the civilian leaderships, in choosing for themselves how they should organize for and conduct war.[75] The validity of this conclusion has been confirmed by successive scholarly works which stressed how the military organizations' influence over national military strategy is even likely to increase in wartime, due to their monopoly on expertise.[76] The conclusions drawn from these important studies seem therefore to suggest as appropriate an analytical focus on the organizational level, that is concentrating on the culture of the armed forces, when analyzing issues such as military adaptation or counterinsurgency. Such an approach however results only partially applicable to the present study.

Sociologist Uri Ben-Eliezer argued that the interrelation among the military, society, and politics in Israel makes sure that military affairs and war are expropriated from the narrow professional domain of practitioners.[77] This can be considered a consequence of the fact that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is prevalently a conscripts' army and thus retains permeable boundaries with the civil society.

In light of such a nexus, focusing the analysis on the organizational culture of the armed forces could prove rather narrow and potentially lead to overlook key factors, as the sources of the most relevant Israeli beliefs regarding the concept of security and the use of force are to be found in the Israeli society at large rather than exclusively in the armed forces.

On the basis of this evidence, this research adopts the broader framework of strategic culture, focusing the analysis on the beliefs and practices concerning the use of force shared by the national community, conceived as comprising not only the elite political and military voices within the national strategic

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[74] Theo Farrell, 'Culture and Military Power', *Review of International Studies*, 24 (1998), 408.

[75] Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY, 1989).

[76] Elizabeth Kier, 'Culture and Military Doctrine: France Between the Wars', *International Security*, 19/4 (1995), 74; Kimberley Martin Zisk, *Engaging the Enemy: Organization Theory and Soviet Military Innovation, 1955–1991* (Princeton, NJ, 1993); Deborah D. Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars* (Ithaca, NY, 1994).

[77] Uri Ben-Eliezer, *The Making of Israeli Militarism* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1998).

community but also taking into account the general contextual milieu of the broader public sphere.[78]

It has been suggested that the Yishuv (the Jewish community in the Palestine mandate) resembled under some aspects a revolutionary movement, expanding its territorial borders, progressively integrating itself into almost every aspect of life and imposing politics upon the developing society. Such a process runs counter to the most common patterns of political development identified in political science, whereby political systems emerge from within societies.[79] As a consequence, the Israeli culture was shaped by political behavior much more than by cultural and social customs.[80]

Such an evidence renders particularly appropriate, with regard to the analysis of the Israeli strategic culture a framework centered on the historical processes through which the Israeli strategic culture emerged and consolidated. Scholars agree on the fact that, as a distinctive body of beliefs, attitudes and practices regarding the use of force, strategic cultures arise through unique protracted historical processes and are shaped through formative periods.[81] Such formative periods are crucial in defining core elements in the perception of the external environment, such as its own position in the geostrategic context, the threshold of threat perceived as legitimately allowing the use of force and the values to be secured through its use. The primordial, formative period of the Israeli strategic culture can be considered (approximately) the lapse of time between 1936 and 1956. It is in fact in the geostrategic context of this period that the core values to be secured, protected and promoted were first articulated by the Zionists and the foundational convictions regarding the use of force took shape. This chapter intends to show how the forging of the Israeli strategic culture was deeply influenced by the concatenation of events comprised approximately between 1936 and 1956: the constant need to fight in order to protect the settled lands under increasingly trying conditions, the deportation of the Jewish people and the Holocaust in Europe, the 1948-1949 war and, later on, the low-intensity conflict to settle the borders.

The analysis of the Israeli strategic culture will therefore refer to security thinking, institutional and organizational development for policy implementation, working arrangements between the political and military elites, and patterns of interaction between the political and the military echelons. The analysis will be partitioned in three sub-levels of factors: the

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[78] Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 23.

[79] Amir Bar-Or, 'The Making of Israel's Political-Militarty Culture' in Gabriel Sheffer and Oren Barak (eds.), *Militarism and Israeli Society* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 2010), 262.

[80] Itzhak Galnoor, *Steering the Polity: Communication and Politics in Israel* (Sage: Los Angeles, 1982).

[81] Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy* (New York: Oxford UP, 1999), 131, 143; Austin Long, *First War Syndrome: Military Culture, Professionalization and Counterinsurgency Doctrine* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, PhD Dissertation, 2010); Stine Heiselberg, *Pacifism or Activism: Towards a Common Strategic Culture within the European Security and Defence Policy?* IIS Working Paper 2003/4, Copenhagen: Institute for International Studies, 8.

foundational elements, the security standpoints, and the strategic practices. Each cluster of factors will be defined and explained.

Perceiving The Context: The Foundational Elements

Already in the 50s, hypothesizing about the nature of the relationship between people and the environment in the realm of international politics, the scholarly literature coined the terms 'operational' and 'psychological' milieu.[82] The perception of the context, or operational milieu, on the part of a specific, geographically-located, security community defines the basic elements of its psychological milieu, and give it its core beliefs and characteristics: these could be defined as the foundational elements of a strategic culture. The foundational elements set the outermost parameters of a state's realm of possible strategic behavior, defining its sphere of legitimacy and providing strategic communities with a bounded framework of reference and a repertoire of goals that ultimately shape their conception of the strategic environment. The foundational elements of a strategic culture represents the pillars over which the perception of the external context is constructed.

Survival Under Threat

The entire history of the Jewish people is interspersed between intermittent waves of physical violence. Popular Jewish historiography has consistently portrayed the relation of the Jew to his environment in terms of a lamb among wolves, an eternal victim of his neighbors' violence. That clearly explains why scholars have referred to the self-perception and attitude of Jews and later Israelis as *am levadad yishkon*, a 'people dwelling alone'.[83] Such a motif, consolidated in the Diaspora out of a long history of negative experiences that left their mark on the Jewish psyche, was subsequently transposed in the new geopolitical reality of the Yishuv.

From the Roman period through the Middle Ages, the Reformation and the Industrial Revolution Jews have been the objects of persecutions almost everywhere.[84] Approximately from 1881 (continuing up to 1921) *pogroms* and anti-Jewish violence broke out in Czarist Russia (where the majority of European Jewry inhabited) with increasing frequency, touching almost any generation of young Jews and culminating in the atrocities of the civil war which ensued the Bolshevik revolution in 1918. The Jewish *fin-de-siècle* generation came to realize that pogroms were a recurring, indeed almost

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[82] Harold & Margaret Sprout, *Man-Milieu Relationship Hypotheses in the Context of International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1956) and 'Environmental Factors in the Study of International Polities', *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* 1/4 (1957), 309-28; David Criekemans, 'Where 'Geopolitics' and 'Foreign Policy Analysis' Once Met: The Work of Harold and Margaret Sprout and its Continued Relevance Today', Paper Presented at the ISA Annual Convention, 2009.

[83] Asher Arian, 'A People Apart: Coping with the National Security Problems in Israel', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 33 (1989), 603.

[84] Paul Grosser & Edwin Halperin, *Anti-Semitism: The causes and effect of a Prejudice* (Secaucus, NY: Citadel Press, 1979).

permanent, phenomenon; as a consequence, the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed an increasing feeling of mounting threat to Jewish physical survival and the consolidation of an existential anxiety in the attitude of the Jewish Diaspora to the external environment.[85]

The spread of the nationalist ideology of Zionism and the intensification of Jewish migration to *Eretz Israel* (Hebrew for the Land of Israel) did not substantially modify such perception of insecurity.[86] The crucial difference between the condition of the *Diaspora* and the return to Zion, the *Homeland*, was supposed to be a brand new sense of security, and yet it turned out that even in what was to become the Jewish *Homeland*, security was nowhere. The image of a new safe existence in the Yishuv fragmented quite rapidly, leaving room for the emergence of an harsh reality: the Jews had not succeeded in exchanging a life under continuous physical threat for a secure existence, rather they exchanged a situation of grave threat for another.[87]

Already in 1911, anti-Jewish violence was spreading throughout the whole territory of Palestine.[88] More extended violence broke out during the al-Nebi Musa celebrations in April 1920 and for a second time on May 1, 1921, lasting for several days. Such events shocked the Yishuv and were burdened by the Palestinian Jewish community with its previous outlook on the world through the application of old models of Jewish-Gentile relations to the reality of Palestine. The central component in creating the analogy between pogroms in the Diaspora and riots in Palestine was the stance of the British authorities as perceived by the Jews, that is their almost complete disregard for the exposure of the Jewish community to violence.[89]

The vulnerability of the Yishuv in terms of security appeared definitively confirmed in the course of the August 1929 riots, which caught up the Jewish community in a wave of violent disturbances that swept through the whole country. The apprehensions generated by the riots were to be further aggravated by the magnitude of the Arab revolt of 1936-1939 and its overlap with events unfolding in Europe.[90] The perspective of facing recurrent waves of violence, by that time irrefutable, in conjunction with the fear that the Jewish community in Palestine might be completely isolated from the

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[85] Ehud Luz, 'Through the Jewish Historical Prism: Overcoming a Tradition of Insecurity', in Daniel Bar-Tal, Dan Jacobson, Aharon Klieman (eds.), *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience* (London: Jai Press, 1998), 60-62;

[86] Shlomo Avineri , *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981).

[87] Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1992), 80.

[88] Neville Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 217.

[89] David Vital, *Zionism: The Formative Years* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 239-240.

[90] Yigal Eyal , 'The Arab Revolt 1936-1939: A Turning Point in the Struggle for Palestine', in Mordechai Bar-On (ed.), *Never-Ending Conflict – Israeli Military History* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2004), 23-25, 35.

Diaspora and left on its own to face a clash with the Arabs was from that moment on irreversibly incorporated in the mentality of the Yishuv.[91]

The nine years between September 1939 and May 1948 were perhaps the most traumatic in Jewish history. In a relatively short lapse of time the Jews were struck by World War II, the deportation of European Jewry, increasing problems with refugees fleeing to the Middle East, an intensifying struggle to establish a brand new state culminating in the War of Independence and eventually the reality of the Holocaust. Merging all together in an extremely brief and concentrated span of time, these events left a strong imprinting even a on people already familiar with hardships such as hunger, refugees, war and pogroms.[92]

Since the first years of World War II the perspective of total physical annihilation, either by the future German occupiers or at Arab hands in Palestine, spread within the Yishuv. The events in Europe and the Middle East increasingly appeared as two sides of the coin: Arab attitudes and behaviors were in fact perceived as another direct expression of the world's hostility.[93] Scholars have generally labeled this self-perception of being under constant attack as 'siege-mentality', namely 'a belief held by group members stating that the rest of the world has highly negative behavioral intentions toward them'.[94]

The crystallization of the 'siege mentality' in this momentous period of Jewish history is clearly discernible in the public declarations of the leaders of the Yishuv in 1945, after Great Britain halted Jewish immigration to Palestine, adopting a posture increasingly perceived as profoundly hostile by the Zionists.[95] Approximately in the same period, details about the Holocaust became known, transforming the prospect of complete physical annihilation of the Jewish people from an ominous prospect into an integral part of the conceivably possible, which subsequently grew into a central component within the collective psychology of the Jewish people.[96]

Although the balance of forces was actually far from being utterly unfavorable to the Yishuv, the 1948 war was perceived by the Palestinian Jews as an unequal one between a Jewish 'David' and an Arab 'Goliath' in which an infant Jewish state fought a desperate battle for survival against

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[91] Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (New York: Shocken Books, 2003), 241-298; Anita Shapira, *Land and Power* , 222.

[92] Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The war against the Jews, 1933-1945* (New York: Holt Rinhehart and Winston, 1975).

[93] Yehoshafat Harkabi, *Palestinians and Israel* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974), 174-175.

[94] Daniel Bar-Tal and Dikla Antebi, 'Siege Mentality in Israel', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 16/3 (1992), 251- 75 and 'Beliefs about Negative Intentions of the World: A Study of the Israeli Siege Mentality', *Political Psychology*, 13/4 (1992), 633 – 45; Avner Yaniv, 'A Question of Survival: The Military and Politics under Siege', in Avner Yaniv (ed.), *National Security and Democracy in Israel* (New York: Boulder, 1993).

[95] Jacob Coleman Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 232; 237-239; 256; Idith Zertal, *From Catastrophe to Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998)

[96] Howard F. Stein, 'The Holocaust and the Myth of the Past as History', *The Journal of Historical Review*, 14/ 5 (1994), 28-33; Dalia Ofer, 'The Past That Does Not Pass: Israelis and Holocaust Memory', *Israel Studies*, 14/1 (Spring 2009), 2-3; Dina Porat, *The Blue and the Yellow Stars of David: The Zionist Leadership in Palestine and the Holocaust, 1939-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990).

overwhelming odds.[97] In the lack of knowledge regarding the exact size of the contending armed forces (and overall national resources) the Jewish population in Palestine tended to hold a view of the conflict in rather simple numeric terms: the population of the Arab states was ten times greater than the Jewish population, therefore it was hard to imagine that the Arabs would not be capable to mobilize resources and field forces far superior to those that the Yishuv could muster.[98]

Ethno-religious Insularity and Isolation

Scholars have acknowledged the relative absence of the Arabs in Zionist discourse in general and in the shaping of the Israeli identity in particular.[99] From the inception of the Zionist enterprise, propaganda described the land to which Zionists were headed as something akin to desolate and forsaken. As Anita Shapira has noted, such attitude generated in the minds of the early settlers an image of 'virginity' of *Eretz Israel* as well as a diffused disregard among them toward the local Arab inhabitants.[100]

The reality of life for the early Zionists in Palestine did not contribute to falsify such an image. The prevalently Ashkenazi (born in central-eastern Europe) new settlers developed in fact very limited contacts with the Arabs in both functional and social terms, as they were mostly circumscribed to work relations with only certain strata of the Arab population, namely Fellahin and Bedouins.[101] This limitation in the nature and scope of Jewish-Arab relations fed among Jews stereotypes, whose incidence appear evident either in romanticized images of the Arab population or, more often, in reactions to the manifestations of hostility on the part of the Arab population. Similar to what happened with regard to the siege-mentality, attitudes acquired in the Diaspora were in fact transferred to the realities in Palestine. Consequently, the Jewish community often interpreted Arab hostility by applying concepts borrowed from European models of Jewish-Gentile relations, envisioning the enmity demonstrated by Arabs toward them as flowing from the same irrational sources that had given rise to anti-semitism.[102]

This phenomenon of alienation and lack of understanding even deepened with the coming of age of the first generation of Sabras, that is men and women born in the Yishuv. The vast majority of this 'Palestinian' generation

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[97] Uri Milstein, *History of Israel's War of Independence* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1996-1998), 62; Benny Morris, *1948 - A History of the First Arab-Israeli War* (New Haven: Yale UP), 8.

[98] Mordechai Bar-On, 'Remembering 1948 - Personal Recollections, Collective Memory, and the Search for "What Really Happened"'; Avi Shlaim, 'The Debate About 1948', in Benny Morris (ed.) *Making Israel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 37-40; 124-146.

[99] Robert Wistrich and David Ohana (eds.), *The Shaping of Israeli Identity: Myth, Memory and Trauma* (London: Frank Cass, 1995).

[100] Anita Shapira, *Land and Power*, 58.

[101] Michael Shalev, 'Jewish Organized Labor and the Palestinians: A Study of State/Society Relations in Israel', in Baruch Kimmerling (ed.), *The Israeli State and Society: Boundaries and Frontiers* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), 93-133. In the Middle East agricultural laborers and farmers are called Fellahin; Bedouins are part of a desert-living Arab ethnic group.

[102] Neville Mandel, 'Attempts at an Arab-Zionist Entente: 1913-1914', *Middle East Studies*, 1/3 (1965), 264.

grew up within a framework of Jewish existence in which the Arabs were rather marginal. Whereas in some of the oldest settlements the prevailing working conditions, in which labor was carried out side by side by Jews and Arabs, had helped to foster some sense of comradeship and mutual knowledge, the new generation did not benefit from such kind of experiences.[103] Settlements in which Arab workers were employed on an ample scale (and were therefore part of the everyday life of the settlers) started in fact to decline from the second half of the 30s.[104] In that period Arab workforce was mostly replaced by Jewish workers and extremely few points of contact remained between Zionists and Palestinian Arabs.[105] In mixed towns such as Haifa and Jerusalem, Jews mostly lived in separate neighborhoods and the Arabs were barely an integral component of their everyday life, not to mention places such as Tel Aviv, already a predominantly Jewish city. Little curiosity about the Arabs existed, something which appears confirmed by the fact that school textbooks included very little material about Arab culture and history or about Islam and its traditions, and Arabic was rarely taught in schools.[106] The lack of basic information and of a critical means of communication such as language did not stimulate further curiosity in the Arab/Islamic culture, rendering Jewish people even less prone to familiarize with Arab life-style, culture and habits.

Generally speaking, the first generation of Sabras was strongly affected by an habit of mind, a psychological disposition, to attribute a unique value to their world, the reality of life in the Yishuv, and a scarce proclivity to venture forth from the tiny shell of their immediate milieu of which the Arabs were not part.[107]

Such lack of interest and general disregard surfaces not only in the attitudes of the people at large but, from the early 20s, can be discerned also in ideology, political discourse and practice. The already evident cultural dissonance and scarce empathy between the Zionists and the Arab population of Palestine in conjunction with the rising antagonism translated, approximately from the time of the Balfour declaration (November, 2, 1917) in the articulation within the Zionist movement of increasingly 'separatist' positions with regard to the relations with the Arab world.[108]

Such instances were later elaborated by prominent Zionist Revisionist leader Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Describing his emotional attitude towards the Arabs as one of 'polite indifference' Jabotinsky expounded strongly separatist and

[103] Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

[104] Yosef Gorny *Zionism and the Arabs, 1882-1948: A Study of Ideology* (New York: Oxford UP, 1987), 175.

[105] Gershon Shafir *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989).

[106] Michael Assaf, *The Relations between Arabs and Jews in the Land of Israel,* 1860–1948 (Tel Aviv, 1970),48–56.

[107] Simha Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians* (London: Croom Helm, 1979) 180; Ruth Kark & Joseph B. Glass, 'The Jews in Eretz-Israel/Palestine: From Traditional Peripherality to Modern Centrality', *Israel Affairs*, 5/4 (1999), 73-107.

[108] Yosef Gorny *Zionism and the Arabs,* 156-178.

unilateralist positions, advocated the need, for the very success of the Zionist cause, to purposefully disregarding the mood of the local inhabitants.[109] In Jabotinsky's vision the realistic acknowledgment of the deep Arab hostility and its sources led in turn to conceive an extremely rigid strategy in which the 'other' was barely taken into account. Throughout the 30s the increasingly low level of attention paid to Arab attitudes grew more manifest in Zionist diplomacy and even as enemies, Arabs came to be regarded in a depersonalized and undifferentiated way.[110]

At the roots of this relatively diffused disregard for the local inhabitants Yosef Gorny has traced the feelings of weakness and vulnerability, rather than arrogance, pervading the Jews in their march towards becoming a national community. In conjunction with a strong sense of ethno-religious separateness clearly belonging to the cultural baggage of the Diaspora,[111] this perception of vulnerability made appear seclusion from the local inhabitants as a necessary condition for the growth and strengthening of the Jewish society.[112] Nevertheless, *de facto*, profound socio-cultural cleavages existed between the Zionists, the Arabs of Palestine and the population of the neighboring countries. None of them ever represented a yardstick for comparison or achievement for Zionists and it is worth stressing that Arab Palestine and the early 20th century Middle East did not represent under any point of view a culture or social model most Zionists identified with or wanted to integrate into.[113]

Except for some members of this generation,[114] the average Sabra had no room for the Arabs in his world: consequently from the 30s up to the 1948 war, Arabs simply were 'not hated, not loved, not taken into consideration - part of the landscape'.[115]

Eyn Breira

From the 1936-39 Arab Rebellion onwards consciousness of an inevitable confrontation between Jews and Arabs grew stronger, generating increasingly cynic and pessimistic patterns of thinking. An element of fatalism and

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[109] Valdimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky, 'The Arab Problem', in *Towards the State - Essays* (Rome: Institute for Higher Jewish Studies, 1983), 264; 267; 268 (Italian).

[110] Aharon Klieman, 'Zionist Diplomacy and Israeli Foreign Policy', *Jerusalem Quarterly,* No. 11 (Spring 1979), 105; Shmuel Almog (ed.), *Zionism and The Arabs: Essays* (Jerusalem: Historical Society of Israel, 1983), 18.

[111] Raymond Cohen, 'Culture Gets in the Way', *Middle East Quarterly* (September 1994).

[112] Yosef Gorny *Zionism and the Arabs, 1882-1948: A Study of Ideology* (New York: Oxford UP, 1987), 12; 23-27; 77.

[113] Elie Podeh, 'Rethinking Israel in the Middle East', 284.

[114] Several people from this generation lived in close contact with the Arab population, developing an intimate knowledge; prominent examples are Moshe Dayan and Yigal Allon, see Martin Van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive, a Critical History of the Israeli Defense Force,* (New York: Public Affairs Press, 2002), 65-70.

[115] Anita Shapira, *Visions in Conflict* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1989), 23–25 (Hebrew), quoted in Dina Porat, 'Forging Zionist Identity Prior to 1948', in Robert Rotberg (ed.), *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2006), 56.

determinism began to mature in the Zionists' perception of their enterprise: to be destined to fight.[116]

National consciousness had just started to spread among ordinary Arabs and antagonism was still occasionally mitigated by the benefits some of them derived from the Jewish presence, but overall hostility for the 'outsiders' tended to prevail.[117]

Even though some segments of the society of the Yishuv still clung to the conviction that the path to a Jewish state could be opened through diplomacy, the majority of its members was growing skeptical about it, and envisioned a grim future of fighting. The strife with the Arabs of Palestine increasingly came to be perceived as of an inter-communal nature: a confrontation between Jews seeking to establish their right of self-determination in a land they considered to be the cradle of their nation, and an indigenous Arab population which regarded the same land, where they have been present for centuries, as belonging to them.[118] The fact that the yearning for a homeland necessarily entailed the use of force opened the door to the fatalist prediction of a future of repeated clashes until the day Arabs finally acquiesced, accepting the presence of Jews in Palestine as an immutable reality. The slogan *eyn breira*, 'we have no choice', embodying such understanding, began to appear frequently in connection with the Jewish-Arab struggle.[119]

Such a perspective envisioned the state of war as inflicted on the Jewish nation, namely a continuation, in a new form, of the old, well-known pattern of Jewish existence, that is a struggle for survival in a hostile environment which made it necessary for the Jews to mobilize all their spiritual and material resources in order to survive.[120]

The crossing of local events with global developments and the deterioration in the situation of the Jewish people in Europe from the second half of the thirties imbued this process with a sense of urgency. The Holocaust subsequently added a tragic element, transforming the desire for a homeland from an abstract wish into an imperative for survival. The perception of an all-out assault threatening the very existence of the Jewish people and the fact that a Jewish political entity was supposed to provide asylum and protection to every Jew, contributed to a deeper and more desperate commitment to Jewish statehood, making the success of the Zionist enterprise an absolute imperative. If threatening the Zionist enterprise equated with a potential physical threat to any Jew the use of force came to be perceived as

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[116] Efraim Inbar, 'The 'No Choice War' Debate in Israel', in Efraim Inbar (ed.), *Israel's National Security: Issues and Challenges since the Yom Kippur War* (London: Routledge, 2008), 56.

[117] Yehoshafat Harkabi, *Arab Attitudes to Israel* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1972), 385.

[118] Mordechai Bar-On, 'Introduction', in Mordechai Bar-On (ed.), *Never-Ending Conflict*, 16; Shmuel Sandler, 'Toward a Theory of World Jewish Politics and Jewish Foreign Policy', *Hebraic Political Studies*, 2/3 (2007), 326-360.

[119] Anita Shapira, *Land and Power*, 222; Martin Van Creveld, *The Rise of Modern Israel* 61-63.

[120] Ofira Seliktar, *New Zionism and the Foreign Policy System in Israel* (Beckenham: Croom Helm 1986), 165; Efraim Inbar, 'War in Jewish Tradition', *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, 9/2 (1987), 63; Ehud Luz, 'Through the Jewish Historical Prism', 56.

unavoidable, as it was supposed to secure the community's very physical existence.[121]

At the same time, such a realization rendered the Zionists more impatient toward the possibility of establishing a national home through diplomacy and peaceful means. The acute perception of threat led in fact to define the looming confrontation with the Arabs in irremediable terms as an unalterable zero-sum game. *Eyn brera* was therefore to become the hegemonic framework through which the conflict with the Arabs was envisioned. 'No choice other than to fight' started to become the cornerstone of Zionist strategic thinking.[122]

The coining and diffusion of the concept of *eyn brera* and the traits of unilateralism and fatalism it implied can be considered a pivotal phase of the shaping of the Israeli strategic culture as it epitomized the transition from the old Diaspora Jew, to the Zionist construction of *yahudat shririm* (muscular Jewry), a new Jew ready to fight in a battle for attaining Jewish rule in Palestine.[123]

The powerful show of force of Arab nationalism in Palestine provided by the events of 1936-1939 generated in fact a widespread impression that the hourglass of Zionism was running out. In the following years, the Holocaust, the acute problem of Jewish refugees, the growing perceived indifference, bordering on hostility, of Great Britain reinforced the perception of aloneness of the Jewish people. Serving simultaneously as an explanation of the situation and a justification for fighting, *eyn breira* interlocked the defensive ethos the Zionist had inherited from the Diaspora with a new proactive and offensive readiness to resort to force dictated by necessity.[124] On their own the Jews faced the absolute need to win a decisive, ultimate battle for the sovereignty in Palestine.[125]

Security Standpoints

Out of the foundational elements of strategic culture, which could be defined its perceptive, passive, aspects extend the so-called *security policy standpoints*. They could be defined as the consolidated and accepted narratives (intended as compelling story lines which can convincingly explain events) and interpretations of how core values are to be secured and

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[121] Gil Merom, 'Israel's National Security and the Myth of Exceptionalism', *Political Science Quarterly,* 114/3 (1999), 414.

[122] Efraim Inbar, 'The 'No Choice War' Debate in Israel', 60; Martin Van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, 126.

[123] Yael Zerubavel, 'Mythological Sabra and Jewish Past - Trauma, Memory, and Contested Identities', *Israel Studies* 7/2 (2002) 115-144; Arye Naor, 'Jabotinsky's New Jew: Concept and Models', *Journal of Israeli History: Politics, Society, Culture*, 30/2 (2011), 141-159; David Ohana, 'Zarathustra in Jerusalem: Nietzsche and the "New Hebrews"', *Israel Affairs*, 1/3 (1995), 55.

[124] Efraim Inbar, 'The 'No Choice War' Debate in Israel, 58.

[125] Jacob Coleman Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, 256.

protected, that ultimately structure the responses provided by a strategic community to the inputs deriving from the strategic environment.[126]

The security standpoints act therefore as intermediary factors, or 'transmitters', between the core values, the foundational elements and actual practices. The security standpoints represent therefore the links between the passive side of strategic culture, the perception of the external environment, and its active side, the strategic practices with which to cope with the external challenges: the security standpoints ultimately set preferences for national security policy choices by excluding certain options while including others.[127]

Geostrategic Perception and Security

The foundational elements of the Israeli strategic culture, whose consolidation process this study has briefly traced, combined into an extremely pessimistic perception of the strategic environment on the part of the leadership of the new-born Israel as well as of the Israeli population at large in the aftermath of the 1948-49 War of Independence.[128] Such a perception, essentially based on assumptions and distillations of the collective experiences of Jewish Diaspora, the life in the Yishuv and the interpretation of the immediate post-1948 war geopolitical circumstances, envisioned an existentially isolated country, facing multiple layers of threats varying in the level of intensity which, combined altogether, could potentially jeopardize its very existence.[129] The propagation and institutionalization of this narrative alimented a process of social construction of such beliefs which, combined with an enduring situation of 'intractable' conflict, further contributed to the diffusion, consolidation and perpetuation of this pessimistic perception in the Israeli populace (and as a conscript army within the IDF) and the political-military elites. [130]

In fact, in several studies investigating the Israeli case Daniel Bar-Tal has showed how the peculiar history and collective memory of the Jewish people and a constant elevated level of external threat have profoundly conditioned the Israeli society's epistemic bases and its dominant orientation toward the conflict with the Arab World,[131] nurturing in the collective psychology of

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[126] Lawrence Freedman, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper 379 (London: IISS, March 2006), 22-26; Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History* (London: Routledge, 2004), 1.

[127] Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 17-18.

[128] Asher Arian, *Security Threatened. Surveying Israeli Public Opinion on Peace and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995); Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars* (New York: Oxford UP, 1993), 244.

[129] Yehoshafat Harkabi, *Israel's Fateful Decisions* (London: I.B. Tauruson, 1988); Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993). Both these authors stress the cultural bases of Israel's foreign policy, Segev in particular makes reference to the legacy of the Holocaust.

[130] Neta Oren & Daniel Bar-Tal, 'The Detrimental Dynamics of Delegitimization in Intractable Conflicts: The Israeli-Palestinian Case', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 31 (2007), 111-126; 'Intractable Conflicts' are total, violent, of zero sum nature, perceived as irreconcilable, lasting at least a generation, involving all society members and requiring great investments, see Louis Kriesberg, 'Intractable Conflicts', in Eugene Weiner (ed.), *The Handbook of Interethnic Coexistence* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 332–342.

[131] Daniel Bar-Tal, 'Contents and origins of Israelis beliefs about security' *International Journal of Group Tensions*, 21 (1991), 225–73; Daniel Bar-Tal, 'Societal Beliefs in Times of Intractable Conflict: The Israeli Case', *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 9 (1998), 22-50; 'The Rocky Road Toward Peace:

Israelis a chronic sense of insecurity, a constant perception of being under existential threat.[132]

Notwithstanding the favorable outcome of the 1948-1949 war and a more pronounced gap between the Israeli military capabilities and the self-image of the victim, the enduring impact the Jewish past in conjunction with the overall imbalance of power between the Palestinian community, which potentially disposed of the support of the whole Arab world and Israel, contributed to preserve in the Jewish state a self-representation as the weaker side.[133]

In the first years of the country's existence the awareness that, even though Israel represented a *fait accompli*, Jews remained a small minority in the Middle East facing an enemy whose resources were potentially endless contributed to maintain a perception of overall weakness, of being in any case permanently and irreversibly in the position of the 'few against the many'. Israel's demographic, material and geographic low staying power rendered in fact the perspective of a final decision over Israel by the Arabs credible.[134] The spreading consciousness of the actual dimensions of the Holocaust in conjunction with the developing idea of a state of perennial 'dormant war' endured by the Jewish state fed a growing anxiety towards the face of possible annihilation, maintaining operative a self-image of Israel as fundamentally weak in the face of more powerful adversaries.[135]

'Security' was one of the basic purposes of giving birth to a Jewish homeland, and yet the fact that 'security' remained evanescent even in the face of the birth of the Jewish state and the impressive show of strength provided by the IDF in the course of almost two years of war, contributed to consolidate the a belief that the security of the state and its Jewish citizens remained under threat. Even the ensuing period of relative quiet came to be perceived as a kind of lull, a mere interlude before the next inevitable encounter.[136]

As previously discussed, despite Jewish strong historical, religious and cultural bonds with the Middle East, the development of the Yishuv in Palestine and the process of creation of the Jewish state witnessed increasing feelings of separateness and/or disregard for the local inhabitants on the part of the Zionists and, later on, the development of a gulf between the Jewish and Arab communities. After 1948, the foundation of the state of Israel and the temporary change in the nature of the conflict from an inter-communal to

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Societal Beliefs Functional to Intractable Conflict in Israeli School Textbooks' *Journal of Peace Research*, 35 (1998), 723-742; 'From Intractable Conflict Through Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation: Psychological Analysis', *Political Psychology*, 21 (2000), 351-365.

[132] Avner Yaniv, 'A Question of Survival: The Military and Politics under Siege', in Avner Yaniv, *National Security and Democracy in Israel* (New York: Boulder, 1993).

[133] David Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders* (Jerusalem: Keter Books, 1972), 267; 283; Yehezkel Dror, 'Israel's Quest for Ultimate Security: Strategies and Perceptions', in Daniel Bar-Tal, Dan Jacobson, Aharon Klieman (eds.), *Security Concerns*, 433-47.

[134] Israel Tal, *National Security: The Israeli Experience* (Westport: Praeger, 2000) ,41.

[135] Reuven Pedatzur, 'Ben-Gurion's Enduring Legacy', 144-146; Yechiam Weitz, 'Political Dimensions of Holocaust Memory in Israel During the 1950s', *Israel Affairs*, 1/3 (1995), 129-145.

[136] Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 3-9; 11-12; Asher Arian, *Security Threatened*.

an inter-state strife did not alleviate the increasingly pessimistic Israeli perception of their ethno-cultural insularity in the Middle Eastern environment.[137]

It could be argued that in this case cultural patterns and material conditions affected each other in a complex feedback relationship, breeding among Israelis a tendency to ethnocentrism and a certain lack of empathy with the surrounding Arab populations.[138] In fact, on the one hand, the modern secular-nationalist creed of Israelis or, according to the definition of Liebman and Don Yehiya, the new Israeli 'civil religion', incorporated deep-rooted religious concepts which emphasized the inherent sense of exceptionalism and uniqueness of the Jewish people.[139] As a 'new people' reborn in Israel, Israeli Jews tried to think of themselves as a 'light unto the nations'.[140] On the other hand, the situation of forced isolation in which the Yishuv first, and then the Jewish state were constrained in the Middle East reinforced in turn 'isolationist' tendencies on the part of the Israeli leadership as well as the very population.[141]

The conflict with the Arab world and the ideological confrontation with the claims for sovereignty of the Arabs over Palestine required the Zionists, and then the Israeli society, to build and maintain particularly strong societal beliefs about the justness and legitimacy of Zionist goals: historical, theological, societal, cultural, and most of all national and existential arguments were employed in support of the Zionist movement.[142] As several studies on the Israeli society have shown, this propensity to attribute positive traits, values, and behaviors to its own society, was strengthened as the conflict with the Arab world exacerbated.[143] This tendency, together with the

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[137] Elie Podeh, 'Rethinking Israel in the Middle East', *Israel Affairs*, 3/3-4 (1997), 282; Edward E. Azar, Paul Jureidini, and Robert McLaurin, 'Protracted Social Conflict Theory and Practice in the Middle East', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 8/1 (Autumn 1978), 41-60; Shmuel Sandler, 'The Protracted Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Temporal-Spatial Analysis', *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations* 10/4 (December 1988), 55.

[138] Ethnocentrism is here employed to describe a concept according to which 'one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are recorded and evaluated in relation to it', see William Graham Sumner, *Folkways: a Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores, and Morals* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1906) (Italian), 17; Jack L. Snyder, 'Anarchy and Culture: Insights from the Anthropology of War', *International Organization*, 56/1 (Winter 2002), 12.

[139] Charles Liebman & Eliezer Don Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel: Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 90; 132; David Ben-Gurion, *Rebirth and Destiny* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), Shlomo Aronson, *David Ben-Gurion and the Jewish Renaissance* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2010) 87; 92; 158.

[140] Moshe Hazani, '*Netzah Yisrael*, Symbolic Immortality and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict' in Knud Larsen (ed.), *Conflict and Social Psychology* (London: Sage, 1993), 58.John Hofman, 'The Meaning of Being a Jew in Israel: An analysis of Ethnic Identity', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 15/3 (1970), 196-202.

[141] Some have placed Israel in the category of the so-called 'pariah' or 'outcast' states, see Efraim Inbar, 'The Emergence of Pariah States in World Politics: The Isolation of Israel', *Korean Journal of International Studies,* 25 (Winter 1983/84), 55-83.

[142] Eric Cohen, 'The Changing Legitimations of the State of Israel', *Studies in Contemporary Jewry,* 5 (1989), 148-165; Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*; Paul Grosser & Edwin Halperin, *Anti-Semitism*.

[143] Yoram Bilu, 'The Image of the Enemy: Cracks in the Wall of Hatred' *Palestine-Israel Journal* 1/4 (1994), 24-28; Dan Bar-On, 'Cultural Identity and Demonization of the Relevant Other: Lessons From the

perception of salient differences between its own group (the Israeli society - ethnically defined) and the 'other' (the Arab world), and the arousal of fear produced by the situation of 'intractable' conflict, bolstered the development of ethnocentric traits.[144] The Israeli military successes and the scarce Arab proficiency in combat did not contribute to enhance respect and consideration for the Arabs even as enemies and deepened the conviction of the rectitude of the Israeli political and military course.

The slogan *eyn breira*, which can be considered the main lesson derived by the Zionist community from years of inter-communal strife, already assumed a 'self-help' vision of the world inherited from the experience of the Diaspora. Such an understanding was further reinforced by the experience of the Holocaust and by the Zionist community's isolation in the Middle East.[145] As the state-building process progressed, this deeply pessimistic and realist vision of the world was transposed to the interstate relations systems.[146] The very fact that the state's birth was sanctioned in battle appeared to many prominent members of the strategic community, politicians and military, as a powerful confirmation of the importance of power in international relations, making them rather skeptical towards diplomacy and more confident in the use of force (*Koah*).[147] As Dima Adamsky has noted, this strategic mentality grasped the very nature of international politics in a purely Hobbesian perspective.[148]

In the Israeli perception, realist arguments were not considered as having a universal validity, rather they were viewed as perfectly fitting the specific Israeli strategic landscape in the Middle East.[149] In such an environment the conception according to which there are no alternatives to the use of force as the sole instrument for solving external problems was increasingly perceived as not only necessary for sheer survival, but also pragmatic and rational. The conflict with the Arab world, and the way to address it, came therefore to be analyzed in a 'conservative realist' perspective in which force and power, rather than diplomacy, which by definition implies another actor, were

Palestinian-Israeli Conflict', in Arieh Y. Shalev, Rachel Yehuda, and Alexander C. McFarlane (eds.), *International Handbook of Human Response to Trauma* (New York: Plenum, 2000), 115–125.

[144] Shai Feldman & Karen Stenner, 'Perceived Threat and Authoritarianism', *Political Psychology*, 18 (1997), 741-770; Daniel Bar-Tal, 'Causes and Consequences of Delegitimization: Models of Conflict and Ethnocentrism' Journal of Social Issues, 46/1 (1990), 65-81; Robert Levine & Donald Campbell, *Ethnocentrism: Theories of Conflict, Ethnic Attitudes and Group Behavior* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972).

[145] Avner Yaniv, *Deterrence Without the Bomb: The Politics of Israeli Strategy*, (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1987) 64-70.

[146] David Ben-Gurion, 'The First Duty – Achieving the Goal', *Ma'arachot* no.46-47 (March 1948).

[147] Yitzhak Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 37; David Tal, *War in Palestine 1945: Israeli and Arab Strategy and Diplomacy* (London: Routledge, 2003), 345; Yosef Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs*, 177; David Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders*, 1.

[148] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation: The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution in Military Affairs in Russia, the US, and Israel* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 115.

[149] Yoram Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy* (Washington DC: Institute for Peace Studies, 2006), 219.

considered the regulatory elements.[150] The very geostrategic context allowed Israel to 'yield no inch', making imperative for the Jewish state to take into account worst case scenarios and to prioritize the military dimension of strategy to the detriment of its political and diplomatic aspects.[151]

Baruch Kimmerling has convincingly argued that, being essentially a 'social' problem, national security cannot be defined independently from the prevailing convictions of a society, of which the political and military leaderships are spinoffs: security conceptions reflect therefore the hegemonic set of beliefs and ideologies of a society in a certain historical period.[152] In a country which perceived itself as isolated, under siege, and with no other choice than to use force to secure its mere existence, the process of social construction of the concept of 'national security' led to a strong emphasis on the most tangible and physical aspects of 'security', and particularly on threats perceived as being of an existential nature. In fact, no distinction can be found in the Israeli concept of national security between the security of the state and the security of its citizens.[153] The security of the state was conceived as consisting in nothing more than the holistic sum of the physical security of each of its citizens. Deriving from 'objective', external structural factors, namely the nature of the threat, the attitude of the enemies, and the unstable and violent character of the environment, no interpretation of 'security' was possible for Israel other than its most basic form, that is survival.[154]

In fact, as several studies have confirmed, the Israeli political and military leaders and the population at large shared a very pessimistic view of Israel's strategic stance and viewed the 1949 armistice as a temporary respite from, not a solution to, the Arab-Israeli conflict.[155] Enhancement of security became therefore a central social value and security considerations tended to overshadow any other state concern, with the Israeli leadership having a difficult time envisioning any economic, urban, immigration, settlement, or education policy without questioning how it would further the country's national security.[156] The awareness of the lack of a 'second chance', were

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[150] The term 'conservative realism' is borrowed from Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1957).

[151] Michael I. Handel, *Israel's Political-Military Doctrine* (Cambridge: Harvard University Center for International Affairs, 1973), 64; Gregory Giles, *Continuity and Change in Israel's Strategic Culture* (McLean, VA: Defense Threat Reduction Agency, SAIC, 2006), 13; Yehezkel Dror, 'Israel's Quest for Ultimate Security: Strategies and Perceptions', 433-47;

[152] Baruch Kimmerling, 'The Social Construction of Israel's 'National Security'', in Stuart Cohen (ed.), *Democratic Societies and Their Armed Forces: Israel in Comparative Context* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 299.

[153] David Tal, 'Israel's Road to the 1956 War', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 28/1 (1996), 64; Efraim Inbar, 'The 'No Choice War' Debate in Israel', 62.

[154] Reuven Pedatzur, 'Ben-Gurion's Enduring Legacy' in Daniel Bar-Tal, Dan Jacobson, Aharon Klieman (eds.), *Security Concerns*, 145.

[155] David Ben-Gurion, 'The Task Still Ahead', *Ma'arachot* no. 52-53 (October 1948), 8 and 'No Freedom Has Been Bought, But Continuous Vigilance', *Ma'arachot* no. 59 (September 1949), 11.

[156] Asher Arian, Ilan Talmud, and Tamar Hermann, *National Security and Public Opinion in Israel* Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), 23-24; see introduction in Moshe Lissak, (ed.) *Israeli Society and its Defense Establishment* (London: Frank Cass, 1984); Avner Yaniv, 'A Question of Survival: The Military and Politics Under Siege'.

Israel to be defeated on the battlefield, led to a perceived obligation on the part of the Israeli society to devote itself to the full range of security-related issues as 'a divine injunction', to borrow the words of one of its most prominent strategic thinkers.[157]

This conceptualization of 'security', heavily influenced by the convictions and views of David Ben-Gurion, would have acquired in the new-founded state of Israel the status of a cultural master-symbol.[158] Moreover, developed under conditions of extreme uncertainty and an elevated degree of external threat such conception would prove highly resistant to change through the years, leading to a certain degree of cognitive selectivity and creating a one-sided, black and white narrative of the conflict.[159]

Two Schools of Thought

Generally speaking, only minor distinctions existed in the late 1940s and early 1950s within the Israeli strategic community regarding the perception of the geostrategic environment, with the majority of its members adhering with no hesitation to Ben-Gurion's dictum: 'Security unarguably comes first'.[160] This however, should not lead to envision the Israeli strategic culture as some sort of monolith. As Jeremy Black has stressed, culture is better thought of as a sphere and form of contention or a vocabulary for framing responses.[161] It follows that, even if it may be argued that a country's strategic culture does exist and function as a cohesive whole, several distinct schools of thoughts can coexist within a security community as most of the time the various organizational players within it will have different interpretations on how consolidated beliefs and attitudes (culture) should be expressed in actual strategic behavior.[162]

In fact, even though relatively similar interpretations of the Israeli strategic position in the wider Middle East could be found among the country's political and military leaders, more substantial differences intervened among members of the strategic community with regard to the strategic implications

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[157] Israel Tal, *National Security*, 41.

[158] Baruch Kimmerling, 'The Code of Security - The Israeli Military-Cultural Complex', in Baruch Kimmerling (ed.), *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society and the Military* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 217; Sara Helman, 'Militarism and the Construction of the Life-World of Israeli Males' Edna Lomsky-Federer and Eyal Ben-Ari (eds.), *The Military and Militarism in Israeli Society* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 197-198.

[159] Michael A. Hogg, 'Uncertainty, Social Identity and Ideology', in Shane Thye and Edward Lawler (eds.) *Social Identification in Groups* (New York: Elsevier, 2005), 203-30. Daniel Bar-Tal employs the term 'religion of security, see Daniel Bar-Tal, *Living with the Conflict* (Jerusalem: Carmel Press, 2007).

[160] Anita Shapira, *Land and Power*, 368; Charles Liebman & Eliezer Don Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel*, 5; David Ben-Gurion, *Rebirth and Destiny* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), 210.

[161] Jeremy Black, *War and The Cultural Turn* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012), 162.

[162] Colin Gray, 'Strategic Culture as Context: the First Generation of Theory Strikes Back', *Review of International Studies* (1999), 25; and 'Out of the Wilderness, Prime-Time for Strategic Culture', (Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Threat Reduction Agency, 2006), 23-25; Gerald Segal, 'Strategy and 'Ethnic Chic'', *International Affairs*, 60/1 (Winter 1983/84), 15-30.

drawn from such interpretations and even more with regard to the means to be adopted in order to achieve security.[163]

Approximately from the months during which Israel and its opponents were negotiating their armistice agreements in 1949, up to the 1956 Sinai War, a rift started to develop between two different schools of thought within the Israeli strategic community.[164] Israel's political and military leaders were deeply divided among themselves and there was no consensus on the nature of the threat as well as on the best way of safeguarding the country's security.[165] Therefore, an internal struggle matured between two different schools of thought epitomized by David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Sharett (Shertok), who alternated as prime minister during this eventful and formative period.

While the debate between the two schools usually remained focused on current events, in more general terms the argument clearly regarded the way Israel should manage the conflict with the surrounding Arab world. Slightly simplifying for the purpose of explanation, a hawkish, activist, security-centered school of thought stood against a moderate one who privileged a tailored use of force, negotiation and diplomacy.[166] Conceptually, the 'activist' school headed by Ben-Gurion and the 'moderate' school headed by Moshe Sharett, could be viewed as expressions in the realm of policy and strategy of the two ethos (offensive and defensive) matured by the Zionist community between the end of the 19th century and 1948.[167] On the other hand, operationally they appeared as the natural successors respectively, to the Haganah retaliatory policy in British Mandate days and to the Yishuv's 1930s policy of restraint (*havlagah*).[168]

Basing its approach on a strongly inward-looking, Israelo-centric, worldview, exponents of the 'activist' school of thought showed conspicuous disregard and lack of empathy with their opponents, nor did they try to develop any balanced understanding of Arab views.[169] Often implying the alienation and the gulf existing between Israel and the Arabs, 'us and them', they maintained an image of the Arabs as of a primitive, fierce and fanatical enemy. The 'Activist' school of thought came to believe in the necessity of the build-up and extensive use of military power in order to show the Arabs the futility and costs of the conflict.[170] Force was the only language that the Arabs understood

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[163] David Tal, 'Israel's Road to the 1956 War', 66; Ranan D. Kuperman, 'The impact of Internal Politics on Israel's Reprisal Policy During the 1950s', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 24/1 (2001), 1-28.

[164] Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 240.

[165] Mordechai Bar-On, 'Small Wars, Big Wars: Security Debates During Israel's First Decade', *Israel Studies* 5/2 (2000), 107-127.

[166] Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (New York: Allen Lane, 2000), 95-98; Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 242-243.

[167] Anita Shapira, *Land and Power*, 353-370.

[168] Together with Eliyahu Golomb, Moshe Sharett was one of the main architects of the *Havlagah*, see Anita Shapira, *Land and Power*, 250.

[169] In the course of a conversation with an American diplomat in 1951, Abba Eban noted: Ben-Gurion 'hardly knows there is an Arab world', quoted in Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 243.

[170] David Ben-Gurion, 'The Military and the State', *Ma'arachot* no. 279-280 (May-June 1981) 2-11 (Hebrew).

and, consequently, that Israel had, from time to time, to prove its strength and willingness to use it. This, they reasoned, would lead the Arabs to accept Israel's existence, leading to a stable settlement to the conflict.

In their view, autonomously maintaining broad margins of security was highly preferable over obtaining political advantages that carried potential military risks and the perspective value of diplomatic agreements had to be assessed in purely functional and instrument terms related to the *quantum* of physical security they were liable to create. Peace would come only as a by-product of the realization on the part of the Arabs that Israel could not be defeated.[171]

Conversely the 'moderate' school of thought led by Moshe Sharett (foreign minister from 1948 until June 1956 and prime minister from December 1953 until November 1955),[172] tended to de-emphasize the fact that there was a basic clash of interests in Palestine between the state of Israel, the Palestinians and the Arab world. Although recognizing the inherent potential for continuous Israeli-Arab confrontation in order to maintain or regain sovereignty and control over the same country, exponents of this school of thought did not envision an inevitable, head-on collision. They rejected the pessimistic premises of the 'activists' as they completely disregarded the impact of Israel's own behavior on the Arabs and contested the pessimistic conclusion that Israel would be forced to live by the sword.

While sharing with the 'activists' the view that the use of force remained an unavoidable weapon of last resort, Sharett insisted that its resort had to always be scrupulous and selective. In the view of the 'moderates' Israel lacked resources to challenge the Arab world in a prolonged conflict, and had therefore to restrain, whenever possible, Arab hostility. In fact, the 'moderate' school of thought nourished faith in the possibility of peace, held a more flexible image of the Arabs than the 'activist' school and was much more empathic to the effects that the Israeli behavior determined on the Arabs.[173]

In what has been defined the formative period of the Israeli strategic culture (approximately 1936-1956) it was the 'activist' school of thought to hold, almost continuously, the upper hand. Although, as Mark Heller has noted, in the course of the years, especially after 1967, changes in Israel's geostrategic environment as well as in the Israeli domestic politics and society generated strong ideological challenges against the *realpolitik*-inspired Ben-Gurionist strategic approach (referred to in the literature as *bitchonism*), it nonetheless

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[171] Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 97-98.

[172] For studies accounting for nuances and tension between the basic values of Zionism and the Israeli political culture see Yaron Ezrahi, *Rubber Bullets: Power and Conscience in Modern Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Baruch Kimmerling, *Zionism and Territory: the Socio-Territorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *Trouble in Utopia: The Overburdened Polity of Israel* (New York: SUNY Press, 1987).

[173] Yaakov Bar-Siman-Tov, 'Ben-Gurion and Sharett: Conflict Management and Great Power Constraints in Israeli Policy', *Middle Eastern Studies,* 24 (July 1988), 330-56; Avi Shlaim, 'Conflicting Approaches to Israel's Relations with the Arabs: Ben-Gurion and Sharett, 1953-56', *Middle East Journal,* 37 (Spring 1983), 180-201.

left an indelible mark left on the Israeli strategic culture, coming to represent the basis for Israel's strategic thinking and serving to this day as the most influential frame of reference for determining the Israeli national security policy.[174]

Scholarly works in political history have clearly documented how the premises and views of Ze'ev Jabotinsky's political thought rapidly came to be accepted across the broad spectrum of mainstream Zionist leaders, from Berl Katznelson, Menachem Begin and Chaim Arlosoroff to Chaim Weizmann and, most importantly, David Ben-Gurion.[175] In fact, in the course of the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt, Ben-Gurion substantially modified its strategic vision. At the roots of his new understanding of the conflict with the Palestinians and the Arab world it is possible to trace the reception of the central lines of Jabotinsky's analysis.

In two articles, 'the Iron Wall' and 'The Ethics of the Iron Wall' published in 1923, Ze'ev Jabotinsky had expounded a long-term strategy for dealing with the emerging confrontation with the Palestinians and the Arab world.[176] The only way, the revisionist leader argued, that an enduring peace with the Arabs could ever be achieved was through the building of an 'Iron Wall' so strong and impenetrable that enemies trying to break through it would experience devastating defeats. The building of such a wall was in Jabotinsky's view the fundamental means which would have allowed the Zionists to continue their project while frustrating any Arab hopes and attempts of getting rid of them. It would also allow to build positions of unassailable strength from which, in the long-term, the Zionists would have the opportunity to negotiate with the Arabs. Rather than through recognition of the legitimacy of its cause, only through the resignation of the enemy to an immutable reality would Zionism, and later the state of Israel, achieve the ultimate objective of a secure and permanent peace. [177]

Openly acknowledging the inter-communal nature of the conflict between the Arabs and Zionism, such a vision assumed that the Arabs would continue to fight as long as they maintained any hope of preventing the Jewish takeover of their land.[178] Though realistically conceding that in political terms the Zionists were the aggressors while the Arabs were defending themselves, the

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[174] Mark Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 40; Reuven Pedatzur, 'Ben-Gurion's Enduring Legacy', 139-143; Michael Mandelbaum, 'Israel's Security Dilemma', *Orbis,* 32/3, (Summer 1988), 358.

[175] Anita Shapira, *Land and Power*, 156-58 and 210-11.

[176] Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky 'The Iron Wall', *Rassvyet*, November, 4, 1923 and 'The Ethics of the Iron Wall', *Rassvyet,* November, 11, 1923. Translations of the articles, originally published in Russian, can be found www.mideastweb.org/ironwall.htm. For an analysis of the political relevance of Jabotinsky's conception see Ian Lustick, 'To Build and To Be Built By: Israel and the Hidden Logic of the Iron Wall', *Israel Studies*, 1/1 (Summer 1996), 196-223.

[177] Vladimir Zeev Jabotinsky, 'The Iron Wall' and 'The Ethics of the Iron Wall'.

[178] Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition.* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1995), 215; Shibley Telhami, 'Israeli Foreign Policy: A Realist Ideal Type or a Breed of Its Own', in Michael Barnett (ed.) *Israel in Comparative Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 29-52.

deep-rooted character of the Arab opposition inevitably led to the conclusion that only war, not diplomacy, would resolve the conflict. It was therefore pointless (at least at that early stage of the Zionist enterprise) to hold a dialogue with the Palestinians and the Arab world at large: the Zionist program had to be executed unilaterally and by force.[179]

All the fundamental elements of Jabotinsky's approach, unilateralism, indifference to the Arab world, perception of impossibility of peace in the short-term, (imposed) choice to rely on military force, are clearly discernible in the strategic approach to the conflict of the exponents of the 'activist' school led by Ben-Gurion, as well as in its disciples within the Israeli strategic community in the course of the years.

The experience of the Holocaust and the 1948 war contributed to the stiffening of this strategic approach, adding an element of existential anxiety which was absent from Jabotinsky's view. The view that the conflict was a struggle for survival between two communities whose interests were irreconcilable led to the pessimistic understanding that the best that Israel could aspire to was to force the Arabs to desist from hostile acts, deterring them despite their unalterably hostile attitude.[180] In such a strategic approach the 'other', the opponent was conspicuously absent: the behavior of the Arabs in fact was taken for granted, assumed as susceptible of being influenced only by a long-term immutable reality rather than by the very process and modalities through which such reality was upheld, preserved and defended. This attitude was only partly ascribable to lack of knowledge, indifference to the Arabs or ethnocentric beliefs. In fact, even those who, like for instance Moshe Dayan, were knowledgeable and in a way empathic with the Arab world, were for these same very reasons extremely pessimistic concerning the actual possibilities of an accommodation.

Through the years, the continuous state of war, the rise of terrorism and the diplomatic stalemate with the Arab world would have further contributed to the consolidation within the Israeli political and military elites of the beliefs that the conflict with the Arab world posed a continuing threat to Israel's security, that the end justified the means, and that military force was the only effective means of ensuring Israel's survival. Only an ever higher and more impenetrable 'Iron Wall' of military strength would demonstrate to the Arabs their military inferiority and opened the way for peace.[181]

Strategic Practices

Strategic practices should be understood as the longstanding policies and conceptions, mechanisms of policy-making and institutional dynamics in the field of security and military affairs. Strategic practices are the observable manifestations of strategic culture that actively relate and apply the substance

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[179] Ian Lustick 'To Build and To Be Built By: Israel and the Hidden Logic of the Iron Wall', and 'Abandoning the Iron Wall: Israel and the Middle Eastern Muck', *Middle East Policy*, 15/3 (2008), 30-56.

[180] Israel Tal, *National Security*, 42.

[181] Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 599; Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, chap. 8 and conclusions.

of the strategic culture's core (the foundational elements articulated through the security standpoints) to the external environment. Strategic practices are not immutable through time, conversely, they are considerably less resilient to change than the foundational elements of strategic culture. In fact, being military policies ultimately subject to the constraints posed by material capabilities and potentially inhibited by external factors, they are inevitably subject to a certain level of fine-tuning and adaptation.[182]

Deterrence and Negative Political Aims
It has often been claimed in the scholarly literature that Israel never managed to clearly define its political aims in war and that, consequently, military considerations tended to unduly prevail. However, the political dimension of Israel's approach to war can be understood only if situated within the broader picture of the country's strategic culture.

The state of no peace/no war between Israel and the Arab world borne out of the 1948-1949 conflict and the desire to preserve the *status quo*, that is to thwart Arab attempts at destroying Israel and to secure the country's survival and security in a highly unstable strategic environment, generated a profoundly pessimistic awareness of the intrinsic limits of the use of military power, already evident in Ben-Gurion's strategic thinking.[183] This has in turn bounded Israel's strategic horizons, leading to a rather 'negative' understating of war aims and the articulation of a strategy of deterrence (*Harta'a*) for managing the conflict with the Arab world conspicuously influenced by the above mentioned ideas of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, especially his concept of the Iron Wall.[184]

Deterrence, 'the potential or actual application of force to influence the action of a voluntary agent' or 'the persuasion of one's opponent that the costs/or risks of a given course of action outweighs the expected benefits'[185], rose in fact to prominence, coming to represent one of the cornerstones of the Israeli strategic thinking, already in the first years of the country's existence.[186]

Israeli political and military leaders rapidly recognized that it was not in their power to influence the Palestinian grievances or politically address the sources of Arab discontent. In their perception Arab attempts to prevent the establishment of the state, the military attack to eliminate it in its infancy

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[182] Colin Gray, *Out of the Wilderness*, 7-8.

[183] Eliot Cohen, Michael Eisenstadt, Andrew Bacevich, *Knives, Tanks & Missiles: Israel's Security Revolution* (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1998), 59-60; Avi Kober, 'A Paradigm in Crisis - Israel's Doctrine of Military Decision', *Israel Affairs* 2/1 (1995), 188-211; Ephraim Sneh, *Navigating Perilous Waters: An Israeli Strategy for Peace and Security* (London: Routledge, 2005)

[184] Yehezkel Dror, 'A Breakout Political–Security Grand-Strategy for Israel', *Israel Affairs*, 12/4 (2006), 862; Yehezkel Dror, *Israeli Statecraft: National Security Challenges and Responses* (London: Routledge, 2011).

[185] Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 26; Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia UP, 1974), 11; Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1981), 83; Patrick Morgan, *Deterrence Now* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003).

[186] Shlomo Aronson, 'Leadership, Preventive War and Territorial Expansion: David Ben-Gurion and Levi Eshkol', *Israel Affairs*, 18/4 (2012), 528.

and, later on, an attitude of revenge based on non-recognition, prevented the country from elaborating any grand-strategy consistent with a classic pattern of international conflict in which parties although warring, are divided by identifiable, politically solvable disputes.[187] As the (at the time) IDF Chief of the General Staff (CGS) Moshe Dayan stressed, 'Can we argue with their intense hatred for us?' […] before their eyes we are turning the land and the villages in which they and their forefathers lived into our inheritance'.[188]

In the absence of alternative policy instruments to influence the behavior of its opponents, the conviction that only through deterrence it was possible to manage the conflict with the Palestinians and the Arab world rapidly spread through the Israeli strategic community. Thus, although full of contradictions, complex to measure and inherently unstable, deterrence quickly became the key concept in the Jewish state's security strategy, with the Israeli strategic community consistently attaching to it critical importance as an exclusive standard of security.[189]

In fact, after 1948, and particularly from 1951, a 'deterrence by punishment' approach based on swift and disproportionate retaliations against Low-Intensity Conflict (LIC) consolidated in the Israeli practise.[190] No one has expressed the strategic rationale for such an approach as clearly as its main architect, Moshe Dayan. In a much quoted discourse reproduced in the IDF professional journal *Ma'arachot*, he affirmed:

> 'We cannot guard every water pipeline from explosion and every tree from uprooting. We cannot prevent every murder of a worker in an orchard [or] a family in their beds. But it is in our power to set a high price on our blood, a price too high for the Arab community, the Arab army, or the Arab government to think it worth paying.'[191]

This sort of 'massive retaliation' policy fulfilled many functions, such as upholding self-defense, preventing damage to the nation's morale, self-image, and staying power.[192] At the same time yet, vis-à-vis Israel's opponents it aimed at a rather 'modest' aim: achieving *indirect deterrence* that is generating and maintaining restrictive norms of behavior on the part of Israel's enemies, which in turn would have allowed the Israeli civilian

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[187] Moshe Dayan, 'Israel's Border and Security Problems', *Foreign Affairs* 33/1 (1954-1955), 251.

[188] Quoted in Hillel Cohen, *Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Agencies and The Israeli Arabs, 1948-1967* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 95.

[189] Ariel Levite, *Offense and Defense in the Israeli Military Doctrine* (Oxford: Westview Press 1990), 47-62; Efraim Inbar and Shmuel Sandler, 'Israel's Deterrence Strategy Revisited', *Security Studies* 3/2 (Winter 1993), 349; David Rodman, 'Israel's National Security Doctrine: an Appraisal of the Past and a Vision of the Future', *Israel Affairs*, 9/4 (2003), 117.

[190] LIC is here defined as a 'limited politico-military struggle to achieve political, social, economic, or psychological objectives. It is often protracted and ranges from diplomatic, economic, and psychological pressures through terrorism and insurgency' see US *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1979).

[191] Moshe Dayan, 'Military Operations in Peacetime', *Ma'arachot,* no. 119 (May 1959), 59 (Hebrew).

[192] Munir Daher, 'Cumulative Deterrence Model to Deter Low-Intensity Conflict', *Ma'arachot*, no. 388 (Februray 2003) 14 (Hebrew); David Tal, 'Israel's Road to the 1956 War', 65.

population to conduct a normal life.[193] Such type of short-term deterrence upheld by means of reprisals and aimed at persuading opponents to refrain from escalating hostilities or attempting to alter the *status quo* in the context of LIC has been termed by Uri Bar-Joseph as *current deterrence*.[194]

In the unstable LIC context which characterized Israel's first years of existence, *current deterrence* came to be conceived as a kind of substitute for the missing political stabilization. The underlying idea was that threatening the use, or employing force, as a punitive measure was the only way of preventing violence on the part of implacable enemies. Achieving such an aim necessarily required the employment of disproportionate force, as the so-called 'rules of the game' between Israel and its opponents had still to be defined.[195] Reprisals and disproportionate use of force would have generated them, enabling adversaries to make moderating cost-benefit calculations and stabilizing Israeli relations with them (at least for a limited lapse of time), in this way ultimately containing the conflict.[196]

The emphasis on deterrence which characterized Israel's approach to LIC since the early 50s would have consolidated in the years to come in the realm of High-Intensity Conflict (HIC).[197] In such a case however, deterrence intertwined with the concept of battlefield decision (*Hakhra'a*).[198] In fact, Israel's structural asymmetries vis-à-vis its opponents severely limited the country's ability to fashion its strategic environment, denying the Jewish state the opportunity to impose its will on the enemies through forcible negation and/or withholding of their sovereignty.[199] Consequently, Israel's strategic aims in HIC came to be conceived in extremely negative and reactive terms: securing survival and thwarting enemy attempts to defeat it through clear battlefield decisions defined in terms of negating the other side's combat capability.[200] Yet, such a conceptualization of war objectives remained operative in the course of the years. In his study on the evolution of the Israeli war objectives in Israel's conventional wars, Avi Kober has convincingly

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[193] Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 185-189; Boaz Ganor, *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle: A Guide for Decision-Makers* (New York: Transaction Publisher, 2005), 78; Thomas Rid, 'Deterrence Beyond the State: The Israeli Experience', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 33/1 (2012), 141.

[194] Uri Bar-Joseph, 'Variations on a Theme: The Conceptualization of Deterrence in Israeli Strategic Thinking', *Security Studies*, 7/3 (1998), 145-181.

[195] Thomas Rid, 'Deterrence Beyond the State: The Israeli Experience', 138.

[196] Jonathan Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence: Border Warfare from 1953 to 1970* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 36-37; Moshe Dayan, 'Why Israel Strikes Back', in Donald Robinson (ed.), *Under Fire: Israel's Twenty Year Struggle for Survival* (New York: Norton, 1968), 122–129.

[197] Stuart Kinross, 'Clausewitz and Low Intensity Conflict', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 27/1 (2004), 36-37; Roger Beaumont, 'Small Wars: Definitions and Dimensions', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, no. 541 (September 1995), 20-35; Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 18-25. High Intensity Conflict (HIC) operations are defined as entailing sustained and large scale clashes between significant formations of two or more military (or proto military) organizations.

[198] Oz Chen, 'Reflections on Israel's Deterrent Capability', *Ma'arachot*, no. 279-280 (May 1981), 33-34 (Hebrew).

[199] Mattityahu Peled, 'How Israel is Not Prepared for War', *Ma'arachot*, no. 289-290 (October 1983), 25; 28 (Hebrew).

[200] Israel Tal, *National Security: The Israeli Experience*, 42; 46-47.

showed that, despite a mixture of positive and negative military and political objectives, the 'negative' school of thought has continued to predominate through the years.[201]

In fact, Israel's narrow political margin and the ensuing difficulty in translating military successes into political gains, made sure that the most important *political* result Israel could hope to achieve in war remained thwarting enemy attempts to obtain political gains through the use of force. This in turn encouraged to achieve battlefield decision in and of itself, as if it were a war objective, as a means to demonstrate relative advantage over its enemies.[202] And yet, battlefield decision was never understood in the Israeli strategic culture in a purely Clausewitzian sense: imposition of its own will on the enemy through complete denial of his ability and will to fight. Rather, it has been conceived in the narrower perspective of 'operational decision', officially defined by the IDF as 'the break of the enemy's resistance power to act effectively against us by creating a situation in which (according to the decision-maker's estimate) the conditions necessary to attain the set goal [of the war] are achieved. A state of decision is recognized as such when the enemy looses its ability to act effectively against us'.[203]

For these reasons, even though crucial in Israel's national security concept (sequentially) composed of *deterrence*, *early warning* and *battlefield decision* and known in the Israeli jargon as the 'holy triangle',[204] battlefield decision remained an end and a means at the same time, an intermediate aim, instrumental in achieving the ultimate one: 'recharging the batteries of deterrence' and therefore fully restoring the *status quo*.[205]

In fact, faced with a situation in which it had to confront different layers of threats which fed each other, terrorism, guerrilla and attrition warfare as well as conventional war, Israel has struggled for a long-term deterrent posture. In the Israeli strategic thinking both *current deterrence* and deterrence via battlefield decision (or, according to Bar-Joseph's typology, *strategic deterrence*) have fitted a broader grand-strategic paradigm for managing the conflict with the Arab world which has been termed *cumulative deterrence*.

Cumulative deterrence, understood as the aggregate impact of Israel's shows of force and retaliatory operations in LIC, conventional military victories through battlefield decision, proven resolve to use any means to secure its

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[201] Uri Bar-Joseph, 'Towards a Paradigm Shift in Israel's National Security Conception', *Israel Affairs*, 6/3 (2000), 99-102; Avi Kober 'Israeli War Objectives into an Era of Negativism', in Uri Bar-Joseph (ed.), *Israel's National Security Towards the 21st Century* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 183;

[202] Zvi Lanir, 'Political Aims and Military Objectives – Some Observations on The Israeli Experience', in Zvi Lanir (ed.), *Israeli Security Planning in the 80s: Its Politics and Economics* (Eastbourne: Praeger, 1984), 14-49.

[203] From *The Dictionary of IDF Concepts,* (Tel Aviv: G [general staff] Branch GHQ-Training and Doctrine [TOHAD], 1998), 136 (Hebrew), quoted in Uri Bar-Joseph, 'The Paradox of Israeli Power', *Survival*, 46/ 4, (2004–05), 141.

[204] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation*, 112.

[205] Moshe Bar-Kochba, 'Strategic Decision on the Terms of the State of Israel', *Ma'arachot*, no. 317 (November 1989) 12 (Hebrew); Gabriel Ben-Dor, 'Responding to the Threat' in Daniel Bar-Tal, Dan Jacobson, Aharon Klieman (eds.), *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, 111-114.

survival (including, later on, an ambiguous nuclear capability),[206] was primarily designed to persuade the adversaries that the destruction of Israel was impossible or that it entailed costs greatly exceeding the benefits expected from continuing the fight.

Such a conceptualization of long-term deterrence internalized the full range of constraints affecting the country as well as the perspective of a continuity of threat which could not be eliminated. In fact, even combining the threat of denial (the opponent will fail in achieving its goals) with punishment (a high price will be exacted from the opponent for challenging Israel) Israel could not expect to put an end to the conflict in any particular 'round'.[207] Preventive and pre-emptive denial or disproportionate punishment did not in and of themselves foreclose the possibility that Israel's enemies might opt for another conventional attack, nor they sufficed to completely eliminate material and moral attrition through LIC as the tremendous disparity in size and resources would have in any case sustained Arab hopes of future success.[208]

Conversely, Arab resignation to the permanent existence of Israel could be brought about from persistent frustration of enemy efforts to destroy Israel (in the case of HIC) or disrupt its daily life (in the case of LIC) through a gradual process of cumulative dissuasion. Enemies had to be impressed with Israel's resolve to retaliate disproportionately in the face of the prosecution of LIC and by its readiness to wage successive rounds of conventional warfare.[209] The rationale underlying the concept has been that whether Israel faced an irregular non-state enemy or a state's regular army, inflicting incremental defeats on its opponents and generating a 'knockout effect' after each round of conflict could ultimately break their will to fight and compel them to internalize the fact that violence would yield no tangible results.[210] Conceptually, *cumulative deterrence* has therefore represented the strategic *trait d'union* between different rounds of apparently disconnected military engagements, either LIC operations and conventional wars: periodic deterrence failures, preventive and preemptive operations as well as swift and massive use of retaliatory force on the part of Israel represented in fact necessary conditions for long-term deterrence success.[211]

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[206] Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb* (New York: Columbia UP, 1998) and *The Worst-Kept Secret: Israel's Bargain with the Bomb* (New York: Columbia UP, 2012).

[207] Uri Bar-Joseph, 'The Paradox of Israeli Power', 137-156; Saadia Amiel, 'Deterrence by Conventional Means', *Survival* 20/2 (March-April 1978), 58-62.

[208] Yoav Ben-Horin and Barry Posen, *Israel's Strategic Doctrine*, R2845-NA (Santa Monica: RAND, 1981), 13-16; Yitzhak Rabin, 'Israel's Security Problems in the 80s', *Ma'arachot* no.270-271 (October 1979), 19 (Hebrew).

[209] Dan Horowitz, 'The Israeli Concept of National Security', in Avner Yaniv (ed.), *National Security and Democracy in Israel*, 11-50.

[210] Avriel Bar-Joseph & Avner Simhoni, 'Asymmetric Warfare and Israel Security Strategy', *Ma'arachot*, no. 429 (February 2010), 6 (Hebrew).

[211] Elli Lieberman, 'Deterrence Theory: Success or Failure in Arab-Israeli Wars?' *NDU McNair Papers*, no.45 (October 1995), 63.

In the cadre of the Israeli strategic culture, deterrence has been conceived as a political objective in LIC and HIC. It was designed to generate, maintain, and prevent the erosion of specific rules of behavior considered essential to stabilize the conflict and therefore as a fundamental prerequisite of any political process.

In fact, basing the assumption that the resolution of the conflict depended entirely upon the Arab states voluntary participation in a political process, only through deterrence could Israel expect to succeed in wearing down the opponent's will to fight and building up (consistently with the theory of the Iron Wall) positions of unassailable strength from which its opponents, realizing that they cannot gain from Israel through the use of violence more than they could obtain through diplomacy, could be dragged into political negotiations.[212] From an Israeli perspective, a stable and effective balance of deterrence improved the long-term prospects for peace, representing an unavoidable premise of any political solution to the conflict with the Palestinians and the Arab world at large.[213]

The main consequence of such a conceptualization of deterrence and war aims has been the stiffening of the Israeli strategy-making process into a rigidly linear and sequential pattern in which policy and operations became two extremely independent, discreet functions and war was allowed 'to create its own momentum'.[214]

Offense and Pre-emption

Out of the psychological weaknesses consolidated in the Yishuv period as well as during the first years of the State of Israel, such as the traumatic experience of the Holocaust, the Arab attempt to destroy Israel at birth in 1948 and the complete lack of strategic depth, the architects of the Israeli security doctrine derived the view that Israel could not afford to withstand attrition warfare. For the Jewish state the price, in terms of both casualties and damage to the economy, resulting from a prolonged state of war was in fact considerably higher than that of its enemies. Thus, since the foundation of the state, Israel nourished a certain aversion to attrition warfare, mainly due to the country's self-image of incapacity to sustain prolonged wars.[215] Such an understating

[212] Yithzak Rabin, 'Israel's Security Problems in the 80s', 20; Moshe Bar-Kochba, 'Strategic Decision on the Terms of the State of Israel', 6; Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 599.

[213] Col. S., 'Who Needs a Pyrrhic Victory? The Principle of Economy of Force – The Basis for Change in the Israeli Doctrine', *Ma'arachot*, no. 286 (February 1983), 35; Yitzhak Rabin, 'Deterrence in an Israeli Security Context', in Aharon Kleiman and Ariel Levite (eds.), *Deterrence in the Middle East: Where Theory and Practice Converge* (Jerusalem: JCCS Studies, 1993), 9.

[214] Russell F. Weigley, 'The Political and Strategic Dimensions of Military Effectiveness', in Allan R. Millet and Williamson Murray (eds.), *Military Effectiveness* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1988), 341; Richard K. Betts, 'The Trouble with Strategy: Bridging Policy and Operations', *Joint Force Quarterly*, Autumn/Winter 2001–02, 23; Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 17; Colin S. Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice* (New York: Oxford UP, 2011); Avi Kober, 'Israeli War Objectives into an Era of Negativism', 176.

[215] Uri Bar-Joseph (ed.), Israel's *National Security Towards the 21st Century,* 2-5; Attrition warfare has been perceived as some sort of Arab 'way of war' emphasizing staying rather than striking power, see Norwell De Atkine, 'Why Arabs Lose Wars?', *Middle East Quarterly*, 6/4 (Dec. 1999), 17-27.

had a profound impact on the Israeli culture of war, molding a diffused consent among military commanders and politicians alike towards the effectiveness of offensive and pre-emptive approaches in warfare.[216]

Thus, Israel gave birth to a war-making style strongly committed to offense, preemption and speed in which the actual handling of operations was shaped by the combination of a strategic defensive approach with an hyper-offensive tactical doctrine.[217] Offensive operations and pre-emption were not only believed to compensate for Israel's relative lack of staying power and poor manpower resources, but seizing the operational initiative was considered crucial in order for Israel to be capable of dictating the place and pace of events, maintaining full control of the war and forcing the enemy in a reactive posture.[218] Finally, As Yigal Allon stressed, maintaining a reputation for preemption was closely related to the stability of deterrence. In fact, an operational doctrine centered on offense and pre-emption perfectly fitted the Israeli deterrence-based strategy, offering better prospects either of deterring the outbreak of war and of 'recharging the batteries of deterrence' through unequivocal battlefield decisions.[219]

Mainstream Yishuv thinking stressed the importance and effectiveness of offensive retaliatory actions for the purposes of taking *revenge*, exacting *punishment* and, most of all, *deter* Arab violence. Already in the 1920s retaliatory raids against Arab villages and destruction of their fields or herds represented the customary response of Jewish defense organizations to Arab harassment.[220] Throughout the first part of the 1930s the *Haganah* continued to respond to Arab aggressions with reprisal raids, generally linking its retaliatory strikes to a specific, very recent attack, or series of attacks. Such an approach would have been further developed and refined by the Scottish Captain Charles Orde Wingate, who trained Jewish defense groups in the course of the Arab revolt (1936-1939). Wingate was in fact the mastermind behind the creation of the 'Special Night Squads' (SNS). The SNS were mixed (English and Jewish) militiamen units which became operational from June 1938, conducting patrols and raids deep in enemy territory.[221] Although the SNS experience lasted a bit more than one year, its legacy can be considered of the utmost importance for the *Haganah*, and later the IDF. As David Ben-Gurion more than once acknowledged, Wingate significantly contributed to the birth of the IDF ethos: prominent figures who would shape the IDF's *esprit de corps*, as Moshe Dayan, Yigal Allon, and many other IDF future

[216] Israel Tal, *National Security: The Israeli Experience*, 42.

[217] Michael I. Handel, *Israel's Political-Military Doctrine*, 66; Uri Bar-Joseph, 'The Paradox of Israeli Power', 138; Shimon Naveh, 'The Cult of Offensive Preemption and Future Challenges for Israeli Operational Thought', in Efraim Karsh (ed.), *Between War and Peace: Dilemmas of Israeli Security* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 171.

[218] Yoav Ben-Horin and Barry Posen, *Israel's Strategic Doctrine*, 102.

[219] Yigal Allon, *The Making of Israel's Army,* (London: Valentine & Mitchell, 1980), 77; David Rodman, 'Regime-targeting: A strategy for Israel', *Israel Affairs*, 2/1 (1995), 155.

[220] Raanan D. Kuperman, 'The impact of Internal Politics on Israel's Reprisal Policy During the 1950s', 1-28.

[221] Simon Anglim, 'Orde Wingate and the Special Night Squads: A Feasible Policy for Counter-terrorism?', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 28/1 (2007), 36.

commanders, were in fact enlisted in the SNS.[222] The approach Wingate proposed to enforce has been referred to in official documentation as a 'counter-gang' strategy. Radically unorthodox, it was fundamentally based on conducting highly offensive, preemptive retaliatory raids, hunting enemies in their own territory to keep them off balance, and using some of their own operational and tactical methods against them in order to scare supporters and potential offenders into passivity.[223]

Out of the tactical experience accumulated by the SNS and, later on, the *Palmach* (the Strike Companies of the Jewish military force created on May, 19, 1941), in the aftermath of the independence war Israel almost naturally turned to the strategic method of limited military retaliation.[224] Indeed, a pattern of continuous retaliations based on the use of disproportionate force against Arab attacks characterized the entire period from the end of the 1948-1949 war until October 1956, in the attempt on the part of Israel to 'define the rules of the game' with its opponents and preserve the *status quo* emerged from the independence war.[225] In doing so, the IDF took advantage of the experiences matured by the *Haganah* and during the 1948 War, adopting an 'indirect approach'. Israel designed in fact its military operations to 'set a high price on the blood of its citizens' through retaliations aimed not only at striking against the perpetrators of the attacks (military or irregulars), but more than often also at pressurizing the weakest link: the civilian population.[226]

Whereas retaliation was in the aftermath of Israel's independence war conceived as an act of specific *punishment,* a strike aimed at hitting the actual perpetrators of the attack, following the relative failure in the period between 1949 and 1951 to locate and directly strike against the perpetrators of the attacks, the IDF reached the conclusion that punishment was best left to the Arab governments. Consequently, the retaliatory policy underwent a process of trial and error. Having the governments of the neighboring countries no natural incentives to act against attackers, they would have to be compelled to do so, and the most effective way to compel them to curb infiltration or to

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[222] David Ben-Gurion, 'Our Friend: What Wingate Did for Us', *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review* No.27, (September 1963); Yigal Allon, *The Making of Israel's Army,* (London: Valentine, Mitchell, 1980), 8-11; Moshe Dayan, *Story of My Life*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1976), 44-48; Michael B. Oren, 'Orde Wingate: Friend under Fire', *Azure*, Issue no. 10 (2001).

[223] Simon Anglim, 'Orde Wingate and the Special Night Squads', 35; Simon Anglim, 'Orde Wingate 'Guerrilla Warfare and Long-Range Penetration, 1940-44'', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 17/3 (2006), 241-62; Colin Gray, *Explorations in Strategy*, (Westport: Praeger, 1996), 154.

[224] Zeev Maoz, 'Evaluating Israel's Strategy of Low-Intensity Warfare, 1949-2006', *Security Studies*, 16/3 (2007), 325; for a general discussion of the IDF's approach to low-intensity conflict during the first decades of Israel's history see Gunther E. Rothenberg, 'Israeli Defense Forces and Low-Intensity Operations', in David A. Charters and Maurice Tugwell (eds.), *Armies in Low-Intensity Conflict: A Comparative Analysis* (London: Brassey's, 1989), 49-61.

[225] Gil-li Vardi, ''Pounding Their Feet': Israeli Military Culture as Reflected in Early IDF Combat History', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 31/2 (2008), 295-324; Gabi Siboni, 'Disproportionate Force: Israel's Concept of Response in Light of the Second Lebanon War', *INSS Insight*, No. 74 (2 October 2008).

[226] Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 192-197. The under-armed and poorly-trained *Haganah* frequently resorted during the Yishuv years to strikes against the enemy's points of least resistance in the attempt to achieve the objective while reducing casualties.

punish infiltrators was by hurting them enough to persuade them that the price of inaction was much higher. Israel shifted therefore the focus of its reprisal operations to 'soft underbellies', that is civilian targets such as the attackers' clan, village, or district: the logic of punishment was therefore superseded by the element of deterrence.[227] Throughout the 50s offensive raids and reprisals continued, progressively growing in size and degree of sophistication. Beginning as platoon-size operations, they developed in the course of 1954 into company-size, reached the scale of battalion-size raids the following year, and finally culminated in brigade-size operations before the 1956 Sinai Campaign.[228]

Notwithstanding the fact that they constituted little more than controlled punitive actions, they produced a significant impact on Israel's political and military echelons.[229] Politicians and senior officers became in fact convinced of the effectiveness of the combination of strategic defense (deterrence) and operational offense (offensive raids) as a form of compensation for the lack of a permanent political settlement.[230] The defensive strategic purpose inherent in Israel's deterrent posture started therefore to acquire an increasingly offensive content which subsequently flew in the unwritten doctrine of the IDF, remaining ever since more-or-less intact: reliance on the application of offensive force at the tactical level became therefore a regulatory norm.[231]

The military campaigns of 1956 and 1967 were marked by offensive sweeps at all levels, as well as by a more pronounced inclination to pre-emption, prevention and application of the indirect approach.[232] The Israeli political and military echelons came to consider offense crucial not only basing on the belief that it perfectly suited Israel's poor staying power, but also on the base of Israel's lack of capability to absorb an enemy attack on its soil.[233] Desperately in need for at least operational depth, Israeli commanders came to believe that by bringing war to the enemy's territory it could be artificially created.[234] Moreover, although 'striking first' was never explicitly acknowledged as a principle of Israeli operational doctrine, within the Israeli strategic community the idea that striking first could generate an irreversible

[227] Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 436 ; Barry M. Blechman, 'The Impact of Israel's Reprisals on the Behavior of Arab States', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 6/2 (1972), 155-181: Ranaan D. Kuperman, 'Rules of Military Retaliations and Their Practice by the State of Israel', *International Interactions* 27/3 (2001), 297-326.

[228] Shimon Naveh, *Operational Art and the IDF: A Critical Study of a Command Culture* (Centre for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment, September, 30, 2007), 59-60; Gil-li Vardi, "'Pounding Their Feet': Israeli Military Culture as Reflected in Early IDF Combat History", 309.

[229] Michael B. Oren, 'Escalation to Suez: The Egypt-Israel Border War, 1949-56', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 24/2 Studies on War (Apr. 1989), 347-373.

[230] Shimon Naveh, 'The Cult of Offensive Preemption and Future Challenges for Israeli Operational Thought, 172.

[231] Mark Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy*, 10.

[232] Yoav Ben-Horin and Barry Posen, *Israel's Strategic Doctrine*, 31; Israel Tal, *National Security: The Israeli Experience*, 54.

[233] Shimon Naveh, *Operational Art and the IDF*, 66.

[234] Ahron Yariv, 'Strategic Depth - An Israeli View', *Ma'arachot* no. 270-1 (October 1979), 22 (Hebrew); David Rodman, *Defense and Diplomacy in Israel's National Security Experience* (Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 10-14.

effect on the enemy clearly held sway. Indeed, the decade of relative tranquility that followed the 1956 Sinai campaign strengthened the consensus for preemption projected by an offensive maneuver into the depth of the enemy's territory and reinforced the presumed link between it and deterrence.[235] Through preemption and prevention, the IDF could in fact disrupt the opponent's war plans, forcing upon him a war of improvisation.[236] Finally, pursuing an 'indirect approach' to military operations and tactics, bypassing frontal assaults and attrition battles, the IDF could offset the adversary's quantitative superiority.[237] Thus, through the years, the IDF elevated tactical offense to the level of an operational principle which in turn found its most successful expression in the IDF adoption of *blitzkrieg*.[238]

The consolidation of this paradigm of offensive pre-emption is not only discernible in the realm of HIC, but also in the realm of LIC.[239] Despite the high tolerance demonstrated by the Israeli society to the material and psychological costs of attrition warfare, especially when the country's survival was perceived at stake, Israel always tried to end as quickly as possible prolonged attrition-based confrontations. Such attitude was already evident in the early 1950s, when the employment of massive disproportionate force in reprisals was considered the only viable method for stemming infiltrations and *fedayeen* activities from Egyptian territory.[240] Moreover, the LIC context was not perceived as precluding to the IDF the possible resort to heavier weapons, larger formations or the application of the offensive pre-emption paradigm.[241]

When in 1967, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) attempted to launch an armed struggle in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the IDF developed a very offensive-oriented counter-guerrilla approach.[242] Despite applying 'classic' 'carrots and sticks' and the combination of offensive and

[235] Yitzhak Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, 45-66.

[236] Avi Kober, 'The Rise and Fall of the Israeli Operational Art, 1948-2008' in John Andreas Olsen & Martin Van Creveld (eds.) *The Evolution of Operational Art from Napoleon to the Present* (New York: Oxford UP, 2010), 171-172.

[237] In light of the fact that the influence exerted by Liddell-Hart's thinking on Israeli military commanders is a matter of debate, Liddell Hart's notion of 'indirect approach' is here employed simply to describe the Israeli tendency to concentrate attacks against the weakest links of the enemy system. For different points of view about Liddell Hart's influence on the IDF see Brian Bond, 'Liddell-Hart's Influence on Israeli Military Theory and Practice', *RUSI Journal*, no. 121 (June 1976), 83-89 and Tuvia Ben-Moshe, 'Liddell Hart and the Israel Defense Forces - A Reappraisal', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 16/2 (Apr. 1981), 369-391.

[238] Shimon Naveh, *Operational Art and the IDF*, 12; Ariel Levite, 'Is It Really Necessary to Update Israel's Military Doctrine?' *Ma'arachot* no. 317 (October-November 1989), 37 (Hebrew); Avi Kober, 'The Rise and Fall of the Israeli Operational Art, 1948-2008', 176; Israel Tal, *National Security: The Israeli Experience*, 203. Gil-li Vardi, "'Pounding Their Feet': Israeli Military Culture as Reflected in Early IDF Combat History", 312.

[239] Yoav Ben-Horin and Barry Posen, *Israel's Strategic Doctrine*, 31; W. Andrew Terrill, 'The Nature and Value of Commando Operations During the Egyptian-Israeli War of Attrition', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 8/2 (1997), 16-34.

[240] Avi Kober, 'From Blitzkrieg To Attrition: Israel's Attrition Strategy and Staying Power', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 16/2 (2005), 220.

[241] Mark Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy*, 29.

[242] Hanan Alon, *Countering Palestinian Terrorism in Israel: Towards a Policy of Countermeasures* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1980)

defensive measures, the IDF put a premium on the continuous and systematic conduct of offensive operations aimed at disrupting the enemy organisations' infrastructures, networks and leadership at the various levels.[243]

An almost identical approach was adopted in the fight against terrorism beyond the boundaries of the Middle East from the 70s. Israel's response to international terrorism was in fact carried out mostly by means of Special Operations Forces (SOF) commando raids strongly reminiscent of those of the reprisal era. [244] Reintroducing a practice already adopted by the undercover unit *Shahar* in 1947 (Operation Zarzir), the IDF started to conduct pre-emptive targeted assassinations of PLO's senior leaders and operational commanders.[245] Since Operation 'Wrath of God' in the aftermath of the Munich massacre onwards, the pre-emptive offensive operations against key figures of enemy organizations a 'trademark' of the IDF.[246]

The more significant result deriving from the crystallization of the preemption doctrine was the complete submission of the thinking and acting patterns of the Israeli armed forces to an offensive ethos. As the years passed by, this ethos developed into a cult transcending the bounds of professional military logic, and imposing a simplistic approach on the level of policy-making.[247]

Materialistic Approach to Military Affairs

Several scholarly studies have analyzed the increasing emphasis attached by military organizations and defense establishments to the application of advanced technologies to military affairs from the late 60's.[248] Israel has represented no exception to this trend, especially in light of the relentless quest for force multipliers capable of balancing the various asymmetries

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[243] Eitan Shamir, 'From Retaliation to Open Bridges: Moshe Dayan's Evolving Approach to Counterinsurgency', *Civil Wars* 14/1 (2012) 63-79; Michael I. Handel, 'The Evolution of Israeli Strategy: The Psychology of Insecurity and the Quest for Absolute Security', in Williamson Murray, McGregor Knox and Alvin Bernstein (eds.), *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States and War* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1994), 564.

[244] Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism* (New York: Columbia UP, 2009), 46.

[245] Zeev Schiff, 'On the Origins of Targeted Assassinations', *Haaretz*, June, 5, 2006; Avner Yaniv, 'Special Operations: The Israeli Experience', in Loren B. Thompson, *Low-Intensity Conflict: The Pattern of Warfare in the Modern World*, (Lexington MA: Lexington Books, 1989); Ohad Leslau, 'Worth the Bother? Israeli Experience and the Utility of Special Operations Forces', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 31/3 (2010), 509-530.

[246] Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism*, 30-65.

[247] Shimon Naveh, 'The Cult of Offensive Preemption and Future Challenges for Israeli Operational Thought', 169; Reuven Pedatzur, 'Israel: Update of Military Doctrine', *Ma'arachot* no. 319 (July 1990), 20-29 (Hebrew); Yossi Peled, 'Does the Israeli Operational Concept Need a Change?' *Ma'arachot* no. 318 (February 1990), 4 (Hebrew); Yehezkel Dror, 'Strategic-Political Considerations for Updating Military Doctrine', *Ma'arachot* no. 310 (December 1987), 8-12 (Hebrew);

[248] James W. Gibson, *The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press 1986); Williamson Murray, 'Clausewitz Out, Computer In, Military Culture and Technological *Hubris*', *The National Interest* (Summer 1997); 'Military Culture Does Matter', *Strategic Review* (Spring 1999) and 'Does Military Culture Matter?', *Orbis* (Winter 1999). For an account of the broader issue of the increasing relevance of technology in modern societies see Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Vintage Books 1993).

characterizing its strategic relationship with its enemies. Compared with other aspects of the Israeli strategic culture, the so called techno-centric approach to warfare or 'cult of technology', has therefore consolidated at a later stage.

In a condition of almost complete self-reliance, redressal of the human, geographic and time asymmetries which a small state located in an hostile environment inevitably faces, requires maintaining a qualitative edge over opponents under two respects.[249] First, offsetting the opponents material superiority in manpower and resources through the quality, professionalism and motivation of people working in the military and security establishment. Second, shrinking space, accelerating time and increasing firepower beyond the previous limits through state-of-the-art technology in weapon, command and control and intelligence systems.[250] Such was the perception of the Israeli security architects who, cognizant of the impossibility of earning quantitative advantages over its enemies, understood that Israel had no other feasible option than to generate them from quality.[251]

Up to the 1948-1949 war the IDF still had very limited access to military technology and deployed mostly pre-World War II military equipment. Yet, the IDF managed to balance its technological gap and quantitative inferiority vis-à-vis its opponents through moral factors. Creative planning, ability to seize the initiative, aggressiveness, an elevated degree of combat motivation and military units' cohesion and, last but not least, strong belief in the rightness of the Zionism course, founded the qualitative edge of the Israeli soldiers.[252] Such an understanding did not substantially change throughout the 50s. Conversely, under Moshe Dayan's tenure as CGS, the idea of injecting an aggressive commando spirit and spreading an unconventional ethos in the whole armed forces was still regarded as a way of balancing the IDF's relative lack of material resources.[253]

Weapons procurement started to improve approximately from the mid-50s when, along the lines of a phenomenon which has been defined in the scholarly literature as 'military isomorphism,'[254] the GHS promoted a modernizing build-up of the whole armed forces in the attempt to transform the militia-style IDF into a more modern army.[255] Although bringing a partial update of the armed forces' rather obsolete military hardware, weapons procurement remained poorly synchronized and balanced across the services,

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[249] Yigael Yadin, 'Quality Versus Quantity', *Ma'arachot*, no. 254 (February 1977), 4 (Hebrew).

[250] Saadia Amiel, 'Defensive Technologies for Small States' in Louis Williams, *Military Aspects of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Tel Aviv: University Publishing Projects, 1975), 17-18.

[251] Israel Tal, *National Security: The Israeli Experience*, 43; Dov Tamari, 'The Quality of the Military', *Ma'arachot*, no. 267 (January 1979), 3-4 (Hebrew).

[252] Benny Morris, *1948 - A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*, conclusions; Joseph Avidar, 'The Transition from the Haganah to the IDF: Organizational Aspects', *Ma'arachot* no. 255 (April 1977), 7-8 (Hebrew).

[253] Avner Yaniv, 'Special Operations: The Israeli Experience', 115.

[254] Theo Farrell, 'Culture and Military Power', *Review of International Studies*, 24 (1998), 412.

[255] Martin Van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive,* 308; Michael Handel, 'Quantity versus Quality in Building Military Infrastructure', *Ma'arachot* no. 286 (February 1983), 8-25 (Hebrew).

as the IDF was still prevalently an infantry army and lacked potential for armored warfare.[256] It was only in the period between the 1956 and 1967 that Israel started to acquire for the first time advanced military technology through French purchases.[257] In fact between the aftermath of the Sinai campaign and the outbreak of the 1967 War, the emphasis in the IDF shifted from ground forces to mechanization and armor, with the quantitative ratio between tank and infantry brigades changing from 1:2 to 2:1, a phenomenon which has been associated with the rise of a growing tank-oriented 'technocratism' within the high ranks of the armed forces.[258]

The economic recession that preceded the Six Day War, the subsequent French arms embargo, and the flood of cheap labor from the newly occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip favored a rapid expansion of Israel's military industry and fostered growing attention on the part of the IDF to the application of technology in military affairs in general, and the US military technologies in particular.[259] It is in this period that the Israeli inclination to the provision of military solutions to security problems started to acquire a strong technocratic touch.[260] Moreover, the country's international isolation (further strengthened by the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza) and difficulties in obtaining weapon systems considered essential for national defense, even from the USA, increasingly pushed the Jewish state towards self-reliance in the field of defense industry as well as towards looking for 'unorthodox' solutions for obtaining state-of-the-art military hardware.[261]

In this period technology came to be regarded by many as a sort of panacea for the country's continuous and complex military problems, a convenient shortcut to minimize war costs and duration, and a solution to the long-standing problem of the civil society's high sensitivity to casualties in war (a major domestic political consideration).[262] The War of Attrition witnessed in fact the extensive employment of modern weaponry exactly for such purposes: shortening the war in order to undermine the Egyptian attrition strategy based on superior resources and preserving the lives of the Israeli soldiers though maximum force protection.

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[256] Shimon Naveh, *Operational Art and the IDF*, 68.
[257] Michael I. Handel, 'The Evolution of Israeli Strategy', 547.
[258] Zeev Levkovitch, 'The 1953-1960 Armored Division Debate', *Ma'arachot*, no. 325 (July 1992), 30-39; Israel Tal, 'The Tank at Present and in the Future', *Maarachot*, no. 281 (November 1981), 2-7; Micha Bar, 'The Tank's Obscure Future', *Maarachot*, no. 339 (February 1995), 2-9.
[259] Nafrali Blumental, 'The Influence of Defense Industry Investment on Israel's Economy', in Zvi Lanir (ed.), *Israeli Security Planning in the 1980s*, 166-177; Stewart Reiser, *The Israeli Arms Industry: Foreign Policy, Arms Transfers and Military Doctrine of a Small State* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1989).
[260] Uri Bar-Joseph, 'Towards a Paradigm Shift in Israel's National Security Conception', 106.
[261] Sylvia K. Crosbie, *A Tacit Alliance: France and Israel from Suez to the Six Day War* (Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1974); for accounts of the special relationship between Israel and the US see Avraham Ben-Zvi, *The United States and Israel: The Limits of the Special Relationship* (New York: Columbia UP, 1993); *John F. Kennedy and the Politics of Arms Sales to Israel* (London: Frank Cass, 2002); *In the Shadow of the Hawk: Lyndon B. Johnson and the Politics of Arms Sales to Israel* (London: Frank Cass, 2004). For studies detailing the Israeli covert cooperation with South Africa see James Adams, *The Unnatural Alliance, Israel and South Africa* (London: Quartet Books, 1984) and Sasha Polakow-Suransky, *The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship with Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Pantheon, 2010).
[262] Edward Luttwak and Daniel Horowitz, *The Israeli Army* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 108-109.

In the following years, one of the most relevant lessons drawn from the Yom Kippur war was that, though elevated, quality was not sufficient to match Arab manpower and material resources, something which led the IDF to almost double its order of battle.[263] Nevertheless, as the trends in manpower and demography grew even more unfavorable to Israel after 1973, massive application of technology once again came to the fore as a potent (and unavoidable) force multiplier: technological quantity started to be understood as the most appropriate form of quality for the IDF.[264] At the beginning of the 80s, once stretched to the limits its manpower resources, Israel decisively turned to 'capital-intensive warfare'.[265] In fact in the course of the 1982 Lebanon war the Jewish state deployed on the battlefield a highly sophisticated combat model, introducing an impressive array of innovations, highly advanced platforms and weapon systems.[266]

Within the Israeli strategic community no unanimous consent existed in support to such a technology-driven approach to military affairs, especially within the IDF, where many continued to stress the need for privileging the human and moral dimensions of maintaining a qualitative edge over the enemies.[267] Decades of battlefield experience, the unceasing quest for technological advances and military self-reliance had in fact determined among the highest ranks of the armed forces a generalized preference for a continuous but cautious application of technology within a relatively stable military framework.[268] And yet despite such skepticism, the continuous and massive employment of technology contributed to strengthen the Israeli *penchant* for technical-material solutions in the military realm, consolidating within the Israeli strategic community the conviction that technology represented Israel's main advantage over its opponents.[269]

Scarce Proclivity to Intellectualism

Already in the 1950s Ben-Gurion expressed concerns about the lack of 'intellectual openness' among the highest ranks of the IDF.[270] Such a concern on the part of Israel's founding father has found confirmation in the tendency

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[263] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation*, 113-114; Zeev Bonen, 'Sophisticated Conventional War' in *Advanced Technology and Future Warfare*, BESA Mideast Security and Policy Studies no.28, http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/publications/28book1.html.

[264] Eliot Cohen, Michael Eisenstadt, Andrew Bacevich, *Knives, Tanks & Missiles*, 61.

[265] Zvi Lanir, 'The Qualitative Factor in the Arab - Israeli Arms Race of the 1980s', *Ma'arachot* no. 286 (February 1983), 27 (Hebrew); Zeev Bonen, 'Weapons Development of the 1980s', *Ma'arachot* no. 255 (April 1977), 22-26 (Hebrew).

[266] For a detailed account of the IDF approach and military innovations in the 1982 Lebanon war see Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation,* 93-99.

[267] Avi Kober, 'The Rise and Fall of the Israeli Operational Art, 1948-2008', 181-182; Chen Itzhaki, 'Technology is Not Everything', *Ma'arachot* no. 332 (October 1993), 2-7 (Hebrew).

[268] Reuven Gal, *A Portrait of the Israeli Soldier* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1986), 175;Patrick J. Garrity, *Why the Gulf War Still Matters: Foreign Perspectives on the War and the Future of International Security*, Center for National Security Studies Report no.16, Los Alamos, 1993, 80.

[269] Meir Finkel, 'IDF's Qualitative Edge - Not on Technology Alone', *Ma'arachot*, no. 439 (October 2011), 37 (Hebrew); Isaac Ben Israel, 'Back to the Future', *Ma'arachot*, no. 329 (April 1993) 2-5, Isaac Ben Israel, 'Technological Lessons', *Ma'arachot*, no. 332 (October 1993), 8-13 (Hebrew).

[270] Eliot Cohen, 'An Intellectual Challenge', *Haaretz*, 20 September 1998.

to neglect the intellectual aspects of the military profession exhibited through the years by the IDF.

The roots of such scarce proclivity to intellectualism among the members of the Israeli armed forces can be traced to the development of the Zionist ethos and relationship with the use of force, as well as to the very establishment of the IDF. The above-mentioned Zionist construction of *yahudat shririm*[271] was supposed to give birth to a 'new Jew' who represented the very antithesis to the Diaspora Jew: the 'People of the Book' had to become the 'People of the Plow and Rifle'.[272] Such a process necessarily entailed, at least to some extent, the refusal of the most intellectual traits associated with the popular image of the 'bookish Jew' to the advantage of a new image of a more 'muscular' Jew, physically strong and ready to use force and protect his life and his country.[273] Such an image was strongly connected to the Yishuv leaders' conception of how a Jewish armed force was supposed to look like. In fact, consistently with this newly-coined ideal-type, a farmer attached to the land and ready to resort to force, military service was not considered by the early Zionist leaders as an occupation in and of itself: soldiering was regarded as an honorable occupation only in times of grave crisis.[274] Any future Jewish armed force was therefore envisioned not much as a truly professional army, but as a 'people's army', ideally composed of citizens-warriors, an institutional body which could serve as the state's main instrument of security, but also as an educational and integration instrument for the *olim hadashim* (new immigrants).[275]

A second factor which strongly contributed to consolidate the IDF scarce proclivity to intellectualism was the prioritization of practice over theory. The pressing need to acquire combat experience and to perform proficiently on the battlefield characterized the experience of all the Jewish paramilitary and defense militias during the British mandate period.[276] The impossibility of acquiring a formal military education and the necessity of rapidly becoming competent in actual combat however, rapidly shifted from an externally-imposed constraint to the 'psychological' milieu of the Jewish military forces. Such a process is clearly evident when looking at the *Palmach.* Incorporating the legacy of the most unconventional and unorthodox military experiences of the Yishuv period, the *Palmach* became the bearer of a 'partisan-style' culture quite distant from the traditional professional military, based on tactical assertiveness, operational creativity, audacity and high disrespect for the

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[271] See note 47 for bibliographical references.

[272] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation,* 119.

[273] David Ohana, 'Zarathustra in Jerusalem: Nietzsche and the "New Hebrews"', 38-60.

[274] Eitan Shamir, *Transforming Command : The Pursuit of Mission Command in the U.S., British, and Israeli Armies* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2011), 89.

[275] Yoav Gelber, 'Ben-Gurion and the Formation of the Israel Defense Forces 1947-1948', in Ronald W. Zweig (ed.), *David Ben-Gurion, Politics and Leadership in Israel* (London: Frank Cass, 1991), 193-215; Amos Perlmutter, *Military and Politics in Israel, Nation-Building and Role Expansion* (London: Frank Cass, 1969), 55; Victor Azarya and Baruch Kimmerling, 'New Immigrants and the Israeli Armed Forces', *Armed Forces & Society* 6/3 (1980), 455-456.

[276] Simon Anglim, 'Orde Wingate and the Special Night Squads: A Feasible Policy for Counter-terrorism?', 35.

more formal aspects of the military profession.[277] The excellent combat performance of Israeli commanders (mostly Palmachnicks) during the Israeli War of Independence, like Yigal Allon who, despite conspicuously ignoring military theory, exhibited impressive commanding and leadership qualities represented a further step in the validation process of this un-professional militia-style ethos.[278]

The low degree of professionalism of the IDF as an institution and the assumption that combat experience and charismatic qualities of the commanders could be a substitute for formal military education started therefore to merge into an anti-intellectual attitude from the IDF's first years of existence.[279] And yet, the IDF's first two decades were marked by vibrant theoretical and doctrinal debates. As showed by Avi Kober, Israel's formative years witnessed a 9,5 per cent of the publications on *Ma'arachot*, the IDF most important professional publication, dedicated to theoretical issues, whereas 43,5 per cent were concerned with military history.[280]

At the roots of such an interest in the abstract aspects of the military profession it is possible to trace the influence exerted by a core of foreign-trained theoreticians or military intellectuals, like Haim Laskov, Eytan Avisar-von Friedman, Yigael Yadin and Yohanan Ratner, commanders and staff officers of European origin, who were exposed to British, German and Russian military thought.[281]

The balance between these two groups within the IDF, the *sabra* 'doers' and the foreign-trained 'talkers', according to the distinction provided by a former member of the Agranat Commission (The Commission of inquiry into the failures of the Yom Kippur War), was for the most part preserved until the early 1960s, when, due to a generational change, the performance-oriented *sabras* began to outnumber the intellectual veterans of the foreign militaries.[282] Such a change not only resulted in increasing prominence of the practitioners or 'doers' over the theoreticians or 'thinkers' within the officer corps, but also witnessed the promotion to key strategic posts of officers with impressive low and high-intensity conflicts experience and combat records but poor or even non-existent formal military education.[283] Such a neglect of the theoretical and abstract aspects of the military profession fostered a natural inclination on the part of the new IDF leadership to disregard

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[277] Shimon Naveh, *Operational Art and the IDF*, 39-44; Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation*, 120; Martin Van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, 75-77.

[278] Tuvia Ben-Moshe, 'Liddell Hart and the Israel Defense Forces'; Anita Shapira, *Yigal Allon, Native Son: A Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

[279] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation,* 122; Gil-li Vardi, ''Pounding Their Feet': Israeli Military Culture as Reflected in Early IDF Combat History', 294-308.

[280] Avi Kober, 'What Happened to Israeli Military Thought?', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 34/5 (2011), 713; Eliot A. Cohen, Michael Eisenstadt and Andrew Bacevic, *Knives, Tanks, and Missiles*, 74-76.

[281] Eitan Shamir and Meir Finkel, 'From Who Should the IDF Learn?' *Ma'arachot*, no. 433 (October 2011), 30-32 (Hebrew).

[282] Yaacov Hisdai, 'Ideologue versus Performer: IDF's Priest and Prophet', *Ma'arachot* no. 279-280 (May-June 1981), 41-46.

[283] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation,* 123.

intellectual skills, not considering them among the qualities which made excellent military commanders.[284] Having rewarded aggressiveness, improvisation and bravery with battlefield successes, the 1948, 1956, and 1967 campaigns contributed to validate a rather narrow understanding of the professional military commander, as a leader with a 'knife between his teeth'.[285] In their eyes the *Palmachnick*, the courageous, heroic and brave military autodidact, was a perfect embodiment of all the qualities which IDF officers were supposed to possess, and combat experience remained the main parameter for advancement and promotion within the armed forces.[286]

The main by-product of the shift in the officer corps and the highest ranks of the IDF was therefore not only an increasing anti-intellectual attitude but also a tendency to focus on the most material aspects of military affairs.[287] Such a change appears evident in the preference exhibited by military personnel for concentrating theoretical analyses on tactical, operational, and doctrinal issues, leaving, especially after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the more abstract aspects of military thought in the hands of civilian strategists.[288]

The generational change of the early 60s witnessed also the emergence, among the IDF officers, of the ethnocentric traits characterizing the Israeli society at large. In the field of military thought, ethnocentrism manifested itself in the conviction, persistently exhibited by IDF officers and members of the Israeli strategic community, of the absolute uniqueness of their situation, something which in turn generated a strong reluctance to assimilate its own strategic context with those of other countries.[289] On this assumption, the IDF increasingly manifested an inclination to believe in the absolute peculiarity of its own campaigns. Retaining a strong sense of appropriateness of its own methods and operational concepts, the Israeli armed forces grew relatively indifferent to foreign military thinking and combat practices.[290] This can be considered the main reason why the interest exhibited by the IDF for military history hardly translated in the employment of analyses of foreign historical

[284] Ya'akov Amidror, 'The Essence of the Military Profession', *Ma'arachot* no. 369 (February 2000), 26-32 (Hebrew); Reuven Gal, 'Testing the Current Model of the Israeli Officer', *Ma'arachot* no. 346 (February 1996), 18-25 (Hebrew).

[285] Erez Weiner, 'Who Needs the Doctrine?' *Ma'arachot*, no. 385 (September 2002), 42 (Hebrew).

[286] Eliot Cohen, Michael Eisenstadt, Andrew Bacevich, *Knives, Tanks & Missiles: Israel's Security Revolution*, 74-76.

[287] Ariel Levite, *Offense and Defense in the Israeli Military Doctrine*, 14-20; Dov Tamari, 'Does Intellectual Conservatism Exist in the IDF?' *Ma'arachot* no. 317 (October-November 1989), 24; Reuven Gal, 'The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF): A Conservative or an Adaptive Organization?' in Daniel Maman, Eyal Ben-Ari, and Zeev Rosenhek, *Military, State and Society in Israel* (London: Transaction Publisher, 2001), 367-368.

[288] Yehuda L. Wallach, *Israeli Military History: A Guide to the Sources* (New York: Garland 1984); Eytan Gilboa, 'Educating Israeli Officers in the Process of Peacemaking in the Middle East Conflict', *Journal of Peace Research* 16/2 (1979), 15-62; Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought* (London: Frank Cass 2001), 353-360.

[289] Yehuda Wagman, 'Israel's Security Doctrine and the Trap of Limited Conflict', *Jerusalem Viewpoints*, no. 514, March 2004.

[290] Author's personal interview with IDF officers, Tel Aviv, February 22, 2012; Eitan Shamir, *Transforming Command*, 122-123; Avi Kober, 'Low-intensity Conflicts: Why the Gap Between Theory and Practise?', *Defense & Security Analysis*, 18/1 (2002), 15-38.

cases for deriving broader 'theoretical' inferences or extracting frames of reference useful for critically evaluating its own performances.[291]

The IDF's lack of familiarity with military theory impacted adversely also on its ability to generate a coherent, integrated corpus of professional military knowledge from the study of its own campaigns and operational activities. In the course of the years in fact, the IDF went through various series of campaign-specific learning cycles, yet no systematic attempt was made to coordinate them into some coherent integrated analysis based on levels of war (tactical, operational, strategic).[292] Moreover, in the absence of formalized procedures for learning lessons, which were never instituted, the IDF resorted to the 'bottom-line test' for the purpose of generating military knowledge, that is it focused analyses and post-action reports exclusively on the outcomes of its operations rather than on the very processes which generated them. As Amidror has noted, inquiring into results rather than processes contributed to further validate the great value attached to combat experience as well as devaluate theoretical study and training.[293]

This intellectual and learning pattern are observable with regard to the IDF study of LIC. From the mid-60s with the first acts of sabotage carried out by the PLO, and even more after the 1967 war, a strong interest in guerrilla and counter-guerilla warfare matured within the IDF, which led to the production of a considerable number of studies by Israeli military experts and the translation in Hebrew of a corpus of foreign theoretical and historical literature, as for instance Walter Laqueur's book *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical and Critical Study*. A few years later however, the trauma created by the strategic surprise of the Yom Kippur suddenly reverted this intellectual interest in Low Intensity Conflict as a distinct field of inquiry: anything less than a conventional war was considered unworthy of study.[294] As a consequence, up to the mid 80s the IDF's doctrinal thinking continued to cling to the old taxonomy that prioritized HIC, 'basic security' (*bitachon yisodi*) at the expense of LIC, 'current security' (*bitachon shotef - batash*) which were considered less worthy of theoretical and intellectual attention. Studies conducted in 1991 and 1992 by the Instruction and Doctrine Division of the IDF Operations Directorate and the Israeli State Comptroller reported that the IDF had never instituted a uniform procedure for post-action reports on 'current security' missions, nor had it ever coordinated all the material made available as a result of its LIC combat experiences.[295]

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[291] See the introduction in Williamson Murray & Richard Hart Sinnreich (eds.), *The Past as Prologue: The Importance of History to the Military Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006).

[292] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation*, 124; Noemi Gal-Or, 'The IDF and Unconventional Warfare', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 2/2 (1990), 215.

[293] Ya'akov Amidror, 'The Sources of Lack of Military Knowledge', *Ma'arachot* no. 378-379 (September 2001), 22; 25 (Hebrew); for an overview of the debate about the relevance of military lessons and the IDF's ability to learn from its campaigns see Itzhak Ben-Israel, 'The Logic of Learning Military Lessons', *Ma'arachot* no. 305 (Septmber 1986), 24-29 (Hebrew); Ya'akov Tzur, 'Did the IDF Learn and Implement the Lessons from Its Campaigns?', *Ma'arachot* no. 378-379 (2001), 17.

[294] Author's personal interview with IDF officer, Tel Aviv, February, 25, 2013.

[295] Stuart Cohen, *Israel and Its Army: From Cohesion to Confusion* (London: Routledge, 2008), 47.

Since the early 1970s only a few commanders interested in the intellectual aspects of the military profession remained within the IDF officer corps.[296] The majority of IDF commanders continued to exhibit scarce proclivity to intellectualism, consistently fitting Liddell Hart's model of 'practical soldiers', that is commanders who rely on experience and experience-based intuition rather than any intellectually acquired knowledge.[297]

Improvisation and Aversion to Strategic Planning

The Israeli attitude to improvise and find solution on the spot in strategic affairs goes back to the early days of Zionism. As discussed above, the Yishuv's security situation always remained so precarious and unpredictable that a certain degree of improvisation in the management of security affairs was *de facto* unavoidable. On the one hand, siege mentality impressed a constant sense of urgency on the psychological state of mind of policymakers and high military ranks. On the other, as discussed above, after the foundation of the Jewish state, Israel's asymmetries vis-à-vis its opponents shaped a perception of the strategic environment as 'non-malleable', impossible to fashion through military and political means.[298]

The need to face multiple layers of threats and ever-pressing security issues in conjunction with the above-described perception contributed to bound the strategic horizons of the Israeli strategic community to the advantage of a short-term oriented approach.[299] The dominantly realist perception of the Middle Eastern landscape and the conviction that the resolution of the conflict depended entirely upon the Arab states generated a 'wait and see' attitude in the Israeli strategic community whereby partial, short-term solutions to security problems appeared not only inevitable but, to a certain extent, even convenient. In fact, in the first years of the country's existence, when the threat to survival was still acutely perceived, temporary, short-term solutions appeared inevitable in order to safeguard the country's existence. With the passing of time however, they continued to be perceived as functional to the Israeli strategic situation as they increased the Israeli narrow space for political maneuvering. The repeated situations of grave danger in which the state of Israel found itself in the course of the years provided the very justification for elaborating flexible, non-permanent solutions to security problems: the Israeli strategic community took therefore the habit of managing grand strategy on a day-to-day basis.[300]

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[296] Avi Kober, The Intellectual and Modern Focus in Israeli Military Thinking as Reflected in Ma'arachot Articles', *Armed Forces & Society* 30/1 (2003), 151-156.

[297] Basil H. Liddell Hart, *Thoughts on War* (London: Faber & Faber, 1943), 96-97.

[298] Yigael Yadin, 'Quality Versus Quantity', *3*; Yehezkel Dror, 'Strategic-Political Considerations for Updating Military Doctrine', 8-12.

[299] Lewis Brownstein, 'Decision Making in Israeli Foreign Policy: An Unplanned Process', *Political Science Quarterly* 92/2 (Summer 1977), 259-279.

[300] Yehezkel Dror, 'A Breakout Political–Security Grand-Strategy for Israel', 855; Eliezer Goldberg, 'Particularistic Considerations and the Absence of Strategic Assessment in the Israeli Public Administration: The Role of the State Comptroller', in Raphael Cohen-Almagor (ed.) *Israeli Institutions at the Crossroads*

Moreover, the formation of national strategy remained, with minor changes over the years, in the hands of the prime minister, defense minister, CGS, and a few others.[301] In fact, the same reasons of urgency and ever-pressing security needs which originally favored the application of short-term solutions in strategic affairs ensured also a preference for un-institutionalized and informal decision making, preferably not taking place through preplanned processes, something which enabled swift communication and problem solving.[302] Complemented by the simplicity and social informality which characterized the egalitarian Zionist society from its inception, the Israeli strategic community managed through the years to maintain a lean and poorly bureaucratized organizational structure as well as to mold a highly informal and simple working style.[303]

As Charles Freilich has showed, from a necessary evil, improvisation (*iltur*) grew, beyond any reasonable expectation, into one of the fundamental characteristics of the Israeli decision-making system in security affairs. Proudly presenting national capacity to improvise as a hallmark of excellence in security affairs, military and defense officials deliberately sacrificed integrated planning for pragmatic improvisation, rendering trial-and-error and 'fire-fighting' the norm in decision-making.[304]

The proclivity to improvise and foster short-term solutions in national-security affairs was further reinforced by the long-standing 'lateral transfer' of senior military officers from the IDF to politics.[305]

When established in May 1948, the IDF had no clear historical references to shape its military worldview. Bringing together the different experiences of the *Haganah* and its elite fighting force, the *Palmach*; of veterans of the British Army and of former members of Jewish underground organisations as LHI (*Lohamei Herut Israel* – Israel Freedom Fighters) and the *Irgun* (*Irgun Tzvai Leumi* – National Military Organization), the new-born Israeli armed forces lacked any coherent operational worldview on which further develop its doctrine: they had to learn without reference.[306]

In the course of the 1948 War severe limits on manpower and resources narrowed Israel's latitude in planning and action. Thus the IDF operated for the most part in small formations (often less than company size) which in

(London: Routledge, 2005) 166-167; Ira Sharkansky and Yair Zalmanovitch, 'Improvisation in Public Administration and Policy Making in Israel', *Public Administration Review* (July-August 2000), 321-329.

[301] Michael I. Handel, 'The Evolution of Israeli Strategy', 555.

[302] Yehuda Ben Meir, *National Security Decision Making: The Israeli Case* (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 1986), 84-91; Charles E. Lindblom, 'The Science of 'Muddling Through'', *Public Administration Review* 19 (Spring 1959), 79-88, this article analyzes a decision-making model very similar to the Israeli one, centered on gradual and incremental changes.

[303] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation,* 110.

[304] Charles D. Freilich, 'National Security Decision Making in Israel: Processes, Pathologies and Strengths', *Middle East Journal*, 60/4 (Autumn 2006), 644, 646–649, 653, 657, 660.

[305] Daniel Maman & Moshe Lissak, 'Military Civilian Elite Networks in Israel: A Case Study of Boundary Structure', in Benjamin Frankel (ed.), *A Restless Mind: Essays in Honor of Amos Perlmutter* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 67-68.

[306] Gil-li Vardi, *Learning Without Reference: The Israeli Defense Forces in Its First Twenty Years*, RUSI Analysis September, 24, 2009.

turn were involved in un-coordinated local battles. The pattern of small-scale fighting units operating independently and often with only local, tactical goals in mind, laid the foundations for a 'small war' frame of thought, which the IDF retained long after the War of Independence:[307] such a pattern of action further reinforced in the following period of 'border wars'. In fact, the IDF persistently exposed a guerrilla/small-war mindset, deploying a 'raiding' warfare model and patterns of command' originally developed within the *Palmach* which emphasized tactical activism.[308] CGS Dayan and the rest of the IDF's GHS consistently cultivated initiative and drive for action amongst IDF officers, even at the price of accepting continuous re-interpretation and/or sheer disobedience of orders. Forced to learn under strain and encouraged in taking tactical initiative, IDF commanders swiftly demonstrated an intense drive for action, repeatedly adopting patterns of self-initiated operations and exploiting every available operational opportunity regardless of strategic, and in some instances even operational, considerations, something which often led to the disconnection of military actions from their political implications.[309]

Scholars have associated this processes with the development of the *bitsuist* (doer) culture in the IDF. A *bitsuist* can be defined as an individual capable of conducting many tasks swiftly and successfully.[310] In fact, in the course of the years, the conviction that it rested upon 'fighting' commanders to translate the superiors' general directions into action took hold within the IDF. Leaving ample freedom of action to tactical commanders in pursuit of their mission evolved therefore into a core feature of the Israeli military system.[311] As Dan Horowitz has convincingly claimed, in the face of multiple different threats, through the 60s the IDF elevated such *bitsuist* ethos and the competence acquired in decentralized operations to the status of an operational principle. Sacrificing efficiency in order to obtain more effectiveness in a relational context, 'plan [became] merely a basis for changes'.[312] And yet, the endorsement of qualities such as resourcefulness, personal leadership, ability to improvise and find unorthodox solutions to complex military situations, at

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[307] Gil-li Vardi, ''Pounding Their Feet': Israeli Military Culture as Reflected in Early IDF Combat History', 295-324.

[308] Shimon Naveh, *Operational Art and the IDF*, 55-59.

[309] Gil-li Vardi, ''Pounding Their Feet': Israeli Military Culture as Reflected in Early IDF Combat History', 295-324 and *Learning Without Reference: The Israeli Defense Forces in Its First Twenty Years*.

[310] Sergio Catignani and Eitan Shamir, 'Mission Command and Bitsuism in the Israel Defense Forces: Complementary or Contradictory in Today's Counterinsurgency Campaigns?', in Alistair McIntyre & Karen Davis (eds.) *Dimensions of Military Leadership* (Ontario: Canadian Defence Forces Academy, 2007), 185-214.

[311] Michael I. Handel, *Israel's Political-Military Doctrine*, 66-67; Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation,* 118.

[312] Dan Horowitz, 'Flexible Responsiveness and Military Strategy: The Case of the Israeli Army', *Policy Science* 1/1 (April 1970), 193; for discussions of the IDF operational maneuver in 1956 see Moshe Dayan, *Diary of the Sinai Campaign,* 1956 (London: Sphere Books, 1967), 39; Yitzhak Rabin, 'After the Maneuver-First Conclusions', *Ma'arachot*, no. 130 (August 1960), 6-10 (Hebrew); Yehuda Wallach, 'On Grand Maneuver', *Ma'arachot,* no. 130 (August 1960), 16-19 (Hebrew), Motta Gur, 'The Experiences of Sinai', *Ma'arachot, no.* 187 (October 1966), 17-23 (Hebrew).

the expense of obedience and coordination, resulted also in a certain aversion to thorough planning and disregard of operational rationales on the part of IDF commanders.[313]

Having never really abandoned what Martin Van Creveld has defined the 'organized mess' culture borne out of the *Palmach*,[314] the entrance of IDF generals into politics further contributed to the Israeli political echelon's lack of strategic vision and tendency to adopt an improvisational approach to the implementation of grand-strategy.[315]

Strategy-Making, the Role of the IDF GS and the Intelligence Apparatus

Scholars of civil-military relations in Israel have pointed out the existence of blurring, fragmented boundaries between the political and military echelons as well as structural and cultural interpenetrability of the civilian and military spheres.[316] Sociologist Yoram Peri has defined the nature of the relationship between the IDF and the political echelon as a 'political–military partnership', in which although formal decisions are still ostensibly made by the political echelon, *de facto* the military is involved an equal partner in policy formulation and implementation.[317] Analogously, Uri Bar-Joseph has qualified as *sui generis* Israel's state-intelligence relations.[318]

The roots of the peculiar features of the relations between the political echelon, the military and the intelligence apparatus are to be found in the period comprised between 1945 and 1949.[319] Until World War II, the Yishuv's main paramilitary forces, that is the *Haganah* and *Palmach*, were utterly dependent on the relevant parties and institutions.[320] Despite the close links developed between the leaders of the founding political groups and the military, the paramilitary forces remained under firm political control, with commanders dealing mostly with pure security matters.[321]

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[313] Simon Anglim, 'Orde Wingate and the Special Night Squads: A Feasible Policy for Counter-terrorism?', 35.
[314] Martin Van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, 161; Dany Reshef, 'What Is Wrong with the Beseder Culture?' *Ma'arachot* no. 361 (November 1998), 90– 92 (Hebrew).
[315] Ya'akov Amidror, 'The Sources of Lack of Military Knowledge', 24;
[316] Yoram Peri, *Between Battles and Ballots: Israeli Military in Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), 15; Yoram Peri, *The Israeli Military and Israel's Palestinian Policy* (Washington: US Institute for Peace Press, 2002).
[317] Yoram Peri, 'The Political–Military Complex: The IDF's Influence Over Policy Towards the Palestinians Since 1987', *Israel Affairs*, 11/2 (2005), 324-344; Eva Etzioni-Halevy, 'Civil-Military Relations and Democracy: The Case of the Military-Political Elites' Connection in Israel', *Armed Forces & Society* 22/3 (Spring 1996), 401-417.
[318] Uri Bar-Joseph, 'State-Intelligence Relations in Israel: 1948-1997', *Journal of Conflict Studies* 17/2 (Fall 1997), 133.
[319] Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *The Transformation of Israeli Society* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985); Amos Perlmutter, *Military and Politics in Israel, Nation-Building and Role Expansion.* Yehuda Ben Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel* (New York: Columbia UP, 1995), xi-xii; Moshe Lissak (ed.), *Israeli Society and its Defense Establishment: The Social and Political Impact of a Protracted Violent Conflict* (London: Frank Cass, 1984).
[320] Yoram Peri, *Between Battles and Ballots: Israeli Military in Politics*, 63.
[321] Yoav Gelber, 'Ben-Gurion and the Formation of the Israel Defense Forces 1947-1948', 193-215.

The period comprised between 1945 and 1948 witnessed the first changes in this pattern. Ben-Gurion, then chairman of the Jewish Agency, assumed political responsibility for the security of the Yishuv, devoting a period of about six months, known as the 'Seminar', to the study of the Yishuv's military problems. Product of this period of study was a guideline document to prepare the military force for the imminent confrontation with the Arab neighbors which, integrating the needs of the state with those of the army, considerably extended its role: whereas the external function of the Yishuv's military force was supposed to be defense, internally it would have had to serve state-building and social integration purposes for the Zionist enterprise, stretching into civilian domains like education, immigrant absorption and agriculture.[322] In parallel with this, there was a substantial increase in manpower and acquisition of equipment and weapon systems for the paramilitary forces which prompted a further expansion of the role of the military and their penetration in the newly-established offices and facilities for the production and procurement of arms.[323] Such consolidation process was followed in 1948 by the creation of a professional army incorporating the pre-state militias, the IDF. Nevertheless, the institutionalization and professionalization of the armed forces did not significantly affect the existing, very intimate, connections between the military and policy-makers.[324]

A similar process took place in the realm of intelligence. Between June 1948 and April 1949 three structures were created: the military intelligence, the domestic intelligence service (Shabak), and the foreign intelligence unit of the Foreign Ministry, all of them coordinated by a joint organism, the VARASH (Hebrew acronym for *Va'ad Rashei Sherutim*-the Committee of the Heads of the Services).[325] Not only were the leaderships of all the three services strongly connected to the political echelon, but each of them was connected exclusively to the executive branch of the institutions, being the military intelligence subordinate to the IDF CGS (and thus to the Defense Minister) the Foreign Intelligence Unit part of the Foreign Ministry and the Shabak directly subordinate to the Prime Minister. [326]

The chronic sense of insecurity embedded in the psychology of Jewish state and the acute perception of self-reliance deriving from the country's political–military–economic isolation fostered an 'intellectual symbiosis' between the

[322] Amir Bar-Or, 'The Evolution of the Army's Role in Israeli Strategic Planning: A Documentary Record', *Israel Studies*, 1/2 (Fall 1996), 98-121.

[323] Alex Mintz, 'The Military-Industrial Complex: The Israeli Case', *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 6/3 (1983), 103-127.

[324] Martin Van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, 75-77; Shimon Naveh, *Operational Art and the IDF*, 38-39; Edward Luttwak and Daniel Horowitz, *The Israeli Army*.

[325] Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism*, 21.

[326] This was even more the case after 1951, with the creation within the Prime Minister's Office of the Mossad which replaced the external intelligence service of the Foreign Ministry, see Uri Bar-Joseph, 'State-Intelligence Relations in Israel: 1948-1997, 133-157. On the origins of Israel's intelligence services see Amos Gilboa and Ephraim Lapid (eds.), *Israel's Silent Defender: An Inside Look at Sixty Years of Israeli Intelligence* (Jerusalem: Gefen, 2011), especially section 2, 21-37.

political echelon, the military and the intelligence services which contributed to consolidate a strong influence of the IDF and the intelligence apparatus in the grey areas of defense and foreign relations, to the detriment of the Foreign Ministry.[327] The division of labor between the agencies in the aftermath of the 1948 war assigned in fact to the military intelligence the responsibility for forecasting any imminent threat of war, namely the production of National Intelligence Estimates (NIE). Though the primary purpose of NIEs was predicting whether war will break out in the following year, they were essentially political documents which broadly reviewed regional and global strategic developments. The responsibility for producing NIEs conferred therefore to the military intelligence a monopoly over the collection and analysis of intelligence about the Arab world and the Middle East.[328] Despite the fact that the foreign intelligence service was assigned an analogous responsibility, the IDF's military intelligence repeatedly went beyond its competences. The Foreign Ministry stopped producing strategic intelligence estimates in 1956 and the military intelligence, which in 1953 had become AMAN (Directorate of Military Intelligence – DMI) in the IDF GHS, filled this vacuum, becoming up to 1974 when the Mossad established the Directorate of Intelligence as its research branch, Israel's sole intelligence estimator. In such a capacity AMAN was responsible not only for military intelligence, but also adviser on intelligence matters to the defense minister, the prime minister, and the cabinet as a whole.[329]

Soon afterward the IDF consolidated an influential role even in the sphere of strategic planning. In fact, between 1969 and 1974 the role of the IDF Planning and Policy Directorate (PPD) was significantly expanded as it was transformed into a joint unit of the IDF and the Defense Ministry, and moved from purely military strategic planning to include also the political and economic aspects of security.[330] The dearth of civilian involvement in this area actually made the IDF PPD the sole body within the Israeli governmental system in possess of the institutional capacity to carry out strategic planning, strategy development, and implementation, with the consequence that the IDF GHS started to function, as Dima Adamsky has noted, more as a national security council than as a general staff.[331]

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[327] Amir Bar-Or, 'The Evolution of the Army's Role in Israeli Strategic Planning: A Documentary Record', 98-121; Aharon Klieman, 'Israel: Succumbing to Foreign Ministry Declinism', in Brian Hocking (ed.), *Foreign Ministries: Change and Adaptation* (London: Macmillan, 1999), chapter 5.

[328] Ian Black & Benny Morris, *Israel's Secret Wars: A History of Israel's Intelligence Services* (New York: Grove Press, 1992).

[329] Uri Bar-Joseph, 'Military Intelligence as the National Intelligence Estimator: The Case of Israel', *Armed Forces & Society* 36/3 (2009), 513; Uri Bar-Joseph, *Intelligence Intervention in the Politics of Democratic States: The United States, Israel, and Britain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 154-56; Samuel M. Katz, *Soldier Spies: Israeli Military Intelligence* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1992), 74-76.

[330] Yoram Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy*, 56-58.

[331] Aharon Yariv, 'Military Organization and Policymaking in Israel', 128 and Amos Perlmutter, 'The Dynamics of Israeli National Security Decision-Making', both in Robert J. Art, Vincent Davis & Samuel Huntington (eds.), *Reorganizing America's Defense: Leadership in War and Peace*, (Washington: Pergamon, 1985), 128-131; Amir Bar-Or, 'The Link between the Government and the IDF during Israel's First 50 Years: The Shifting Role of the Defense Minister', in Daniel Maman, Eyal Ben-Ari,

From the mid-1960s the defense establishment, and especially the IDF, began to develop a symbiotic relationship with the political, economic, judicial and even cultural establishments through the lateral transfer of retired military and intelligence officials into these spheres. The main consequence of this phenomenon was an increasing influence of active-duty and retired security personnel in Israeli public and private life.[332] Approximately in the same period, since 1967, the Israeli political echelon entered in a state which Kobi Michael has labeled 'strategic helplessness', that is a stalemate situation in which it proved increasingly incapable, unable and even unwilling to react to strategic events, setting out and implement a comprehensive long-term strategy and providing suitable responses to the new national security challenges.[333] In the face of such cultural and institutional weakness, the 'civilianized' IDF, at the heyday of public prestige and perceived in the public consciousness as the most reliable institution in the country, came to perceive the strengthening of its role in the policy-making process as necessary and unavoidable.[334]

This brief historical outline illustrates how wrong it is to characterize Israeli patterns of interactions between the political echelon, the military and the intelligence apparatus in the strategy-making process in a simplistic manner. Although the political echelon has formally maintained hierarchical supremacy over the military and the intelligence apparatus, substantively, the social status earned through the years by the IDF (and also by the intelligence community) lead the Israeli public to look at the security establishment as professional, reliable and impartial and to accept its increasing influence on the policy-making process.[335] On the other hand, the centrality of security in the Israeli ethos and public discourse as well as the constant state of war and sense of existential threat in conjunction with the opacity and even absence of strategic guidance after 1967 shaped a structural asymmetry in favor of the military establishment's organizational capabilities.[336] As reminded above in fact, the Israeli governance culture lacked tradition and failed to develop any capacity for staff work at the political level.[337]

In parallel with this, through a process resembling that which led to the constitution of a 'military-industrial complex' in the US, the unremitting flow of retired personnel of the security sector into civilian spheres gave birth to a

and Zeev Rosenhek, Military, State and Society in Israel, 321-343; Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation*, 124.

[332] Stuart A. Cohen, 'Changing Civil-Military Relations in Israel: Towards an Over-subordinate IDF?', *Israel Affairs*, 12/4 (2006), 773.

[333] Kobi Michael, 'The End of the Deterministic Distinction—The Low Intensity War Era as a Paradigmic Challenge for Civil-Military Relations in the Democratic State', in Haggai Golan and Shaul Shay (eds.) *The Limited Conflict* (Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 2004).

[334] Kobi Michael, 'Who Really Dictates What an Existential Threat Is? The Israeli Experience', Journal of Strategic Studies, 32/ 5 (2009), 687-713; Yoram Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy,* 256-258.

[335] Kobi Michael, 'The Dilemma behind the Classical Dilemma of Civil-Military Relations: The "Discourse Space" Model and the Israeli Case during the Oslo Process', *Armed Forces & Society* 33/4 (2007), 524

[336] Kobi Michael, 'Who Really Dictates What an Existential Threat Is? The Israeli Experience', 687-713.

[337] Yehuda Ben-Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel.*

highly variegated informal and hybrid policy network[338] which Barak and Sheffer have defined as 'Security Network'. The conspicuous presence in the political, social, economic, and cultural spheres of retired security personnel contributed in fact to the diffusion of a security-oriented interpretative conceptual system and a conservative and risk-averse approach to security issues.[339] The diffusion of the security mentality has absorbed a conspicuous part of the Israeli civilian culture, impacting adversely on the efficiency of the relevant civilian spheres as well as preventing professionalization and systemic differentiation between them and the security agencies.[340]

In the absence of national security strategies, civilian considerations grew increasingly difficult to articulate and remained often overshadowed by military considerations. The interaction between the echelons became therefore an 'unequal dialogue', characterized by the functional expansion of the IDF and the intelligence services and the centrality of military strategy in the policy-making process through the multiple inputs provided by the military: intelligence assessment, strategic planning and recommendation and implementation of political courses of action.[341]

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[338] Policy Networks are defined as 'clusters of actors, each of which has an interest, or 'stake' in a given policy sector and the capacity to help determine policy success or failure, John Peterson, *Policy Networks* (Vienna: Institute for Advanced Studies, 2003), 1; David Knoke, *Political Networks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Alex Mintz, 'The Military-Industrial Complex: American Concepts and Israeli Realities', *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* 29/4 (1985) 623–639.

[339] As Yoram Peri has convincingly claimed, the IDF officer corps is a reflexion of the Israeli society, as such within it is possible to find 'doves' as well as 'hawks'; however, the collective body of the armed forces generally expounds a conservative and risk averse approach to professional security issues, see Yoram Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy*, 256-264.

[340] Oren Barak and Gabriel Sheffer, 'Israel's Security Network and Its Impact: An Exploration of A New Approach', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38 (2006), 235–261; Baruch Kimmerling, 'The Social Construction of Israel's Concept "National Security"', 299; Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1959).

[341] Yoram Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy*, 256-257; Uri Bar-Joseph, 'Military Intelligence as the National Intelligence Estimator: The Case of Israel'.

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The 1987 Intifada

The conditions that led to Hamas' turn to violence and involvement in the December 1987 Palestinian uprising, the *intifada*, ripened in a long and complex process. It began with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967 and, influenced by the prolonged economic stagnation of the Territories and the constant increase in Israel's settlement activity since the late 70s, evolved through 20 years of Islamic penetration in the Territories. A short-sighted and narrow appreciation of the nature of rising Islamism in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as the use of the same repressive tactics for twenty years failed to contain the rise of religious militancy. Israel's counter-insurgency approach lost its efficacy in the long term. The intifada represented the first opportunity for the Islamists to launch a jihad against the occupier. Its declared objective was to drive Israel out of the West Bank and Gaza as the first step of a struggle to liberate Palestine from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River, thus leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state on the basis of Islamic principles.

The Birth of Hamas

Hamas, acronym of *Harakat al-Muqawamma al-Islamiyya* (Islamic Resistance Movement) was created in December 1987 in Gaza city. Rather than a clear-cut conscious decision however, the foundation of Hamas can be considered as the byproduct of almost two decades (or even more) of Islamic penetration and institution building in the occupied territories and most of all in the Gaza Strip.[342]

According to its own semi-official history, Hamas evolved over time through four stages:

1. 1967–1976: Birth and penetration of a Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood[343] in the Gaza Strip.

2. 1976–1981: Geographical expansion through participation in professional associations in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and institution-building, notably *al-Jamiya al-Islamiya* (Islamic Society), *al-Mujama al-Islamiya* (Islamic Congress), and the Islamic University in Gaza.

3. 1981–1987: Political influence through establishment of the mechanisms of action and preparation for armed struggle.

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[342] Ziad Abu-Amr, 'Hamas: A Historical and Political Background', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 22/4 (Summer, 1993), 5-19.

[343] For an historical outline of radical Islamic movements in the Middle East see Gilles Kepel, *Le Prophète et Pharaon. Aux Sources des Mouvements Islamistes* (Paris : Le Seuil, 1993); Sami Zubaida, 'The Quest for the Islamic State: Islamic Fundamentalism in Egypt and Iran', in Lionel Caplan (ed.), *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism* (London: Macmillan, 1987), 34-35; Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 211-212.

4. 1987: Founding of Hamas as the combatant arm of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine and the launching of a jihad.[344]

Almost since 1948, organizations delivering various kind of social services and aid to the population exerted an important role within the Palestinian society, especially in the refugee camps. Approximately from 1967, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood began to establish Islamic charity associations which supervised religious schools and managed nursery schools and kindergartens usually attached to mosques, founding also neighborhood libraries and sport clubs as well as extending loans to Palestinian students through the *zakat*.[345]

The activities of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Gaza Strip were directed since 1968 by the man who would subsequently become the founder and spiritual leader of Hamas: Shaykh Ahmed Yassin.[346] Based in the al-Abbas mosque the Shaykh launched the first public platform in 1967 with the creation of the *al-Jamiya al-Islamyia* (the Islamic Society), whose objective was to conduct educational, recreational and sports activities for young people.[347] In 1973 he founded the *al-Mujamma' al-Islami*, an umbrella organization for all the activities of the Brotherhood in Gaza which employed young Palestinian professionals in social programs. In fact, the *Mujamma'* was basically a mosque but its structure actually comprised a medical clinic (including a blood bank), a youth sports club, a nursing school, an Islamic festival hall, a *zakat* committee and even a center for women activities. Compared to the traditional mosque, *al-Mujamma al-Islami* with its offer of affordable services and programs to the Gaza population represented a different model of mosque community.[348]

Conspicuously capitalizing on the growing salience of religion in the Palestinian society (the number of mosques in Gaza doubled between 1967 and 1987), the *Mujamma'* rapidly grew, reaching over 2000 employees and opening new branches in several cities of the Gaza Strip.[349] At the same time, figures variously linked to the Muslim Brotherhood managed to rise to prominent roles within the *Waqf*, the institution tasked with the administration of the Islamic endowment, which at the beginning of the 70s

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[344] Matthew Levitt, *Hamas: Politics, Charity and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2005), 22.

[345] Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza* (Bloomington IN: Indiana UP, 1994) 15

[346] Ziad Abu-Amr, 'Shaykh Ahmad Yasin and the Origins of Hamas', in R. Scott Appleby (ed.), *Spokesmen for the Despised: Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1997), 225-256; Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996).

[347] Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: Unwritten Chapters* (London: Hurst, 2009), 36.

[348] Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for a State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 628.

[349] Glenn E. Robinson, 'Hamas as Social Movement', in Quintan Wiktorowicz (ed.) *Islamic Activism : A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 112-138; Sherifa Zuhur, *Hamas and Israel: Conflicting Strategies of Group-Based Politics* (Carisle PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2008), 7.

owned in the Gaza strip 10% of all the real estate, including shops, apartments, buildings garages and 2000 acres of land.[350]

1978 witnessed the founding of the Islamic university of Gaza (IUG) which further allowed the Muslim Brotherhood to penetrate the Palestinian social tissue through the provision of preachers and imams to mosques in the Palestinian territories.[351] The establishment of the Islamic university was soon followed by a faculty of Islamic law and theology at the Najah university and two Islamic colleges in Hebron and Jerusalem in 1980. Eventually this Islamic institution-building process laid the ideological and organizational infrastructure from which Hamas would develop as an (in)dependent organization in 1987.[352]

Almost until the mid-70s the *Mujamma al-Islami* avoided involvement in political and most of all military activities, refusing, in 1957, Khalil al-Wazir's suggestion to form a group to liberate Palestine. Due to the severe repression of the Muslim Brotherhood in both Egypt and Jordan, the Palestinian branch was encouraged by the mother organization, to support predication within the society rather than militant jihad. Thus, similarly to the Muslim Brotherhood, the *Mujamma* advocated *da'wa*, reform and Islamization of society and thought; *'adala* (social justice); and an emphasis on *hakimiyya* (the sovereignty of God, as opposed to temporal rule).[353]

The spread of radical Islamic ideologies throughout the Middle East in the course of the 70s, the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran and, later on, the assassination of Anwar Sadat in Egypt provided further impetus to the diffusion of Islamic radicalism in the Palestinian society.[354] In parallel with this, the *Mujamma* initiated a process of 'palestinization', with its universalistic message leaving room to a more limited nationalist view, centered around the Palestinian question.[355] In fact, the rationale and preparations for militant activities against the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza date back to the late 1970s as Yassin and others believed that *da'wa* had to be complemented with jihad as armed struggle.[356]

In 1982-83, the PLO's military and political defeat in the Lebanon war determined a shift in the strategy of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood. Influenced by the writings of the Egyptian Brotherhood of the time, the Palestinian branch developed a threefold strategy: cadre formation and mobilization, passive resistance, and military action.[357] Shaykh Yassin, under

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[350] Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, 15.

[351] Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, 17.

[352] Matthew Levitt, *Hamas: Politics, Charity and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad*, 30.

[353] Sherifa Zuhur, *Hamas and Israel,* 25

[354] Are Knudsen, 'Crescent and Sword: the Hamas Enigma', *Third World Quarterly*, 26/8 (2005), 1373-1388.

[355] Zeev Schiff & Ehud Yaari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising – Israel's Third Front* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 221; Sa'id al-Ghazali, 'Islamic Movement versus National Liberation', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 17/2 (Winter, 1988), 176-180.

[356] Sherifa Zuhur, *Hamas and Israel,* 42.

[357] Michael Irving Jensen, *The Political Ideology of Hamas: A Grassroots Perspective* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009); Jeroen Gunning, *Hamas in Politics: Democracy, Religion, Violence* (New York: Columbia UP, 2008); Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: A Beginner's Guide* (London: Pluto Press, 2006);

the personal direction of the top echelons of the Egyptian branch, embraced therefore the principle of armed struggle, secretly founding the Palestinian *Mujahidun* as the military arm of the society.[358] Such a move was supported by the deliberation of an Islamist movements' conference held in Amman in 1983 where the decision was taken to support jihad in Palestine.[359] Various committees were established by the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf states to support the resolutions taken in Amman, and within a few years, a new body, the *Jihaz Falastin* (Palestine Apparatus), was in operation. Meanwhile, Shaykh Ahmed Yasin began buying arms, mainly from the Israeli black market.[360] Yet, the organization by the Shaykh of a covert military cell within the movement was discovered by the Shabak which uncovered a weapons storage in Yassin's mosque in Gaza, on June 13, 1984. Yassin was arrested and sentenced to 13 years, but he was the following year in the context of the Jibril agreement, whereby 1,150 Palestinian prisoners were released in exchange for 3 Israelis held by the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC).[361]

Yassin was not allowed by the Israeli authorities to resume his position as chairman of the *al-Mujamaa al-Islami*; he was replaced by Ibrahim al-Yazouri. The entire incident bolstered those within the Brotherhood, particularly in the West Bank, who had maintained that armed jihad against Israel, as a local initiative, would fail, and that the correct path was to continue working toward an Islamic state. Nevertheless, between 1986 and 1987 the Brotherhood progressively adopted a more militant approach and, although to a certain extent uncoordinated, paramilitary activities continued.[362] In fact, a number of attacks were carried out against both the IDF and Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Gaza in 1985-1986 by the 'Mifraqa Group' led by Yahya al-Ghoul, 'Group no.44' led by Salah Shehada in 1986 and 'Group 101', led by Muhammad Shartak in 1987.[363] Besides in 1986 the exposure of the Muslim Brotherhood's covert network led Shaykh Yassin to establish an internal security apparatus, the *Majd*, commanded by Salah Shehada.[364] Thus the period 1983 to 1987 marked the phase of direct preparation for resistance to the occupation, including armed struggle.[365]

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[358] Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2000), 33. According to Robinson the choice to engage in armed struggle created fractures between the older leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood by the younger, activist stratum, who reorganized the movement, giving it a new agenda. See Glenn E. Robinson, 'Hamas as Social Movement', 112-138.

[359] Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: A History from Within* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2007), 45, 49.

[360] Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, 14.

[361] Zeev Schif & Ehud Yaari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, 221.

[362] Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, 37.

[363] Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice*, 35.

[364] Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for a State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 629, 708.

[365] International Crisis Group (ICG), *Dealing with Hamas*, ICG Report no. 21 (Amman/Brussels: ICG, January 26, 2004), 6.

The moment the intifada broke out, Yassin was still reluctant in endorsing an all-out and full-fledged involvement of the Brotherhood which could have dragged it in an uncertain confrontation with the Israeli forces. At the same time he could not just remain a bystander, pretending to be blind to the unprecedented events which were taking place in the Palestinian territories, nor could he ignore the strong pressures to take action coming from within his movement.[366] Yassin and his closest associates wanted to find a way to get involved in the intifada without endangering the movement's future. The Shaykh's main concern was to safeguard the legal status of the *al-Mujamaa al-Islami*.[367] Thus, apparently on the advise of the *Maktab al Irshad al'am* the general guidance bureau of the Muslim Brotherhood, a new separate front organization was created.[368]

The birth of Hamas was announced shortly after the outbreak of the Intifada on December 14, 1987, though it made the night between December 8 and 9, 1987 its official founding date to coincide with the outbreak of the Intifada. Its founders included Shaykh Ahmed Yassin; Salah Shehadah, Abdel-Aziz al-Rantisi, Isa al-Nashar, Ibrahim al-Yazuri, Abd al-Fattah Dukhan; and Yahya al-Sinuwwar.[369] In the days following the creation of Hamas in Gaza, Shaykh Yassin charged Shaykh Jamil Hamami, to create a similar leadership structure for Hamas in the West Bank and develop contacts with the Jordan branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.[370]

Basing recruitment on personal acquaintance to ensure compartmentalization, Hamas' cells were maintained horizontally separated and communications were limited to direct messages through predetermined channels of communication. Even though Hamas was organized around a small number of hard-core activists, they were able to activate and coordinate a wide network of supporters through the mosques and the various institutions affiliated with the new-founded organization.[371] The only point of contact between the *al-Mujamaa al-Islami* and the developing military wing remained Shaykh Yassin who opted for maintaining a clear dividing line between its military branch and communal activities in order to deny the Israeli authorities the ability to destroy the organization. In its founding stage Hamas came therefore to operate, employing Mishal and Rosenthal's typology, as a *hub network*, that is a clandestine and highly decentralized structure lacking a strict chain of command and control throughout the

[366] Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, 67.

[367] Matthew Levitt, *Hamas: Politics, Charity and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad*, 30.

[368] Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for a State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993,* 630.

[369] Sherifa Zuhur, *Hamas and Israel,* 21-23.

[370] Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, 63-64.

[371] Boaz Ganor, 'Hamas, The Islamic Resistance Movement in the Territories', *Survey of Arab Affairs*, 27/28, 2 February 1992.

organizational ranks, and with one single figure responsible for monitoring and directing the organization's activities.[372]

Israel and the Rise of Islamism in the West Bank and Gaza

In the aftermath of the 1967 war Israel set up a military authority for administering the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank.[373] On the administrative level responsibility was split between two bodies: the 'Committee of directors-general of the government ministries', which coordinated the handling of all the economic and civilian issues, and the 'Coordination Committee', which handled the political and security aspects of the Territories. This was headed by an IDF high ranking officer who reported both to the minister of defense and to the CGS. Thus, while each ministry in the Israeli government was charged for the activities in the Territories within its area of responsibility, it was the IDF which provided the overarching framework coordinating civilian and military activities and an IDF senior officer who held formal responsibility for this coordination activity. Such figure, denominated 'Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories' (COGAT) served in the ministry of Defense and the IDF GHS at the same time.[374] In August 1968 the two committees were merged, and the military chairman of the coordination committee, the COGAT, was charged with both responsibilities.[375]

From 1967 COGAT's policy was inspired by the principle, elaborated by the at the time Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan, of the 'minimal contact' with the Palestinians, namely minimizing the impact and visibility of the occupation regime on the civilian population. At the same time however, the military government developed a pervasive infrastructure of control, subordinating almost any activity in the West Bank and Gaza to the release of specially-designed permits by the Israeli authorities.[376] Such a system in turn allowed the Shabak to build an extensive network of informers and collaborators. Being at the time based primarily on human sources (HUMINT), the development of the Shabak's intelligence network closely intertwined with the

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[372] Shaul Mishal and Maoz Rosenthal, 'Al Qaeda as a Dune Organization: Toward a Typology of Islamic Terrorist Organizations', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 28/4 (2005), 286-287. For a more general discussion of the concept of networks David Knoke, *Political Networks: The Structural Perspective.* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Albert-Laszlo Barabashi, *Linked: The New Science of Network* (Cambridge, MA: Persus, 2002); Marsh, David Marsh & Martin Smith, 'Understanding Policy Network: Towards a Dialectical Approach', *Political Studies* 48/1 (2000), 4-21.

[373] Nimrod Raphaeli, 'Military Government in the Occupied Territories: An Israeli View', *Middle East Journal* 23/2 (Spring 1969), 177-190.

[374] Neve Gordon, *Israel's Occupation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 29-30.

[375] Shlomo Gazit, *Trapped Fools: Thirty Years of Israeli Policy in the Territories* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 13; 24-25; for an historical perspective on the COGAT see Joseph Mishalev, Yoav Mordechai, Ronnie Mash, Hadas Klein, 'The COGAT in Historical and Organizational Perspective', *Ma'arachot*, no. 400 (May 2005), 20-28 (Hebrew).

[376] Neve Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*, 42.

development of the government infrastructure in the Territories.[377] For almost 20 years the Shabak remained the main security actor in the Territories, not only responsible for the collection of intelligence but also playing a prominent operational role in 'thwarting operations' and achieving extraordinary results in the repression of any form of insurgent and terrorist activity.[378]

With regard to the military deployment, except for some short periods, between 1967 and 1987 Israel managed to maintain a relatively modest military presence in the West Bank and Gaza. This was made possible by the success of the 'pacification'[379] of the Territories between 1967 and 1971 which made sure that the Palestinian population remained ultimately quiescent to the Israeli occupation. The IDF and the COGAT gave in fact birth to a successful 'carrots & sticks' approach, accurately combining continuous counter-terror operations and collective punishments vis-à-vis the civilian population with a wide array of civil programs, among which stands the cooptation of the Palestinian population in the bureaucracy administering the Territories, the 'open bridges' policy, and various nation-building and development measures in the field of agriculture, industry, education and infrastructure.[380]

It has often been claimed that Israel somehow contributed to the rise of Hamas, covertly supporting its ascendance in Palestinian society and politics. Such a narrative appears at first sight supported by the relatively benign attitude which the Israeli authorities expounded vis-à-vis the religious revival in the Territories since its inception. Nevertheless, rather than the product of a deliberate design on the part of the Israeli authority, such stance can be considered the by-product of several factors. One that particularly stands out was the confusion and chronic inability to take decisive action which marked Israel's policy towards the Islamic movements and which led to a fundamentally reactive approach, oriented towards short-term solutions, while monitoring the phenomenon.

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[377] Author's personal interview with Dr. Barak Ben-Zur, former Head of Division and Special Assistant to the Shabak Director 2000-2006, International Institute for Counterterrorism, Herzliya, January, 22, 2012.

[378] Yoram Peri, 'The Impact of Occupation on the Military: The Case of the IDF 1967-1987', in Ilan Peleg & Ofira Seliktar (eds.), *The Emergence of a Binational Israel: The Second Republic in the Making* (London: Westview Press, 1989), 158.

[379] *Pacification* is a broad and fairly vague umbrella term for a handful of population-centric COIN approaches that focus on the local level. These approaches emphasize development and security, hand in hand, in initially small but then expanding locales. See Christopher Paul et al., *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency* (Santa Monica CA: RAND, 2010), 38; Austin Long, , *On "Other War": Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND 2006), 6.

[380] Neve Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*, 52-54; Michael I. Handel, 'The Evolution of Israeli Strategy: The Psychology of Insecurity and the Quest for Absolute Security', in Williamson Murray, McGregor Knox and Alvin Bernstein (eds.), *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States and War* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1994), 564; Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism* (New York: Columbia UP, 2009), 30-65; Ruth Margolies Beitler, *The Path to Mass Rebellion: An Analysis of the Two Intifadas* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004), 42; Eitan Shamir, 'From Retaliation to Open Bridges: Moshe Dayan's Evolving Approach to Counterinsurgency', *Civil Wars* 14/1 (2012) 63-79;

Since 1967 and throughout all the 70s Israel's main security concern in the West Bank and Gaza was preventing the rise of the Palestinian nationalism and suppress any form of organized resistance. Religious radicalism was not regarded as a potential source of danger for Israeli control of the Territories nor for the Jewish state itself. This attitude is also confirmed by the fact that after June 1967 Israel dropped the harsh restrictions imposed in the Gaza on Islamic activists by the Egyptian authorities. The moment the phenomenon of Islamism began to gain momentum, Israel's position towards Islamic institutions did not differ from its established position towards any nonmilitary and non-nationalist phenomena in the Palestinian territories.[381] Israeli authorities showed in fact an elevated level of tolerance and relatively benign attitude for any institution, association, informational and propagandistic activity which did not expound nationalist positions or supported resistance to Israeli rule, regardless of their political, religious or ideological bent.[382]

Between 1967 and 1986, Israeli authorities permitted the number of mosques in the Gaza Strip to double and officially sanctioned various Islamic *da'wa* organizations. In the first years of the occupation, Israeli authorities regarded the provision of social services directly by Palestinian institutions as a precious means to minimize the visibility of the occupation as well as to relieve Israel from some of its economic burdens.[383]

Political considerations started to influence Israel's behavior towards radical Islamism only since the second half of the 70s. Until then, apparently on the Shabak's advice,[384] the military government allowed Islamic organizations to strengthen in the Territories, while continuing to repress any form of Palestinian nationalism.[385]

In 1978, though warned against doing so by Rafaat Abu Sha'aban, the commissioner of the *Waqf*, the COGAT rapidly released a permit and registered Shaykh Yassin's *al-Mujamaa al-Islami*.[386] Almost in the same period the Israeli authorities turned a blind eye to the Islamic takeover of the *Waqf*[387] as well as to the ascendance of figured linked to Islamic radicalism to prominent positions within the religious establishment. Similarly Israel turned a blind eye to the spread of associations connected to various extents

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[381] Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice*, 201-202.

[382] Author's personal interview with former Mossad Officer, Herzliya , January, 10, 2012.

[383] Author's personal interview with former AMAN Officer, Herzliya , January, 10, 2012.

[384] According to several Shabak officials Hamas benefited only from the security service benign neglect. In particular G. Ezra who served as commander of the Shabak Gaza district strongly denies this accusation. According to him the Shabak was thoroughly aware of the extent of Hamas and no covert aid was provided to the Islamic organization. See Ron Shleifer, *Psychological Warfare in the Intifada: Israeli and Palestinian Media Politics and Military Strategies* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2007), 38.

[385] Zeev Schiff & Ehud Yaari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, 221.

[386] Zaki Chehab, *Inside Hamas: The Untold Story of Martyrs, Militants and Spies* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 18.

[387] Neve Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*, 95.

with the Muslim Brotherhood, which started to operate in the Territories without any license from the Israeli authorities.[388]

Generally speaking, Israel had always shied away from any possible confrontation with religion and had been reluctant to deal with the religious aspects of ruling the Palestinians.[389] Such a conduct was strengthened since the late 70s. In fact, after the 1979 Khomeinist revolution and the wave of radicalism which spread throughout the Middle East it was particularly difficult for Israel to repress the Islamic awakening in the Territories, especially if, as it was the case in the West Bank and Gaza, it was strongly associated with charitable, social and communal activities. Such a policy would in fact contribute to associate Israel with anti-Islamism, crediting the claim that the Jewish state was an enemy of Islam.[390]

Such a view was widely shared within the IDF, even by figures already acquainted with radical Islamism such as for instance Brig. Gen. Yitzhak Segev, military governor of Gaza from late 1979. Having been Israel's military attaché in Iran, he had witnessed Khomeini's revolution and held a rather pessimistic view of Shaykh Yassin's long-term intentions and of political Islam in general. At the same time, however, Segev noticed that the Islamists were in that period still peaceful towards Israel and was convinced that the Israeli priority in Gaza was to counter the rise of the PLO and al-Fatah.[391] In general, both the COGAT and the intelligence community were convinced that any problem radical Islamists could determine would be counterbalanced by greater advantages in terms of countering the PLO's influence in the Territories.[392]

The beginning of the 80s witnessed some reforms in the structure and modus operandi of the Israeli authorities in the West Bank and Gaza. In November 1981, the Israeli government took the decision to separate the civilian from the military administration and to create a Civil Administration (CA) as a structurally autonomous body that would report to the COGAT in the ministry of Defense.[393] In 1983 a new agreement for the division of labor was reached by the intelligence services whereby the Shabak, as the main security agency operating in the Territories, was tasked with overall responsibility concerning potential disturbances and insurgent activities. In retrospect it seems that these changes undermined the effectiveness of the Israeli policy in the territories.

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[388] According to Shalev, in March 1989 it was possible to trace the existence of at least 206 charitable societies, such as the Mansour al-Shawa or the Orphanage Society. Many of them operating without license, employing approximately 2240 people and potentially calling many more activists and volunteers. See Aryeh Shalev, *The Intifada: Causes and Effects* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 18, 24.

[389] Author's personal interview with former AMAN Officer, Herzliya , January, 10, 2012.

[390] Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice*, 202.

[391] Andrew Higgins, How Israel Helped to Spawn Hamas', *The Wall Street Journal* January, 24, 2009 http://online.wsj.com/article/NA_WSJ_PUB:SB123275572295011847.html.

[392] Zeev Schiff & Ehud Yaari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, 224-225.

[393] Shlomo Gazit, *Trapped Fools: Thirty Years of Israeli Policy in the Territories*, 228-230.

The reason why the COGAT had been initially tasked by Moshe Dayan with overall responsibility for administering the West Bank and Gaza was to guarantee unity of command and a straight and simple interface between the command of the Territories and the Israeli government. The creation of the CA generated exactly the kind of coordination problems that the figure of a single *supremo* had avoided in the previous 14 years.

At the same time, it is not clear whether the new agreement over the division of labor in the Territories made the Shabak or the AMAN responsible for intelligence assessments and the political analysis of the Palestinian society. No longer formally in charge of overall responsibility, the AMAN privileged strategic and tactical military analysis, to the detriment of the analysis of the Palestinian society 'basic processes', that is social, economic trends and public opinion surveys.[394] For its part the Shabak, whose resources were already overstretched due to the massive employment of its personnel in Lebanon, narrowly interpreted its new task of overall intelligence responsibility as some expanded version of its formal role, namely security and counterintelligence, rather than the provision of comprehensive intelligence assessments regarding the situation in the Territories.[395]

The net effect of these measures was that approximately from 1983 onwards, surveillance over insurgent activities significantly decreased and no intelligence agency was providing overall intelligence estimates for the Territories.[396] Furthermore even though in most cases the IDF local command, the Shabak and the CA shared the same compound, these three organizations had different organizational and territorial divisions and operated under different authorities, something which in turn produced a certain degree of organizational inefficiency as coordination was very lowly institutionalized and depended mostly on personal contacts.[397]

This organizational failure helps explaining why the Israeli authorities did not grasp the seriousness of the disturbances and acts of violence against the Israeli rule which from the early 80s took place with increasing frequency in the Territories.[398] Particularly alarming were the steep rise in the number of attacks against IDF soldiers by factions and individuals acting without organizational direction and also the growing militancy and inclination to employ violent means expounded, as described above, by individuals

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[394] Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure: The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process* (Westport Praeger, 2009), 15.

[395] Author's personal interview with Dr. Barak Ben-Zur, Herzliya, January, 22, 2012. Moreover the Shabak decided to give a very low priority to monitoring the Palestinian political insurgency, probably as no direct link was perceived between it and terrorism prevention, which was Shabak's main task. See Ron Shleifer, *Psychological Warfare in the Intifada: Israeli and Palestinian Media Politics and Military Strategies*, 50.

[396] Aryeh Shalev, *The Intifada: Causes and Effects*, 35-36.

[397] Ron Shleifer, *Psychological Warfare in the Intifada: Israeli and Palestinian Media Politics and Military Strategies*, 50.

[398] Shlomo Gazit, *Trapped Fools: Thirty Years of Israeli Policy in the Territories*, 230-235.

associated with the *Mujamaa al-Islami* and with the recently formed Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).[399]

In response to rising violence and protests, a fierce debate regarding the right mixture of carrots and sticks developed within the Israeli security establishment: neither the CA, nor the intelligence services, or the IDF disposed of contingency plans for dealing with large-scale disturbances.[400] From August 1985, however, the IDF and the Shabak adopted an 'iron fist' policy, placing over 100 Palestinians under administrative detention, expelling 34 and tightening press censorship.[401] Such measures were followed in 1986 by a rather modest plan presented by the Israeli government, headed by Shimon Peres, to improve the economic infrastructure of the Territories, a measure which bore witness to the Israeli establishment's ignorance of the severity of the situation in the West Bank and Gaza.[402] On the other hand, the Israeli authorities did not modify their behavior towards the *Mujamaa al-Islami*, which continued to benefit from the authorities' leniency even after Shaykh Yassin's arrest of 1984.[403] Compared to the PIJ which had already conducted attacks against Israel settlers and military personnel and was clearly inspired by Khomeinism and the example of the Iranian Islamic revolution, Yassin's organization appeared to the Israeli authorities rather moderate.[404] In fact although the Israeli intelligence services had developed a certain knowledge of radical Islam in Iran and Egypt and of jihadism in Afghanistan, no ideological link was perceived between the Islamic revival in the Palestinian Territories and the broader Middle East and Muslim world.[405] Such a view in conjunction with the growing awareness of the gaps between the civilian population's needs and the services provided by the occupying power, led the CA to continue authorizing the establishment of medical and educational Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, which in turn rapidly became sites of anti-occupation propaganda and resistance.[406]

It was soon evident that the Israeli countermeasures did not succeed in preventing the Palestinian proto-insurgencies from gaining ground.[407] In fact,

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[399] Anat Kurz, *The Palestinian Uprisings: War with Israel, War at Home*, Institute for National Security Studies Memorandum No. 98 April 2009, 21; Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 568-570; Meir Hatina, *Islam and Salvation in Palestine: The Islamic Jihad Movement* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 2001).

[400] Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure: The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process*, 15-16; Shlomo Gazit, *Trapped Fools: Thirty Years of Israeli Policy in the Territories*, 255.

[401] Shlomo Gazit, *Trapped Fools: Thirty Years of Israeli Policy in the Territories*, 130.

[402] Sergio Catignani, *Israeli Counterinsurgency and the Intifadas: Dilemmas of a Conventional Army* (London: Routledge, 2008), 76-80.

[403] Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001*, 570.

[404] Author's personal interview with Dr. Reuven Paz, former Head of the Shabak Research Department, Herzliya, January, 12 ,2012.

[405] Author's personal interview with Col. (res.) Yonathan Fighel former governor of Jenin, Ramallah and Tulkarem, Herzliya, February 22, 2012.

[406] Neve Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*, 153.

[407] A Proto-insurgency can be defined as a small, violent group that seeks to gain the size necessary to more effectively achieve its goals and use tools such as political mobilization and guerrilla warfare as well as terrorism. The group can already use terrorism to this end and can conduct political mobilization, but only

as Ruth Margolies Beitler has argued, counter-insurgency practices successfully implemented in the period 1967-1970 were not codified and lessons were not systematically drawn. Besides, the Israeli success in preventing the formation of strong links between the PLO's (external) leadership and the civilian population in the Territories ensured that many within the IDF and the security establishment regarded at acts of violence and disturbances in the Territories simply as isolated episodes, rather than at symptoms of a broader insurgent phenomenon.[408]

Between April 1986 and May 1987 the situation in the Territories began to deteriorate seriously, with 3,150 cases of violent demonstrations, of which 1,870 incidents involving rock-throwing and 600 involving roadblocks. In the same period there were 65 occurrences of attacks involving the use of firearms, explosives and stabbings, and 150 involving petrol bombs.[409]

Although there were no clear signs of the direct involvement of the *Mujamaa al-Islami* in the disorders, the role played by figures variously associated with the Islamic milieu manifested itself much more evidently than in the two previous years. In the first half of 1986 activists associated with the *Mujamaa al-Islami* repeatedly clashed with other Palestinian political groups, especially communists, carrying out stabbings and acid attacks for the control of the Islamic university of Gaza.[410] As recalled by Brig. Gen. Shalom Harari, at the time military intelligence officer in Gaza, the Israeli authorities chose to ignore these episodes and deliberately refrained from intervening in the clashes in the conviction that both nationalists and Islamists would have emerged weakened from this internecine struggle.[411]

Though less popular than in Gaza, Islamists grew more militant even in the West Bank, especially in the area of Tulkarem and Jenin. According to a survey by the CA, in the three months which preceded the outbreak of the intifada, they were increasingly involved in demonstrations and violent episodes in this part of the West Bank.[412]

The growing involvement of Islamists in the disturbances led the CA to revise the mainstream view, providing more pessimistic assessments regarding the peaceful attitude of Islamist towards Israel which quoted the crude anti-Semitic traits of the Islamic propaganda.[413] Despite the first dissonant voice however, overall the Israeli policy vis-à-vis the *Mujamaa al-Islami* did not undergo significant changes until the outbreak of the intifada.

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on a small scale. It does not have to use terrorism to be a proto-insurgency - a small guerrilla group operating in a limited area would fall into this category as well, see Daniel Byman, *Understanding Proto-Insurgencies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2007).

[408] Ruth Margolies Beitler, *The Path to Mass Rebellion: An Analysis of the Two Intifadas*, 42.

[409] Meron Benventisti, *1987 Report: Demographic, Legal, Social and Political Developments in the West Bank* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Post Editions, 1987), 40.

[410] Zeev Schiff & Ehud Yaari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, 225.

[411] Lecture by Brig. Gen (res.) Shalom Harari, International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), Herzliya, January, 12 ,2012.

[412] Zeev Schiff & Ehud Yaari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, 226.

[413] Aryeh Shalev, *The Intifada: Causes and Effects*, 18, 36.

Short of any long-term view, the Israeli authorities attempted to take advantage of the division and fragmentations in the Palestinian society, trying to exploit and manipulate the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood to weaken the PLO.[414] At least until 1981 Israel allowed for what has been defined as 'restricted radicalism', showing willingness to tolerate religious-political activism in so far as it did not threaten its interest.[415] At the base of this attitude was the view that, Hamas being a conservative social movement, possibly it was also a politically conservative organization.

Nevertheless, Israel's failure to analyze its opponent's structural and ideological evolution, its inflexibility in re-examining the nature of the threat and its tendency to adhere to the legacy of the past played into the hands of its enemies.[416]

The Outbreak of the Intifada

The intifada was characterized generally by nonviolent methods such as commercial shutdowns, economic boycotts, labor strikes, demonstrative funerals, hoisting of Palestinian flags, resignation of policemen and tax collectors, and the development of autonomous local educational, economic, and political institutions. Hamas was involved in all of these activities and, especially in the first phase of the intifada, adopted a low profile. Nevertheless these actions were also accompanied by more aggressive ones such as throwing stones and petrol bombs, by the occasional use of firearms and white weapons as well as by circumscribed episodes of terror. Three distinct phases can be identified in the evolution of the Israeli counter-insurgency campaign: the first from the beginning of the intifada until early March 1988; the second from that date until June 1990; and the third from June 1990 to September 1993.

The First Phase: Coercion

As a consequence of the steady and continuous deterioration of the conditions of life in the territories, a rather minor local incident sparked the fire which marked the beginning of the Intifada. The deaths of four Palestinian laborers hit by an Israeli truck in the Gaza Strip, gave rise to rapidly-spreading rumors that the crash was not unintentional. The accident caused wide-spread disorders which in a few days evolved into a real popular uprising. The riots spread quickly through the refugee camps, villages, and towns in the Gaza Strip, subsequently spilling over into the West Bank. In the first weeks, only about 5 percent of Palestinian activity included the use of firearms, and the

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[414] Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice*, 203; Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 41.

[415] Eitan Alimi, *Israeli Politics and the First Palestinian Intifada* (London: Routledge 2007), 63.

[416] Ruth Margolies Beitler, *The Path to Mass Rebellion: An Analysis of the Two Intifadas*, 110; Reuven Paz, 'The Development of Palestinian Islamic Groups', in Barry Rubin (ed.), *Revolutionaries and Reformers: Contemporary Islamist Movements in the Middle East* (NY: SUNY Press, 2003), 37.

uprising was characterized primarily by widespread non-violent demonstrations and limited episodes of violence.[417] The Palestinian civilian population started to demonstrate every day, carrying out various kinds of strikes, refusing to keep shops open and to pay taxes. It also boycotted Israeli-made products and occasionally threw rocks.[418] On the other hand, organized groups and activists erected roadblocks, hurled Molotov cocktails and rocks, and actively encouraged the public to join the demonstrations and clash with the security forces.[419]

The outbreak of the intifada, its timing and scope, was unforeseen by the Israeli leadership and intelligence services. The demonstrations, rioting, and clashes were understood as an additional wave, albeit broader and more violent, of the disturbances which had taken place in the Territories in the last years.[420]

During the first weeks the IDF and the intelligence services regarded the disturbances as a typical 'current security' problem (*Bitachon Shotef*, or *Batash*) for which standard operational procedures existed.[421] The guidelines for maintaining order, last formulated in 1976, emphasized a 'carrots and sticks' approach, based on the separation of the insurgents from the civilian population. Security forces were therefore supposed to avoid friction, adhering to stringent regulations on the use of live ammunitions and maintaining wherever possible minimal contact with the demonstrators; to enforce repressive measures and punishments against the insurgents, and to reward 'well-behaving' towns and villages. Thus dialogue with the local leadership was kept open and primary responsibility for operational activities was assigned to the Border Police (*Magav - Mishmar Hagvul*), while the IDF was kept in a backup role.[422]

Thanks to its pre-existing structures, the new-born Hamas rapidly gathered pace in the first month of the Intifada.[423] 'Strike groups' (*al-sawa'id al-ramiya*) tasked with throwing stones, writing graffiti and setting roadblocks were constituted under the direct guidance and control of Shaykh Yassin who, fearing an immediate Israeli backlash which could paralyze the newborn movement, supervised all the intifada activities of the organization.[424] At the

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[417] Kenneth W. Stein, 'The Intifada and the Uprising of 1936-1939: A Comparison of the Palestinian Arab Communities', in Robert O. Freedman (ed.), *The intifada Its impact on Israel, the Arab World and the Superpowers* (Miami: Florida UP, 1991), 21.

[418] Gail Pressberg, 'The Uprising: Causes and Consequences', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 17/3 (Spring, 1988), 38-50.

[419] Anat Kurz, *The Palestinian Uprisings: War with Israel, War at Home*, 22-23.

[420] Efraim Inbar and S. Sandler, 'Israeli Deterrence: a Re-Assessment', *Ma'arachot* no. 328 (February 1993), 9-19 (Hebrew).

[421] Stuart A. Cohen, 'Changing Emphases in Israel's Military Commitments, 1981-1991: Causes and Consequences', *Journal of Strategic Studies,* 15/3 (1992), 330-50.

[422] Efraim Inbar, 'Israel's Small War the Military Response to the *Intifada'*, *Armed Forces & Society,* 18/1 (1991), 32.

[423] Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*, 56;

[424] Anat Kurz & Nachman Tal, *Hamas: Radical Islam in a National Struggle*, JCSS Memorandum, No. 48 (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies, 1997), 17. Until his arrest in may 1989 Hamas was coordinated and led in a centralized way by Sheikh Yassin who

same time however, Hamas' complex links with its popular base manifested themselves in the timing and character of many of the organization's violent acts, which originated at the grassroots level and in some instances were even the product of unorganized supporters.[425]

In the face of Hamas' immediate involvement in the Intifada the Israeli authorities, as a sort of legacy of the 70s and the early 80s, showed restraint.[426] For these reasons the CA adopted vis-à-vis the *Mujamaa al-Islami* only a limited set of constraining measures, more closely scrutinizing the activities of the mosques, blocking constructions of new infrastructures and prohibiting sports under the guise of religious activity.[427]

In less than a month the approach initially adopted by Israel proved inadequate. In order to avoid contact with the civilian population, the authorities resorted to the massive imposition of curfews, which required much more troops than those available. Furthermore, basing this approach on previous experiences of short-lived disturbances, the security forces lacked suitable riot-control equipment and often also appropriate training, something which, in conjunction with the Palestinian determination, frustrated the initial efforts to restore order.[428]

Towards the end of December 1987, after Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin's return from a visit to the United States, new contingency plans were implemented. Primary responsibility for restoring order shifted from the Border Police to the IDF and a considerable increase in the deployment of troops took place. Patrols, by foot and on vehicles were increased in order to secure travel routes and deter throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails. With the number of troops deployed in the Territories rising from approximately 1,000 to between 10,000 and 12,000 the IDF started to operate in larger formations, particularly in problematic densely-populated areas, where huge cordon-and-search operations were carried out.[429] Despite the massive numbers of troops deployed and the orders to arrest inciters and activists while minimizing contact with rioters, neither regular units, nor the reservists (now deployed in the West Bank and Gaza) underwent any riot-control training and lacked appropriate equipment as gas canisters and rubber bullets. The growing presence of ill-prepared and ill-equipped troops and the often excessive use of live ammunition led to a growing number of Palestinian casualties between December, 9, 1987 and January, 8, 1988.[430]

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supervised the writing of leaflets and their distribution as well as the collection and distribution of funds.

[425] Zeev Schiff & Ehud Yaari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, 238.

[426] Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*, 58. Later on the links between Israel and Hamas would have led the Muslim Press to complain. See 'Grassroots Forcing Change on Hamas?' Muslim Media 16-31 December 1989.

[427] Zeev Schiff & Ehud Yaari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, 227-228.

[428] Mordechai Bar-On, 'Israeli Reactions to the Palestinian Uprising', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 17/4 (Summer, 1988), 46-65.

[429] Efraim Inbar, 'Israel's Small War the Military Response to the *Intifada*', 34; Sergio Catignani, *Israeli Counterinsurgency and the Intifadas: Dilemmas of a Conventional Army*, 80-82.

[430] Aryeh Shalev, *The Intifada: Causes and Effects*, 101.

And yet, by January 1988, demonstrations and violence in the Territories intensified, reinforcing the Israeli threat perception. In the course of the first months of the uprising insurgent propaganda had managed to articulate, albeit in a slightly fragmentary way, far-reaching political goals such as the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Territories.[431] For many within the Israeli strategic community, as well as among the public at large, the intifada triggered the idea of a campaign against the very existence of the Jewish state. CGS Dan Shomron publicly stated that the aim of the IDF was not only to crush the uprising but to 'implant in their [the residents] consciousness, deterrent memories that will have an effect in the future'.[432] Defense Minister Rabin made similar remarks, saying that the Palestinians had to be deprived of the 'sense of power' they acquired as a result of the protests, and that the 'residents of the territories must not be allowed to make political gains out of violence'.[433] Consequently, inspired by his personal experience with HICs, Defense Minister Rabin ordered the IDF to adopt a tougher stance in order 'to strike the violent demonstrations off the agenda'. Rabin's position reflected the prevailing point of view within the Israeli strategic community and society. Long accustomed to short and victorious military campaigns, they rejected the idea of attrition, preferred to employ the IDF in an 'annihilating' mode and were committed to a quick and effective military confrontation ending up in a battlefield decision.[434]

What proved extremely confusing in the first months was understanding what actually constituted the IDF's mission vis-à-vis the Palestinian uprising. Translating in tactics the objective of 'restoring calm in the Territories' and later on 'striking demonstrations off the agenda' when faced with angry civilian mobs and kids throwing stones proved in fact extremely complicated for the majority of the IDF soldiers and officers on the ground.[435]

Notwithstanding the conceptual confusion, Rabin's guidelines took the shape of a series of coercive measures implemented with the aim of achieving a decisive outcome within a limited lapse of time. Troop deployment was further increased through the doubling of reserve duty, from 30 to 62 days, and new aggressive tactics were implemented.[436] Impressed by the

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[431] Shaul Mishal & Reuven Aharoni, *Speaking Stones, Communiqués from the Intifada Underground* (New York: Syracuse UP, 1994), 38.

[432] Interview with CGS Dan Shomron, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, January, 19, 1988.

[433] *The Jerusalem Post International*, 6/2/1988.

[434] Stuart A. Cohen and Efraim Inbar, 'Varieties of Counter-Insurgency Activities: Israel's Military Operations against the Palestinians, 1948-1990', *Small Wars & Insurgencies,* 2/1 (1991), 41-60; Stuart A. Cohen & Efraim Inbar, 'A Taxonomy of Israel's Use of Military Force', *Comparative Strategy*, 10/2 (April 1991), 121-138; Günther Rothenberg, 'Israel's Defense Forces and Low-Intensity Conflict', in David A. Charters and Maurice Tugwell (eds.), *Armies in Low-Intensity Conflict* (London: Brassey's, 1988), 49-76.

[435] Sergio Catignani, *Israeli Counterinsurgency and the Intifadas: Dilemmas of a Conventional Army*, 91; Joel Greenberg, 'The Occupation's Soldiers' *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 17/3 (Spring, 1988), 144-147.

[436] For discussion about the IDF reserve system see Edward Luttwak and Dan Horowitz, *The Israeli Army* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 85-98,424-26; Reuven Gal, 'Israel' in Charles S. Moskos and F.R. Wood (eds.), *The Military: More than just a Job?* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988), 267-78; Dan Horowitz, 'Strategic Limitations of 'A Nation in Arms'', *Armed Forces & Society,* 13/2 (1987), 277-94.

effectiveness of the Border Police's employment of sticks, the Minister of Defense ordered the troops to be equipped with wood batons (and later on plastic and fiberglass truncheons), and a policy of 'might, force and beatings' to be initiated, not only against activists but also against demonstrators.[437] By early 1988 a special unit, known by its Hebrew acronym ALPHA, was established specifically to design nonlethal means of dispersing demonstrations. Within a few months it had developed purpose-built water cannons, gravel dischargers and a new type of plastic bullets. In addition indiscriminate punitive measures against the civilian population were implemented. By early March 1988 an extensive use of mass arrest was applied either as form of collective punishment or to discourage participation in civil disobedience. In the course of the year the use of such a measure would culminate in the detention, in the prison compound of Ketziot, of the entire male population of villages and small towns.[438] Protracted curfews, cutting of the electricity and of telephone lines (even for extended periods of time), as well as economic blockades were imposed on towns and villages in order to wear down resistance area by area.[439] All the 840 schools and universities run by the CA were closed.[440] Finally, storekeepers were forced to reopen shops which had previously been closed in compliance with PLO or Hamas directives.[441]

Last but not least, Israeli authorities opted for reintroducing house-demolition as a deterrent. The demolition of the houses of families of persons involved in acts of terrorism was introduced for the first time in the late 60s; in the course of the intifada it was enforced against the families of street rioters. According to the reasoning of the security establishment, the relevance of 'land' and 'house' in the Palestinian society made this measure an effective deterrent, forcing families to put pressure on their boys not to participate in street disturbances.[442] From December 1987 until the signing of the Oslo agreement in September 1993, Israel destroyed and partially or fully sealed 847 houses.[443]

Hamas and the *Mujamaa al-Islami* however remained somehow exempted by the hardening of the Israeli approach towards the disturbances. In fact, Israel still refrained from conducting mass arrests against Yassin's organization.[444]

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[437] Mark Tessler, 'The Intifada and Political Discourse in Israel', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 19/2 (1990), 46.

[438] Don Peretz, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising,* 65.

[439] Ibid. 67. During the first year of the intifada at least 1600 curfews were imposed on the territories, of which 400 were prolonged, lasting from 3 to 40 days.

[440] Penny Johnson, 'Palestinian Universities under Occupation, November 1987-January 1988', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 17/3 (Spring, 1988) 100-105 and 'Palestinian Universities under Occupation, February-May 1988' *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 17/4 (Summer, 1988), 116-122.

[441] Aryeh Shalev, *The Intifada: Causes and Effects*, 116, 118-121.

[442] Ami Pedahzur & Arie Perliger, 'The Consequences of Israeli Counterterrorism', in Martha Crenshaw (ed.), *The Consequences of Counterterrorism* (New York: Russell Sage, 2010), 341.

[443] Efrat Silber, 'Israel's Policy of House Demolitions During the First Intifada, 1987-1993', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 23/1 (2010), 91.

[444] Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*, 56.

Violent demonstration by Hamas in the major cities of the West Bank were almost ignored by the IDF GHS, which failed to provide military governors and commanders on the ground a clear and well-defined line of action for dealing with the Islamists.[445] Tightening financial controls aimed at draining the funds reaching the West Bank from abroad as well as reducing the amount of money allowed by the authorities for each single person entering the Territories did not involve people associated with Islamic institutions. While blocking PLO's funding, the CA did not intervene to block financial contributions reaching Hamas from Jordan and even allowed high-rank emissaries of the Brotherhood from Amman to enter the West Bank for consultations.[446] At the same time, some of the punitive measures enforced by the Israeli authorities contributed to strengthen the role of Hamas. The school closures decreed by the CA, prompted in fact the Islamic Resistance Movement to urge the population to 'turn the mosques into centers of study'.[447] Yet, for Israel the perspective risks entailed in allowing the Hamas to strengthen its role within the Palestinian society were counterbalanced by the fractures which a strong Hamas could produce within the Palestinian uprising.

The impact of the first change in Israel's response on Hamas and the uprising in general was not unequivocal. Though a reduction in the level of violence was partially achieved, the Israeli approach failed to achieve its main goal of ending the mass demonstrations. At the same time, welfare, education, and health institutions started to collapse and proved increasingly unable to fulfill their tasks. Similarly, limitation on the entry of Palestinian laborers into Israel and limitations and prohibitions of movement within and from the Territories started to generate an adverse impact on the Palestinian economy.[448] As with regard to Hamas, its role was considered as rather negligible. Since the political echelons had somewhat nebulously defined the 'restoration of order' as the main operational goal, the Islamic Resistance Movement was not considered worthy of any specific attention.[449]

Besides, in the first years of the intifada Hamas maintained a relatively low profile.[450] In fact the organization's leaders, afraid to expose the movement's relative weakness and (still) limited public support, avoided continuously organizing mass demonstrations and carefully planned Hamas' involvement in the insurgency, limiting its activities to those which had religious overtones, and escalating attacks and demonstrations almost exclusively in dates of religious significance.[451]

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[445] Author's personal interview with Col. (res.) Yonathan Fighel, Herzliya, February 22, 2012.

[446] Aryeh Shalev, *The Intifada: Causes and Effects*, 96; Zeev Schiff & Ehud Yaari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, 234.

[447] Hamas leaflet, March, 13, 1988; Aryeh Shalev, *The Intifada: Causes and Effects*, 86-87.

[448] Avi Kober, 'From Blitzkrieg To Attrition: Israel's Attrition Strategy and Staying Power', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 16/2 (2005), 233.

[449] Efraim Inbar, 'Israel's Small War the Military Response to the *Intifada'*, 36.

[450] Robert Satloff, 'Islam in the Palestinian Uprising', *Orbis* 33/3 (Summer 1989), 389.

[451] Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001*, 556.

The Second Phase: Pressure and Counter-Terrorism

Just a few days after the outbreak of the intifada, Yehuda Litani of the 'Jerusalem Post' observed that the Israeli government had to somehow provide a political solution to the intifada.[452] Such a call was echoed by CGS Lt. Gen. Dan Shomron's whose remarks about the fact that the insurgency required a 'political solution' amounted to a confession of poor political guidance.[453] For his part, Defense Minister Rabin concluded that a solution was to be reached through negotiation leading to a political settlement, rather than through military means, as early as January 13, 1988.[454] The highly polarized Israeli political system, however, was structurally incapable of devising a political solution. This stalemate forced the IDF to develop means and methods to contain the insurgency.[455] The intifada could not be equated to conventional war or to the terrorist campaigns of the Palestinian organizations.[456] The decentralized use of low-level violence represented a *sui generis* form of warfare which required a quite different response from the one which the IDF had provided in the realms of conventional warfare and in the struggle against Palestinian terrorism.[457] First of all a decisive outcome in a rather short period of time could not be imposed upon the intifada. Conversely, the intifada could be brought to an end only through a lengthy, 'cumulative process of physical and economic fatigue and the disruption of the frameworks of daily life'. It was necessary therefore to conduct operational activity through an overall long-term framework of attrition, envisioning a prolonged sequence of intermittent encounters, none of which should be regarded as decisive in and of itself.[458]

Sole military force and the uncoordinated and inconsistent use of punitive non-military measures were no longer considered appropriate. Rather the defense establishment began to think in terms of a more coordinated and integrated civilian/military carrot-and-stick approach. Limited use of military force and selective punitive measures such as administrative arrests, deportations, administrative and economic pressures to deter insurgents and attempt to break the cycle of support which fueled the uprising had to be

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[452] *The Jerusalem Post International*, 12/19/1987.

[453] Don Peretz, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 130. In march 1989 the head of AMAN research division would have informed also the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense committee that no military solution to the intifada existed without employing methods unacceptable for western standards of conduct, a claim supported by senior circles of the Shabak, see Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure: The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process*, 17.

[454] Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001*, 587; Yitzhaq Rabin, Yoram Ronen, Moshe Shlonsky and Ehud Ya'ari, 'Rabin on the Future of the Occupied Territories', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 17/3 (Spring, 1988), 150-158.

[455] Amram Mitzna, 'Civil-Military Relations During the First Intifada', in Ram Erez (ed.), *Civil-Military Relations in Israel in Times of Military Conflict*, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies Memorandum no.82 (October 2006), 55; Yehoshafat Harkabi, 'A Policy for the Moment of Truth', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 17/3 (Spring, 1988), 80-90.

[456] Ariel Merari, 'Israel Facing Terrorism', *Israel Affairs*, 11/1 (2005), 223-237.

[457] Noemi Gal-Or, 'The IDF and Unconventional Warfare', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 2/2 (1990), 215.

[458] Suart A. Cohen, 'How Did the Intifada Affect the IDF?', *Conflict Quarterly* 14/3 (1994), 11.

accompanied by rewards for cooperation and abstention from violence in an overall cadre of restoration of the CA functions. This in turn would increase the dependence of the population on the Israeli authorities.[459] Still, both the political and the military echelons were convinced that the continuous employment of military force and of coercive measures was necessary to demonstrate Israel's capacity to remain in the Territories. Thus operationally, Israel's goal was to achieve a reasonable level of tranquility in the Territories and restore the CA. Politically, the aim was to force the Palestinians to internalize the insight that the use of violence could not be translated in any political achievement.[460]

The new operational approach began to be implemented in Spring 1988. A new agreement between the intelligence services assigned to the Shabak formal responsibility for all types of intelligence in the territories, something which in March 1988 resulted in the establishment within the internal security service of a research unit specifically designed to analyze political social and military developments in the Palestinian arena.[461] This however did not lead to significant ameliorations in the quality of the intelligence on Hamas.[462]

In the first six months of intifada, individual acts of violence committed by people who were acting independently, but had close ties with Hamas, had continuously intensified. From mid-88 the situation further deteriorated as Hamas became more and more involved in the execution of Palestinian citizens suspected of collaborating with the Shabak.[463] Even at that time however, Israeli authorities were still ready to turn a blind eye to the Islamic Resistance Movement, as the prevailing opinion was that that it was not planning any serious attack against Israel.[464] In fact, as the IDF further increased its presence and conducted massive rounds-up which led to place under arrest nearly 10,000 Palestinians, pressurizing the civilian population through economic and administrative constraints, the debate over how to cope with Hamas was still raging within the Israeli defense establishment.

The CA, the first Israeli institution to suspect a nexus between the Islamic infrastructure and the Hamas, advocated the adoption of forceful measures to bring back under control the activities of Muslim associations and fully control the *Da'wa* system.[465] By contrast the Shabak was skeptical about the depth of the links between Hamas and the wider Islamic network. Consistently with a much diffused view of Palestinian paramilitary

[459] Don Peretz, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, 73; Graham Fuller, *Israel and the West Bank: Point Of No Return?* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1989), 16-23.

[460] Eitan Alimi, *Israeli Politics and the First Palestinian Intifada*, 132.

[461] Author's personal interview with Dr. Barak Ben-Zur, Herzliya, January, 22, 2012.

[462] Aryeh Shalev, *The Intifada: Causes and Effects,* 36.

[463] Anat Kurz & Nachman Tal, *Hamas: Radical Islam in a National Struggle*, 23, 26.

[464] Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*, 58-59.

[465] The term *Da'wa* is commonly employed within the Israeli security establishment to refer to Islamic movements' civil array, that is the infrastructure of civil and charitable and communal institutions. It will be here employed in the same sense.

organizations among the Israeli defense establishment,[466] the security service tended to hold a view of Hamas as a 'skeleton organization', that is a rather small organization comprising a small number of militants organized in a few cells with a hierarchically-structured chain of command.[467] Shabak reports about the structure and command of the Hamas paramilitary organization outlined in fact a structure composed of approximately 200 members under the command of founding member Salah Shehada with two deputy commanders in the northern and southern sectors of the Gaza strip.[468] For these reasons, the Shabak recommended to strike against the Hamas leadership, rather than fully targeting the Islamic civilian array.[469]

For its part the political establishment took a position similar to the Shabak's. Convinced that it was still possible to exploit the Islamists to divide the Palestinian front,[470] the political echelon was concerned about an excessive use of coercive measures which could push the Palestinians to despair as well as about exposing Israel to charges of violating the Palestinians' freedom of worship by arresting clerical figures or curbing institutions associated with the *Waqf*.[471] In fact, notwithstanding the harsh aspects of Israel's new counter-insurgency approach, a delicate balance between carrots and sticks had to be preserved: the disruption of the Palestinian civilian population's daily life should not be brought to a point where they had nothing to lose.[472]

The first months of the disturbances had left the Israeli government, the intelligence services and the IDF with the impression that no centralized leadership existed, in the first half of 1988 this opinion was revised. Both the former head of the CA Shmuel Goren and the AMAN director Amnon Lipkin-Shahak publicly acknowledged the existence of a local leadership of the Intifada, an 'hard-core' in the security establishment's professional jargon.[473] The identification of a leadership of the uprising suggested as even more appropriate the implementation of a decapitation strike against the Islamic

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[466] Noemi Gal-Or, 'The IDF and Unconventional Warfare', 221; Bard O'Neill, 'The Intifada in the Context of Armed Struggle', in Robert O. Freedman (ed.) *The intifada Its impact on Israel, the Arab World and the Superpowers*, 47-48.

[467] Author's personal interview with former Shabak officer, Herzliya, January 16, 2012; for the definition of 'skeleton terrorist organization' see Boaz Ganor, 'Terrorist Organization Typologies and the Probability of a Boomerang Effect', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 31/4 (2008), 269-283; Shaul Mishal and Maoz Rosenthal, 'Al Qaeda as a Dune Organization: Toward a Typology of Islamic Terrorist Organizations', 275-293.

[468] Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for a State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 632.

[469] Author's personal interview with Col. (res.) Yonathan Fighel, February 22, 2012; Author's personal interview with Dr. Barak Ben-Zur, February 22, 2012.

[470] In May 1988 Shimon Peres met with Hamas leader Mahmud al-Zahar and on June, 1, 1988 Yitzhak Rabin met with a Palestinian delegation which included al-Zahar and Hamas' leader in the West Bank Ibrahim al-Yazuri. See Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza,* 42; Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), 151.

[471] Raphael Cohen-Almagor, 'The Intifada: Causes Consequences and Trends', *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 2/1 (1991), 30.

[472] Zeev Schiff & Ehud Yaari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, 237.

[473] *Haaretz*, June, 30, 1988, A1; Aryeh Shalev, *The Intifada: Causes and Effects,* 82; Hillel Frisch, 'Between Diffusion and Territorial Consolidation in Rebellion: Striking at the Hard Core of the *Intifada*', *Terrorism & Political Violence*, 3/4 (1991), 39-62.

Resistance Movement's leadership.[474] A first step in this direction was taken in April 1988, when the IDF arrested Hamas' founding members Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi and Shaykh Khalil al-Quqa on the charge of being involved in the activities of the al-Sawa'id al-Ramiya that is Hamas' street fighters.[475]

In the second half of 1988 mass demonstrations started to die down and the momentum of the civil disobedience began to stall. The tax boycott and the participation in strikes dropped down in the wake of property confiscations, closings of businesses and fines imposed by the military authorities. In parallel with this, Israel gradually began to restore the normal provision of services by the Civil Administration.[476] Even Hamas reduced the frequency of its strikes and demonstrations as an expression of sensitivity to the needs and fatigue of the civilian population.[477] Apparently the new Israeli approach had made the price of continuing the struggle unbearable for the Palestinians.

As civilian participation in the revolt dwindled, the rate of armed attacks rose. Hamas, which was expanding its constituency in a phase when the intifada was losing its mass character, grew increasingly involved in the assassinations of suspected Palestinian 'collaborators'. Since August 1988 it also started to plant roadside Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and firing against Israeli settlers, civilians, as well as military personnel.[478] These events in conjunction with the publication, in the same month, of the Islamic Resistance Movement's covenant, which did not disguise the long-term aim of canceling the 'Zionist entity', prompted the Israeli authorities to act.[479]

Starting from July 1988 the IDF and the Shabak jointly coordinated a series of arrest operations against Hamas' cadres and mid-level echelon which led to put over 100 activists of the movement under administrative detention.[480] In September of that year Israeli operational activity culminated in a crackdown against Hamas' senior leadership, including Ibrahim Al-Yazouri, one of Yassin's closest aides and Jamil Tamimi the movement's leader in the West Bank, but excluding Shaykh Yassin, whose exact role in the group's military activities the Shabak could not ascertain.[481]

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[474] Israel decided to strike also against the PLO's leadership outside the Territories, assassinating on April, 16, 1988 in Tunis, Abu Jihad (Khalil al-Wazir) who was considered at the time the mastermind behind the intifada. See Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism*, 78-81.

[475] Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for a State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 631.

[476] *Anat Kurz, The Palestinian Uprisings: War with Israel, War at Home*, 24.

[477] Anat Kurz & Nachman Tal, *Hamas: Radical Islam in a National Struggle*, 30-31.

[478] Executions of 'collaborators' progressively augmented throughout the intifada. According to the IDF spokesperson, 942 Palestinians were killed by other Palestinians on suspicion of collaboration between 9 December 1987 and 30 November 1993. Helena Cobban, 'The PLO and the Intifada' in Robert O. Freedman (ed.), *The intifada Its impact on Israel, the Arab World and the Superpowers*, 77-79.

[479] Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for a State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 632; *Anat Kurz, The Palestinian Uprisings: War with Israel, War at Home*, 24; Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*, 60; Meir Litvak, 'The Islamization of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: the case of Hamas', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 34/1 (1998), 148-163.

[480] Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza,* 79.

[481] Zeev Schiff & Ehud Yaari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, 238; author's personal interview with Dr. Reuven Paz, Herliya, January, 12 ,2012. Israel refrained from arresting or banishing from Gaza Shaykh

In the aftermath of the crackdown, intelligence reports indicated that Hamas' senior echelon had been liquidated. Consistently with Shabak's view however the *Da'wa* infrastructure remained almost untouched. This in turn helped Shaykh Yassin, in cooperation with the movement's middle echelon, to rebuild Hamas clandestine infrastructure. Hamas' organic nature rooted in mosques and social institutions affiliated with the *Mujamaa al-Islami* offered high chances of survival against arrests and decapitations as the new activists and leaders could be recruited among or emerged spontaneously from the supporters informally affiliated with the group. Thus in a short lapse of time Yassin managed to reorganize a new secret military organization horizontally highly compartmentalized led by Muhammad al-Sharatiha and called 'Cell 101'.[482] The reorganization made any authority within the movement even more fragmented and hierarchical links between the movements political and military leaders more blurred. It also led to a swift renewal of Hamas military activity culminated in the abduction, on February 16 1989, of an IDF soldier followed in May by the kidnapping and murder of another one.[483]

The moment Hamas resumed violence, however, the IDF and the Shabak had introduced considerable tactical innovations. Before the intifada, the IDF had rejected the establishment of LIC-oriented Special Operation Forces (SOF) for operating in the West Bank and Gaza.[484] Although the IDF regularly played an auxiliary role in constabulary duties in the Territories, the COGAT preferred to rely on the Border Police which, being permanently stationed beyond the Green Line, was more acquainted and familiar with the terrain and the local population and whose police training could better meet the requirements of the Territories' operational activity. Between 1988 and 1989 however, the realization of the existence of an 'hard core' leadership of the *intifada* prompted the establishment of SOF specifically designed to cope with the terrain and the challenges posed by the uprising. On the base of the experience of the *Palmach Mista'arvim*, two SOF units, Duvdevan (operating in the West Bank) and Shimshon (operating in the Gaza strip) were created within the IDF. In 1990 an analogous unit, Yamas, was established within the Border Guard.[485] Such units, operating undercover were tasked with targeted

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Yassin, fearing boomerang effects which could enhance his public prestige. Yassin was nonetheless place under home surveillance and warned against any involvement in terrorist activities.

[482] Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: Unwritten Chapters*, 57.

[483] Author's personal interview with Col. (res.) Yonathan Fighel, February 22, 2012; Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, 56-58.

[484] As Gal-Or convincingly claimed, the inclination in the IDF was to conceive the challenge posed by irregulars as part of the conceptual framework elaborated to prepare to face conventional warfare, hence in cases where the IDF was left with no other choice but to face the paramilitary threat the tendency was to channel the confrontation into patterns relevant to the regular military forces. See Noemi Gal-Or, 'The IDF and Unconventional Warfare', 216.

[485] *Mista'arvim* stands in Hebrew for 'becoming an Arab' and was originally employed to refer to special undercover units within the Palmach. The name was employed once again for Duvdevan and Shimshon. For an overview of these two units see Stuart Cohen, '*Mista'arvim* – IDF 'Masqueraders': The Military Unit and the Public Debate', BESA *Security and Policy Studies*, no. 16, April 1994; The Palestinian Human Rights Information Center, *Targeting to Kill: Israel's Undercover Units* (Jerusalem, May 1992); Bet'selem – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, *The Activities of the Undercover*

operations for arresting or killing leading members of the 'hard core' of the *intifada*.[486] Approximately in the same period the IDF deployed crack infantry units to target, often in helicopter-borne operations, problematic areas, such as villages declaring 'independence'.

Israel's ability to adopt a more proactive stance and to conduct selective strikes against the insurgent infrastructure and leadership improved thanks also to ameliorations in the operationalization of intelligence and diffusion of tactical and operational knowledge relevant to the conduct of counter-insurgency. The IDF started in fact to employ Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) (already deployed in the 1982 Lebanon war) and helicopters for supplying real-time intelligence. IDF units in the Territories also began to operate in coordination with Shabak liaison officers.[487] Moreover, knowledge accumulated through standardization of post-action reports in conjunction with study of foreign sources conducted in the previous years resulted in the publication of several instruction booklets dealing with operational aspects of combating the intifada and ultimately in the release of a tactical doctrine for waging Low-Intensity Conflict (LIC).[488]

Taking advantage of these tactical innovations, after Hamas' double kidnapping, the IDF and the Shabak carried out a second decapitation strike against the Islamic Resistance Movement in May 1989. This time together with more than 300 activists, even Shaykh Yassin and Salah Shehada were arrested.[489] In September, concurrently with a new wave of mass arrests among the Palestinian organizations[490] Hamas was outlawed.[491] Following the 1989 decapitation of the movement, the Shabak began to conduct periodical operations aimed at containing its military activity as well as countering (albeit to a limited extent) Islamic social and educational activities.[492] And yet, this did not translate into a clear understanding of the nexus between Hamas and the Islamic social, educational and religious infrastructure. The Shabak and AMAN grew increasingly aware of the fact that Hamas was deeply

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Units in the Territories (Jerusalem, May 1992) and the unofficial internet site of the Israeli SOF www.isayeret.com.

[486] Hillel Frisch, 'Between Diffusion and Territorial Consolidation in Rebellion: Striking at the Hard Core of the *Intifada*', 39-62.

[487] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation: The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution in Military Affairs in Russia, the US and Israel* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2010), 93; 99. Eliot Cohen, Michael Eisenstadt, Andrew Bacevich, *Knives, Tanks & Missiles, Israel's Security Revolution*, (Washington: the Washington Institute for Near Policy, 1998) 119; author's personal interview with Dr. Barak Ben-Zur, Herzliya, January, 22, 2012.

[488] Arieh O'Sullivan, 'What a Riot', *The Jerusalem Post*, January, 2, 2004; Efraim Inbar, 'Israel's Small War the Military Response to the *Intifada*', 44. Robert Thompson, 'Fundamental Principles of Civil Disturbances' Prevention', *Maarachot* no. 312-313 (September 1988), 31-34 (Hebrew); W. Andrew Terrill 'Low Intensity Conflict in Southern Lebanon: Lessons and Dynamics of the Israeli-Shi'ite War', *Conflict Quarterly* 7/3 (1987),25

[489] Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence* (New York, NY: Columbia UP, 2006), 61-62.

[490] Neve Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*, 158.

[491] Anat Kurz & Nachman Tal, *Hamas: Radical Islam in a National Struggle*, 23.

[492] Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for a State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 739.

rooted in the Palestinian society, but searches in the mosques in the main cities of the West Bank and interrogations of imams and clerical figures led the intelligence services to conclude that radical Islamism was still not a widespread phenomenon yet.[493]

The Third Phase: Hearts & Minds?

Israel's 1989 decapitation and arrests of the Islamic Resistance Movement members represented a severe blow to the movement and forced it to restructure and re-staff most of the senior positions in its various branches. As Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal acknowledged, the Israeli operations of 1989 annihilated the movement leadership and almost totally paralyzed Hamas. The movement was also forced to move its leadership outside the Territories and to establish a new command and control apparatus along lines similar to those in the Territories.[494] A group of high-ranking Hamas figures from the USA led by Musa Abu Marzuq proceeded to restructure the movement in conjunction with the Muslim Brotherhood leadership in Jordan. Marzuq developed a framework to avoid the movement's collapse in case of future decapitations: from late 1989 an external command provided political guidance, coordinated foreign relations and military operations, and organized financial support.[495] Following Marzuq's intervention Yassin's role as Hamas supreme leader came *de facto* to an end. A new phase in which the movement was actually controlled from the outside began.[496]

In June 1990 a new Likud-led government came to power in Israel. Its new Defense minister, Moshe Arens, introduced some changes in the government policy vis-à-vis the intifada. Prioritizing the safety of the Israeli civilian population through more capillary control of the territory, Arens advocated troops redeployment, minimization of contact with the local population, as well as a stricter enforcement of the regulations governing the resort to live fire.[497]

As historian Benny Morris has argued, even though the Intifada would have officially came to an end in September 1993, when the PLO and Israel signed the Declaration of Principles (DOP), the end of October 1991 and the opening of an international Middle East peace conference in Madrid might be viewed as a more accurate cutoff date.[498] In fact since 1990 Palestinian participation in mass demonstrations dropped drastically from 48,858; to 29,174 in 1991; 23,686 in 1992 and 20,459 in 1993.[499] The dwindling number of spontaneous

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[493] Zeev Schiff & Ehud Yaari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, 239; Author's personal interview with Col. (res.) Yonathan Fighel, February 22, 2012; Author's personal interview with Dr. Barak Ben-Zur, February 22, 2012.

[494] Boaz Ganor, 'Hamas, The Islamic Resistance Movement in the Territories'.

[495] Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: Unwritten Chapters*, 61.

[496] Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, 58.

[497] For Arens view on Israel's wars outcomes see Moshe Arens, 'The Termination of Wars', *Ma'arachot* no. 292-293 (March/April 1984), 3 (Hebrew).

[498] Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001*, 594.

[499] Quoted in Avi Kober, 'From Blitzkrieg To Attrition: Israel's Attrition Strategy and Staying Power', 232.

demonstrations and the first successes in isolating and striking against the 'hard-core' of the intifada from the second half of 1990 led the Israeli authorities to relieve the pressure on the civilian population. Thus, fewer activists were expelled and the destruction or sealing of homes in response to involvement in violent attacks declined; moreover, in order to avoid creating immediate *loci* of friction, the IDF's presence in the refugee camps and towns was scaled back. Thus the IDF and the Shabak shifted from the conduct of rounds up and mass arrests to more 'surgical' operations of containment; surveillance and pursuit.[500] Containment measures, designed to restrict the freedom of movement of enemy personnel, were characterized by the periodic establishment of IDF mobile roadblocks, which conducted intensive searches and identity checks. Surveillance, meanwhile, grew more intense and pervasive through the conspicuous deployment of Shabak teams and specially-trained squads (identified by their Hebrew acronym as HENZA) to gather tactical intelligence. Finally 'pursuit' operations were targeted attacks against selected members affiliated with the most radical groups involved in the intifada's violence, such as the one launched on December 4, 1990 which led to the arrest of more than 1700 people accused of various degree of affiliation with the Islamic Resistance Movement, including almost all the members of the new leadership set up by Marzuq.[501]

Concurrently, the restoration of the CA authority and a greater awareness of the reality of the economic and social conditions of life in the West Bank and Gaza led the COGAT to launch a series of civil programs in the health, education and infrastructures sectors. This initiative represented a very close approximation of all those socio-economic-political measures aimed at influencing the perception of the civilian population which in are commonly defined as 'hearts and minds'.[502] In mid 1991, permits were issued for new economic initiatives in the territories. The Civil Administration approved a temporary tax exemption for new factories and granted retroactive approval for factories that were built without permits. Likewise, economic assistance to the Territories was facilitated, elections to boards of commerce were allowed, and the CA worked to open educational institutions that had been closed as a result of the riots.[503]

Between the end of 1990 and 1991, Israel also defined a new counter-insurgency approach vis-à-vis the Islamic Resistance Movement. Following searches conducted by the Shabak and the IDF in the offices of the Zakat committee in Jenin in 1991, several aspects of Hamas funding system and Islamic educational infrastructures were uncovered. Consequently the Shabak and the CA came to develop an integrated approach whereby the security

[500] Suart A. Cohen, 'How Did the Intifada Affect the IDF?', 10.
[501] Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: Unwritten Chapters*, 62.
[502] Author's personal interview with Maj. Gen. (res.) Daniel Rothschild, former head of the COGAT (1991-1995), Herzliya, February, 29, 2012; author's personal interview with Col. (res.) Yonathan Fighel, February 22, 2012; Michael Fitzsimmons, 'Hard Hearts and Open Minds? Governance, Identity and the Intellectual Foundations of Counterinsurgency Strategy', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 31/3, 342-347.
[503] *Anat Kurz, The Palestinian Uprisings: War with Israel, War at Home*, 24.

service was supposed to continue to monitoring individuals and disrupting the terrorist infrastructure while the CA would start to map the Islamic *Da'wa* and to recommend the necessary steps.[504] Nevertheless, the Israeli authorities still regarded Hamas as a minor problem, and remained in general very reluctant to interfere in Palestinian religious affairs. They worried about the potential consequences of enforcing constraining measures against Islamic social and charitable institutions for the already deteriorated public image of Israel.[505] Moreover, the IDF and the Shabak did not succeed in developing a clear exhaustive picture of Hamas' *Da'wa* infrastructure, especially in the West Bank where it was particularly articulated. Thus Israel's turn to the application of 'hearts & minds' measures vis-à-vis Palestinian insurgents, concerned Hamas' civil array only to a very limited extent. In fact, the Israeli authorities were partly afraid and partly unable to replace the social and communal services provided by Islamic institutions through direct provision by the COGAT, nor did they consider it a priority. Eventually, Israel limited to apply circumscribed defensive measures towards the Islamic civil array, occasionally followed by direct application of force in the form of raids and closures of militant mosques and institutions associated with Hamas.[506]

By contrast, Israeli actions proved more effective against Hamas' paramilitary organization. In fact, despite its separation from the civilian branch and the tight horizontal compartmentalization, the military wing did not succeed in surviving as a clandestine infrastructure: the mass arrests carried out by the IDF and the Shabak in 1989, 1990 and 1991 determined a fragmentation of its cells. Nevertheless, those who for some reason managed to escape arrests, set up into small groups which began operating independently, providing the first embryonic nucleus from which a new Hamas military wing would spawn.[507] In fact, by 1991, the remnants of both the *Majd* and the *Mujahideen al-Filastinun* were reorganized into a new organization under the name of *Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades*. The first Qassam Brigades cell, named after a Muslim Brotherhood leader killed in action against British forces in 1935, was established by Zaccaria Walid Akel, at the time head of Hamas military wing in Gaza. Thus their creation was not the product of a leadership's decision, but a grassroots initiative taken by senior military activists at the local level and only *post-facto* recognized by the movement's leadership.[508]

The *Qassam* Brigades not only continued kidnapping and murdering suspected collaborators, but they soon engaged in terrorist attacks against Israel. In December 1991 in fact, they murdered an Israeli resident of the Kfar Darom settlement in Gaza in an attack which, closely replicating Hizb'allah

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[504] Author's personal interview with Col. (res.) Yonathan Fighel, February 22, 2012; author's personal interview with former Mossad Officer, January, 10, 2012.

[505] Ran Goren, 'The IDF and the Media - Can the Clock Be Turned Back?', *Ma'arachot,* no. 322 (December 1991), 20-23 (Hebrew).

[506] Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, 56.

[507] Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: Unwritten Chapters*, 63.

[508] Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, 64.

tactics and *modus operandi*, suggested a brand new operational cooperation between the Hamas military wing and the Lebanese organization.[509]

In 1992 *al-Maktab al-Siyasi*, Hamas' Political Bureau (which would be later known as the 'external leadership') was formally established, and the *Qassam* Brigades expanded its infrastructure in the West Bank, especially the areas of Hebron and Nablus.[510] And yet, Hamas' military wing continued to suffer the consequences of the Israeli counter-terror operations. The serious damage caused to the movement's military capability led in fact to the so-called 'war of the knives', that is a long series of stabbings against Israeli military and settlers which continued until December 1992 when the brigades inaugurated the period known as '7 days war'. As the intifada's thrust waned, a variety of disparate insurgent cells started to coalesce in the attempt to solidify new operational infrastructures and embark in independent actions. In doing so, even without being affiliated nor taking advantage of their infrastructure, they often employed the name of organizations still highly committed to the struggle.[511] This is what happened on December 7 1992 when an Hamas cell in Gaza ambushed an Israeli patrol on its way from al Shuja'iyah to Bet Lahyia, killing 3 soldiers; on December 12, when 2 more soldiers were killed in Hebron by an armed cell and eventually the day afterward, when an Israeli border policeman was kidnapped.[512]

On December 16, following the execution of the hostage, Rabin took unprecedented steps against Hamas. The Minister of Defense ordered in fact the IDF and the Shabak to storm the offices and homes of all the Hamas' leaders and to proceed to mass arrest of the movement's members.[513] The operations resulted in the detention of over 2000 people and the deportation of 415 leaders of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad on the southern Lebanese hillside of Marj al-Zuhur.[514] This move, which was defined 'temporary removal' served multiple scopes, such as reassuring the Israeli public as well as attempting to decrease Hamas' recruitment within the prison system.[515] At the same time, however, it marked a clear shift in Israel's approach. Nearly all the deportees were in fact members of Hamas civilian, information, political and religious infrastructure and no one had been directly involved, as far as the Israeli authorities knew, in violent activities or in the planning and

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[509] Several experts already noticed the influence of the shiite model and Hizb'allah on sunni radicals, see Emanuel Sivan, 'Sunni Radicalism in the Middle East and the Iranian Revolution', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 21 (1989), 1-30. The Israeli intelligence related the cooperation between Hamas and Hizb'allah to the October 1991 Tehran conference, authors' personal interview with former Mossad Officer, January, 10, 2012;

[510] Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: Unwritten Chapters*, 75.

[511] Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure: The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process*, 19; Robert Satloff, 'Islam in the Palestinian Uprising'.

[512] Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: Unwritten Chapters*, 64; Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, 64.

[513] Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*, 64.

[514] Ali Jarbawi and Roger Heacock, 'The Deportations and the Palestinian-Israeli Negotiations', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 22/3 (Spring 1993), 32-45.

[515] Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: Unwritten Chapters*, 66; Sherifa Zuhur, *Hamas and Israel: Conflicting Strategies of Group-Based Politics*, 35.

execution of acts of terrorism.[516] Although still unaware of the nexus between the *da'wa* system and Hamas' military activities, the Israeli authorities realized that the core of the Islamic Resistance Movement was not its military apparatus. Thus, by removing a number of central non-military figures within the organization, Israel hoped to deliver a metaphorical 'shot in the brain' to the movement, crippling its influence within the Palestinian society, and indirectly weakening also its military wing.

Apparently, however, the *Izz-al-din-al-Qassam* Brigades were not affected, at least in an immediate or direct way, by the mass arrests and deportations conducted in late 1992. In 1993 Israel faced a new wave of attacks against settlers, military personnel and civilians. Far from deterring or incapacitating the movement, the 1992 decapitation and deportations evidenced Israel's inability to effectively curb Hamas military activities, either directly, through mass arrests and targeted operations against the Brigades' cells, and indirectly by removing the movement's political and religious leadership.[517] By contrast the evolutionary development of Hamas' terrorist tactics, which led to the group's employment of suicide bombings, on April 16, 1993 at the Mehola junction in the West Bank, and on October, 4 near Beit El. This evolution showed that the movement had successfully managed to develop a clandestine network even in the West Bank, where it was traditionally much weaker than in Gaza.[518] Presumably to counterbalance Israel's softer stance and political concessions in the secret negotiations which at the time were taking place in Oslo, Prime Minister Rabin (re-elected in 1992) ordered to react decisively once again.[519] In the following months the IDF and the Shabak carried out several rounds of targeted operations against Hamas' military infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza managing also to kill in November 1993 one of the Brigades most popular and talented commanders, Imad Aqel.[520]

And yet, even after such a dramatic (and deadlier) shift in Hamas' tactics, such as the employment of suicide bombings, the movement continued to be considered by the Israeli authorities a minor problem which could be dealt with simply through counter-terror operations.

Conclusion: Culture and Adaptation

Generally speaking the Intifada and the context in which it took place resembled under many aspects the colonial wars which gave birth to the so-called counter-insurgency theory in western military thinking. It is therefore not surprising that, on the whole, Israel's approach to the 1987 Palestinian uprising and the fight against Hamas falls in line with tactics and operational

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[516] Anat Kurz & Nachman Tal, *Hamas: Radical Islam in a National Struggle*, 22-23.
[517] Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*, 65.
[518] Matthew Levitt, 'Hamas from Cradle to Grave' *Middle East Quarterly* 11/1 (2004), 3-15.
[519] Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001*, 618.
[520] Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, 66.

methods employed in this context and prescribed by the classical theory of counter-insurgency.

The intifada in and of itself as well as Hamas' turn to violent methods posed unique and unknown challenges for the Israeli security apparatus. In the tactical fight against demonstrators and stone-throwers the IDF adapted rather slowly. Policing operations were alien to the IDF's history, military personnel never received appropriate training for this kind of combat and success or mission accomplishment were hard to measure from a military point of view. Nevertheless, the IDF gradually adapted, introducing police-style riot-control techniques and equipments and deploying non-military measures to control the civilian population.

The IDF and the Shabak performed more effectively in the fight against the 'hard core' of the intifada as well as against terrorist cells. As testified by the campaigns launched almost every year against the Islamic Resistance Movement, the unorthodox, offensive ethos characterizing the Israeli security community considerably helped in adapting to the conditions of this type of combat. Through a rapid process of trial and error the IDF successfully managed to transform its organizational structures and operating patterns to adapt to the mode of fighting of a weaker side who countered mass by mobility and decentralized command, exploited superior local knowledge and invisibility. The Israeli armed forces' *bitsuist* ethos and their decentralized command patterns allowed the IDF to operate in a rather flexible way, even when performing large-scale arrests or riot-control operations. At the same time, Shabak's long acquaintance with the Palestinian environment and ability to overcome inter-organizational rivalries made sure that an effective and smooth cooperation with strike units was soon in place.

The IDF operational concept, based on offensive maneuver of ground forces proved totally irrelevant in the face of the intifada, therefore it had to develop an operational approach *ex novo*. If one defines counter-insurgency operational art as displacing the insurgents' influence from the social networks among which they operate and countering 'the issues' that drive the insurgency (frequently called 'grievances') it is safe to say that Israel, though quite slowly, managed to adapt.

As showed, In the initial phase of the insurgency the IDF attempted to separate the insurgents from the civilian population relying exclusively on coercion. It took a rather long time for the political and military establishments and the intelligence services to adequately take into account the social and economic grievances which, in conjunction with the political aspirations of the Palestinian people, had led many to get involved in the riots and violence. Subsequently however, after crushing the 'hard core' of the intifada the IDF manage to deploy a more balanced approach applying carrots & sticks in order to drive a wedge between the insurgents and the civilian population through the application of selected coercive measures and hearts & minds programs.

At the strategic level Israel proved able to adapt quite rapidly. Already in the first days of the intifada both the defense minister and the CGS clearly stated that no military solution existed for the intifada, although both of them shared the conviction that priority had to be given to crushing the insurgency in order for the Palestinians to internalize the fact that violence would lead them nowhere as well as 'to recharge the batteries of [Israeli] deterrence'. In the meantime, although adopting a tough stance against the intifada, Israel took care not to damage the Palestinian structure of authority which consolidated during the intifada, as well as to quickly restore the CA governmental and social services in the Territories. These steps contributed to constrain Hamas' *Da'wa* system represented the premises which allowed Israel to move towards the shaping of a new political order in the West Bank and Gaza through agreements which denied Hamas' political goals. The Madrid conference in 1991 and the Declaration of Principles of 1993 represented serious political defeats for the Islamic Resistance Movement, which delegitimized it among the strategic 'centre of gravity' represented by the Palestinian population.

3
The Oslo Interregnum

Conspicuously reshaping Israel's geostrategic environment, the early 90s had a profound impact on the Israeli perception of the conflict with the Palestinians, the approach to Low-Intensity Conflict (LIC) and the understanding of the threat posed by radical Islamists.

The geostrategic transformations of the early 90s led the Israeli strategic community to perceive the existential threat to the Jewish state as less immediate than in the past. Even though the Arab *capability* to harm Israel did not decrease, the Middle Eastern strategic environment of 1993 was nonetheless perceived as one in which the *probability* of the use of force against Israel on the part of the Arab states was rather low.[521]

The Palestinian intifada engendered a radical change in the perception of the conflict with the Arab world, leading the Israeli strategic community to shift from a 'war between states' to a 'war between nations' paradigm. Whereas the first school saw the refusal of the Arab states to recognize Israel's existence as the main source of the Arab-Israeli conflict and focused on the inter-state dimension, the second school emphasized the centrality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Israeli-Arab dispute and prioritized its solution in order to normalize Israel's relations with the Arab world.[522]

The Intifada also contributed to a reappraisal of the phenomenon of LIC. As had happened with the 1982 Lebanon war, the intifada posed the IDF in front of the limits of the sole military force in achieving its intended political goal.[523] Even though this did not immediately lead to reappraise LIC, which continued to be considered merely a 'serious nuisance', the prolonged and intensive attrition caused by the intifada made the Israeli strategic community internalize the insight that the conflict with the Palestinians could not be resolved only by military means. In conjunction with a general decline in the Israeli threat-perception this made the Israeli political and military leaderships generally more inclined towards a political accord.[524]

Finally, the geostrategic changes of the 90s favored a re-conceptualization of the threat posed by radical Islamic movements. According to official Israeli estimates of the early 90s in fact, the Gulf War had significantly enhanced the power of the 'moderate' actors in the middle-eastern area (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan) while weakening the political appeal and influence of the so-called 'radicals' (Iraq, Syria, and Libya), thereby contributing to maintain

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[521] Efraim Inbar, 'Israel's Strategic Environment in the 1990s', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 25/1 (2002), 21-38.

[522] Yoram Peri, 'The Israeli Military and Israel's Palestinian Policy: From Oslo to the Al-Aqsa Intifada', *Peaceworks*, no. 47 (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2002).

[523] Dima Adamsky, 'The Impact of the Cold War's End on the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A View from Israel' in Artemy Kalinovsky & Sergey Radchenko (eds.), *The End of the Cold War and the Third World: New Perspectives on Regional Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2011), 129.

[524] Ron Tira, 'Shifting Tectonic Plates Basic Assumptions on the Peace Process Revisited', *Institute for National Security Studies Strategic Assessment*, 12/1 (June 2009), 92.

radical groups such as Hamas isolated at the international level.[525] In the case of the Palestinian Islamic movements however, their weakened international stance was counterbalanced by their growing influence within the civil society. This phenomenon, of which the Israeli strategic community had grown increasingly aware in the course of the intifada, came to be perceived as a serious threat which required a brand new response.[526]

Counter-Terrorism and State-Building: the Rabin and Peres Government, 1993-1996

The signing by Israel and the PLO of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (Declaration of Principles - DOP or Oslo I) on September 13, 1993, dramatically changed Hamas' strategic situation, confronting the Islamic Resistance Movement with nothing less than an existential threat. Thus, **in October 1993** Hamas reached the decision **to join the Damascus-based** 'Democratic and Islamic National Front', **a united front of the Palestinian organizations opposed to the Oslo process** including, apart from Hamas, the Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), PFLP-General Command, and five smaller rejectionist groups.[527] Concurrently, cooperation with Hizb'allah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards was intensified through the establishment of an intelligence network within the Izz-al-din-al-Qassam Brigades and the training of approximately 3,000 Hamas fighters in urban guerrilla tactics.[528] Having chosen to reject the DOP and threatened by the PLO's consent to desist from hostile actions against Israel, a commitment to be imposed by the newly-established Palestinian Authority (PA) in cooperation with the Israeli security services, the Islamic Resistance Movement started to escalate its military activity already in the last months of 1993.[529]

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[525] Harold H. Saunders, *Other Walls. The Arab-Israeli Process in a Global Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991); Yossi Alpher (ed.), *War in the Gulf: Implications for Israel* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992); Ephraim Kam, 'Changes in the Soviet Union: Implications for the Foreign Policy and Security of the Arab States', in Joseph Alpher, Zeev Eytan and Dov Tamari (eds.) *The Middle East Military Balance 1989–1990* (Tel Aviv: Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies, 1991), 32–37; Reuven Pedatzur, 'The Gulf War in the Eyes of the Israelis', *Ma'arachot* (May–June 1993), 5-17; Daoud Kuttab, 'In the Aftermath of the War', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 20/4 (Summer 1991), 115-123; Edy Kaufman, Shurki B. Abed and Robert L. Rothstein (eds.), *Democracy, Peace and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Boulder, CO: Lynn Rienner, 1993), 5

[526] Yitzhak Rabin, 'Israel's Security Policy After the 1991 Gulf War', in *Israel's National Security Thinking* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan Center for Strategic Studies, 1991); Efraim Inbar, *War and Peace in Israeli Politics. Labor Party Positions on National Security* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1991); Aviezer Ya'ari, 'Problems of National Intelligence in the Current Era', Ma'arachot, no. 350 (October 1996), 13-17 (Hebrew).

[527] Anat Kurz & Nachman Tal, *Hamas: Radical Islam in a National Struggle*, JCSS Memorandum, No. 48 (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies, 1997), 34; Jonathan Schanzer, 'The Challenge of Hamas to Fatah'
Middle East Quarterly (Spring 2003), 32.

[528] Kenneth R. Timmerman, *In Their Own Words. Interviews with Leaders of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Muslim Brotherhood* (Los Angeles: Simon Wiesenthal Center, 1994), 10; Wendy Kristianassen, 'Challenges and Counterchallenges: Hamas's Response to Oslo', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28/3 (1999), 19-36; Iyad Barghouti, 'Interview: The Islamist Movement in the Occupied Territories', *Middle East Report* 183 (1993), 9-12.

[529] **Anat Kurz & Nachman Tal, *Hamas: Radical Islam in a National Struggle*,** 36.

Mindful of the fact that terrorism and guerrilla attacks by Palestinian rejectionist groups would represent the main security concern to the implementation of the DOP and the prosecution of the peace process, the Israeli government formulated a new strategy aimed at insulating the political negotiations from terrorism. Readapting the slogan coined by Ben-Gurion to justify a policy of simultaneous cooperation with the British occupiers against the Nazis while opposing Britain's restrictive immigration policies to the Yishuv, Rabin declared that Israel would fight terrorism as if there were no peace process, while its would have pursued the peace process as if there were no terrorism.[530] Thus, the Rabin government publicly acknowledged that it did not intend to link the negotiations to a complete cessation of terror, as it would have played in the hand of the rejectionists, giving them a veto over the peace process.[531]

Drawing a line between security and the peace process was considered realistic and feasible in light of the new perception of the geostrategic context. Already in 1992 Rabin publicly expounded a new vision of Israel's security problems influenced by an overall lower threat perception.[532] This appeared evident in the very language employed by the prime minister in a number of statements pronounced on relevant public occasions. In fact, Rabin went as far as denying such fundamental beliefs of the Israeli strategic culture, as siege-mentality or the sense of existential isolation, abandoning the view of the Jews as 'a people that dwells alone' and the perception of the outside world as fundamentally hostile.[533] In such a view terrorism, and LIC in general, were considered even more than ever a 'military nuisance' with marginal effect on Israel's overall balance of security.[534]

Consistently with the 'traditional' view which belittled the relevance of *batash, bitachon shotef* - current security threats,[535] Rabin tended to downplay the danger posed by LIC to the Israeli security, claiming that to consider Hamas or Hizb'allah as a serious threat to the Jewish state would be an offense to the IDF.[536] Such a view was shared also by a conspicuous part of the strategic community. Former head of the AMAN and then Deputy CGS

[530] Boaz Ganor, 'Terrorism as a Military Factor: The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process era, 1993-2000' in Barry Rubin (ed.), *Conflict and Insurgency in The Contemporary Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2010), 108.

[531] Boaz Ganor, 'Israeli Counter-terrorism in the Shadow of Oslo', *Policy View* no. 17 (December 10, 1995), 47-48.

[532] Hemda Ben-Yehuda 'Attitude Change and Policy Transformation: Yitzhak Rabin and the Palestinian Question, 1967–95', *Israel Affairs*, 3/3-4 (1997), 201-224.

[533] Yitzhak Rabin, 'Israel's Security Policy After the 1991 Gulf War', Efraim Inbar, 'Yitzhak Rabin and Israel's National Security', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 20/2 (1997), 35-36; for insights on Rabin's 'traditional' view of Israel's security problems see the collection of articles in *Ma'arachot* no. 344-345 (January 1996).

[534] Zaki Shalom, 'Principles and Guidelines in Current Security Situations', *Ma'arachot* no. 354 (November 1996), 20-24 (Hebrew); Boaz Ganor, *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle: A Guide for Decision-Makers* (New York: Transaction Publisher, 2005), 78.

[535] Stuart Cohen, *Israel and Its Army: From Cohesion to Confusion* (London: Routledge, 2008), 4; Avi Kober, *Israel's Wars of Attrition* (London: Routledge, 2009), 47-48.

[536] Quoted in Efraim Inbar, 'Yitzhak Rabin and Israel's National Security', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 20/2 (1997), 36.

Maj. Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, Maj. Gen. Danny Rothschild, former head of the AMAN Research division and, from 1991, head of the COGAT and even the leadership of the Mossad were all very optimistic about Israel's new strategic stance and the chances of cooperation with the Palestinians.[537]

Despite the fact that from the early 90s some pessimistic voices within the Israeli strategic community and the academia foreclosed Hamas' shift to a strategy of ideologically-driven terrorism, the majority remained convinced that Islamic radicalism would not have represented a major security problem in the peace process.[538] Basing his assessment on the civil programs in the health, education and infrastructure sectors successfully implemented in the West Bank and Gaza since 1991, Maj. Gen. Rothschild was convinced that Hamas' popular base did not support the radical positions expounded by the movement's leadership.[539]

Such a position was basically shared by the political establishment and the Rabin government. Consistently with a broader view of national security, incorporating several non-military dimensions, 'soft power', namely the development of economic and social links with the Palestinians, was considered a powerful driving force in fostering a different kind of relations between Israel and its neighbors.[540]

With regard to the problem of low-intensity violence and terrorism, following the intifada the Israeli strategic community had come to recognize the profound power of Palestinian nationalism and the crucial role of political and economic grievances in fomenting terrorism and violent resistance to the Israeli rule in the Territories. The prevailing conviction was that a political accord and the deployment of a wide array of socioeconomic measures below the level of high politics could be conducive to the removal of these grievances.[541] Specifically addressing the issue of Islamic radicalism, Prime Minister Rabin pointed out that 'practically the only way to dry the swamp of

[537] Jon Immanuel, 'Hamas Tabs, Muslim Merchants Vote," Jerusalem Post, May 29, 1992; 'The Mossad and Imad Mughnieyeh', *Jerusalem Post*, February 19, 2008; Ronen Bergman, *The Secret War with Iran* (New York: Random House, 2008), 64–65.

[538] Author's personal interview with former AMAN Officer, Herzliya , January, 10, 2012; author's personal interview with Dr. Reuven Paz, former Head of the Shabak Research Department, Herzliya, January, 12 ,2012. For Paz's view on Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic groups see Reuven Paz, 'The Development of Palestinian Islamic Groups', in Barry Rubin (ed.), *Revolutionaries and Reformers*: *Contemporary Islamist Movements in the Middle East* (NY: SUNY Press, 2003), 23-40; John Kifner, 'Mideast Accord: Gaza, Dedicated Extremists Present Twin Threat to the Middle East', *The New York Times*, September 14, 1993; Martin Kramer, 'The Prospect of Islamic Revival: Symposium', *The Middle East in the Aftermath of the Gulf War* (Tel Aviv: Dayan Center, 1987); Kenneth R. Timmerman, *In Their Own Words. Interviews with Leaders of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Muslim Brotherhood* (Los Angeles: Simon Wiesenthal Center, 1994), 10-11.

[539] Author's personal interview with Maj. Gen. (res.) Daniel Rothschild, former head of the COGAT (1991-1995), Herzliya, February, 29, 2012; author's personal interview with Col. (res.) Yonathan Fighel former governor of Jenin, Ramallah and Tulkarem, Herzliya, February 22, 2012.

[540] To describe such a 'new look' to security affairs Shimon Peres employed the term 'New Middle East', see Shimon Peres with Arieh Naor, *The New Middle East* (New York: Henry Halt, 1993) and Shimon Peres, *Battling for Peace. A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 1995).

[541] Gil Merom, 'Israel's National Security and the Myth of Exceptionalism', *Political Science Quarterly,* 114/3 (1999), 409-434; Thomas A. Marks, 'Counterinsurgency and Operational Art', *Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement*, 13/3 (2005), 168.

radical Islam is through economic development and improved standard of living'.[542]

Operationally, the DOP established cooperation in the realm of security between Israel and the PA. The decision to place primary responsibility for Counter-Terrorism (CT) on the PA had its roots in both political and operational considerations on the part of Israel. First it would be extremely complex and dangerous for the IDF to operate among an armed hostile population; second, the Israeli government wanted to fully support the sovereignty of the PA. Thus, through 'a strong police force', the PA would carry responsibility for the prevention of terrorist attacks against Israel by the rejectionist factions.[543] Nevertheless, an analysis of article VIII of the DOP immediately show how the exact terms of the arrangements on security, as well as the responsibilities of the parties, remained relatively vague.[544] In fact, Rabin wanted Israel to retain, at least to a certain extent, some responsibility for CT. It was the Prime Minister's conviction that, however problematic, the occasional use of force could still prove useful in signaling determination and in enhancing Israeli deterrence.[545]

De facto however, the government imposed significant constraints on the use of military force and since September 1993 the IDF switched to a new approach based on restraint (*Havlagah*).[546] As implemented from 1993, *Havlagah* represented the reformulation of a concept which had made its appearance in the political lexicon of the Yishuv in the 30s. Combining a mixture of moral principles and political pragmatic considerations, such concept was re-introduced in the 90s to indicate an operational approach based on self-restraint even in the face of severe Palestinian provocations.[547] Within the Israeli strategic community it was believed that the need to avoid disrupting the diplomatic process with the PA required a brand new operational/strategic approach: the IDF had therefore to apply restraint to the use of force whereas Israeli society had to be prepared to absorb attacks.[548] Such an approach was geared towards the achievement of a threefold strategic aim: preserving Israel's international stand; building trust and confidence with the Arab world in the realm of security; allowing

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[542] Efraim Inbar, 'Yitzhak Rabin and Israel's National Security', 35.

[543] Gal Luft, 'The Palestinian Security Services: Between Police and Army', *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy Policy Watch*, no. 189 (November 1998); Graham Usher, 'The Politics of Internal Security: the PA's New Intelligence Services', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 25/2 (1996), 21-34.

[544] http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Declaration%20of%20Principles

[545] Daniel Byman, *A High Price: the Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism* (New York: Oxford UP, 2011), 82-86;Efraim Inbar, 'Yitzhak Rabin and Israel's National Security', 31; Efraim Inbar and Shmuel Sandler, 'Israel's Deterrence Strategy Revisited', *Security Studies* 3/2 (Winter 1993), 349.

[546] Zeev Maoz, *Defending the Holy Land: A Critical Analysis of Israeli Security and Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 2006), 262; Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure - The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process* (Westport Praeger, 2009), 123.

[547] Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1992), 234-240.

[548] Avi Nudelman, 'The IDF's Changing Attitude towards the Palestinian Security Forces', *Ma'arachot* no. 385 (September 2002) 84-5.

maneuvering space for addressing the socio-economic and political grievances that fueled terrorism.[549]

Though politically isolated in the Palestinian arena and deprived of much of its Intifada-era popular support, from the early 90s Hamas started to increasingly look at Hizb'allah as a model.[550] Influenced by the Lebanese Shia's successful 'ballots and bullets' approach, prominent leaders as Musa Abu-Marzuk and Mahmud al-Zahar publicly advocated limited cooperation with Arafat and emulation of the PLO's *marhalya* (salami) approach, a piece-by-piece strategy, whereby the liberation of the West Bank and Gaza would represent only the first stage towards the liberation of the entire Palestine.[551]

The military build-up of the Islamic groups and their shift to a more militant approach did not escape to the Israeli intelligence services, which from the early 90s started to provide alarming assessments concerning the future security cooperation with the PA in the fight against Hamas. In august 1993 a report by the Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies calculated that the PA would need Armored Personnel Carriers (APC), machine guns, and reconnaissance helicopters to effectively fight the Islamists.[552] Similarly, in late 1993, the IDF and the intelligence services provided the Prime Minister a number of reports on Iran's influence over Hamas and the PIJ as well as on Arafat's failed attempts to placate Hamas during a meeting in Khartoum in January 1993.[553]

Nevertheless, in the aftermath of the signing of the DOP, the government was still convinced that the Palestinian security services, though untrained, lacking experience and equipment as they might have been, could effectively operate as the arm of Israel's intelligence, fulfilling all the operational functions previously performed by the Shabak, the Border Police and the IDF.[554] The very fact that Carmi Gillon, an expert on the Israeli radical right, was preferred to Gideon Ezra, who had considerable counter-terrorism experience, to replace Ya'akov Peri at the head of the Shabak clearly reflected the government's belief that terrorism by the Palestinian rejectionist groups would represent a relatively minor problem.[555]

In January 1994, deputy CGS Lipkin-Shahak and Shabak director Ya'akov Peri met in Roma with Jibril Rajoub and Mohammed Dahlan, head of the soon-to-be-established Palestinian Preventive Security (PPS) to define the

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[549] Eival Gilady, 'Strategy and Security in Israel', Speech before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, July 27, 2004 http://www.lawac.org/speech/pre%20sept%2004%20speeches/gilady%202004.htm; Shimon Peres with Arye Naor, *The New Middle East*, 46.

[550] Ely Karmon, 'Iran–Syria–Hizballah–Hamas A Coalition against Nature Why Does It Work?', *The Proteus Monograph Series* 1/5 May 2008; Ely Karmon, 'Hamas' Terrorism Strategy: Operational Limitations and Political Constraints', Middle East Review of International Affairs, 4/1 (March 2000).

[551] Barry Rubin, 'On the Ground in Gaza', *GLORIA Center Papers*, January 4, 2008. At the beginning of 1994 Hamas' members formed Khalas, a political movement that published a newspaper and helped spread Hamas ideas throughout Palestinian society.

[552] Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure - The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process*, 49.

[553] Youssef M. Ibrahim, 'Palestinian Religious Militants: Why Their Ranks Are Growing', *The New York Times,* November, 8, 1994; Yossi Melman, 'War and Peace Process', *The Washington Post,* January, 29, 1995.

[554] Daniel Byman, *A High Price: the Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, 83.

[555] Carmi Gillon, *Shin Bet Between the Schisms* (Tel Aviv: Miskal Yedioth Ahronot Books, 2000), 196, 201, 226.

mechanisms of the security cooperation between Israel and the PA. Under the so-called 'Rome Agreement' Israel was expected to provide intelligence on the rejectionist organizations, particularly Hamas, and the PA would carry out operational activities, preventing attacks and arresting suspects and perpetrators.[556]

Given Hamas' escalation of violent acts in the early months after the DOP, it appeared evident to both parties that the implementation of the DOP would depend on the PA's capability and willingness to prevent Islamists from committing violence against Israel. This became even clearer after the massacre at the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron in February 1994, when Baruch Goldstein, an Israeli right-wing settler, gunned down dozens of Muslim worshipers in Hebron. The event enabled Hamas to claim that any future violent acts the movement would commit were defensive, a response to the Israeli aggression.[557] In fact, on April 6 and April 13, 1994, two Hamas suicide bombers detonated themselves in the Israeli cities of Afula and Hadera and the Islamic Resistance Movement claimed that the attacks were meant to avenge Goldstein's massacre.[558]

Although Israel was already familiar with suicide bombing from Hizballah's attacks against IDF soldiers and intelligence officers in Lebanon,[559] the employment of this tactic by Hamas presented a new challenge to its security establishment in light of the exposure of the Israeli heartland to the operational reach of the Islamic Resistance Movement.[560] The government's immediate reaction was in fact to order a big crackdown against Hamas in which the Shabak and the IDF arrested over 1600 members of the organization in the West Bank and Gaza. Moreover, special teams were formed within the Shabak to deal with the operational aspects of the Islamic organization's employment of suicide bombers, and within the AMAN, to study the phenomenon of suicide terrorism in different parts of the world.[561]

At the same time, both Rabin and Peres continued to emphasize the non-military dimension of the struggle, that is the need to create economic and social conditions which could 'drain the swamp' and divert support for radical Islamic organizations within the Palestinian civil society.[562] In fact, the Oslo Accord envisioned a market economy that was expected to improve the standards of living of the Palestinians, modernizing the traditionally

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[556] Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure - The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process*, 80.

[557] Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia UP), 67-68.

[558] Anat Kurz & Nachman Tal, *Hamas: Radical Islam in a National Struggle*, 35-36.

[559] Clive Jones, & Sergio Catignani (eds.), *Israel and Hizbollah: An Asymmetric Conflict in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2009); Clive Jones, 'Israeli Counter-insurgency Strategy and the War in South Lebanon 1985–97', 82-108; W. Andrew Terrill 'Low Intensity Conflict in Southern Lebanon: Lessons and Dynamics of the Israeli-Shi'ite War', *Conflict Quarterly* 7/3 (1987), 22-35.

[560] Yoram Schweitzer, 'The Rise and Fall of Suicide Bombings in the Second Intifada', *INSS Military and Strategic Affaris*, 13/3 (October 2010), 40.

[561] Julian Ozanne, 'Israel Rounds Up Hamas Supporters', *Financial Times*, 20 April 1994; Boaz Ganor, 'Israeli Counter-terrorism in the Shadow of Oslo', 45.

[562] Boaz Ganor, 'Israeli Counter-terrorism in the Shadow of Oslo', 45.

agriculture-dominant economy. With the help of the US academia and think thanks a large number of collaborative economic projects were designed by non-governmental institutions in Israel.[563]

The 'Paris Protocol on Economic Relations' signed between Israel and the PA on April 29, 1994 reflected this new thinking. The Protocol called for a Palestinian market economy, semi-integrated with Israel via an open border for labor and goods and a custom union. Under this regime, Israel would collect import, value-added, excise taxes, income tax, and health premiums from Palestinians working in areas outside the PA's control.[564] All of these revenues, which were supposed to be later transferred from Israel to the PA, amounted to some 50 percent of the PA budget, while the remaining part would come from international donors.[565] From a Palestinian standpoint this mechanism was extremely convenient, as it gave the PA a certain degree of independence and maneuvering space; from an Israeli point of view however, though partially relieving the Jewish state from the economic burden of sustaining the Palestinian state-building process, it posed a serious limit to the coordination of the state-building and security measures.

In fact, despite the creation of an elaborate monitoring system headed by the World Bank to supervise the management of the international donors' contributions, the PA and its president Yasser Arafat almost immediately attempted to secure some form of control over the new economic institutions, interfering with the flow of foreign aid capitals.[566] The consequent slowing down of money transfers and investments *de facto* complicated the implementation of the large-scale infrastructural projects originally envisioned to generate jobs and improve the economic standards of living of the Palestinian population.[567] The creation of a hidden budget, known as A-*Sunduk A-Thani* (Fund B) and the duplication of offices and bureaucracies, allowed Arafat to manipulate the Palestinian proto-state apparatus and to enhance his power base through purchases of illegal weapons as well as payments and bribes to friends and foes.[568] Moreover, in the spring of 1994 Arafat inaugurated a strategy of 'conciliation' with Hamas through the signing

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[563] Stanley Fischer, 'Interview: Economic Transition in the Occupied Territories', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 23/4 (1994), 52-61; Sara Roy, 'US Economic to the West Bank and Gaza: The Politics of Peace', Middle East Policy 4/4 (October 1996), 50-76; Henry Siegman, *U.S. Middle East Policy and Peace Process* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Report, 1994).

[564] Rex Brynen, *A Very Political Economy: Peacebuilding and Foreign Aid in the West Bank and Gaza* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2000), 56-57.

[565] Stanley Fischer, 'Interview: Economic Transition in the Occupied Territories', 57; Report of a Study Group Convened by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Transition to Palestinian Self Government: Practical Steps Toward Israeli-Palestinian Peace* (Bloomington IN: Indiana UP, 1992), 114-120.

[566] Ahmed Qureia (Abu Ala), *From Oslo to Jerusalem. The Palestinian Story of Secret Negotiations* (London: Tauris, 2006), 283; Jennifer Olmsted, 'Thwarting Palestinian Development', *Middle East Report* 201 (1996), 11–13, 18.

[567] Rex Brynen, 'International Aid to the West Bank and Gaza: A Primer', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25/2 (1996), 46-53; Menachem Klein, 'Quo Vadis? Palestinian Dilemmas of Ruling Authority Building since 1993', *Middle Eastern Studies* 33/2 (1997), 383-404.

[568] Author's personal interview with Maj. Gen. (res.) Daniel Rothschild, former head of the COGAT (1991-1995), Herzliya, February, 29, 2012.

of an agreement whereby the Islamic Resistance Movement would refrain from terror attacks in exchange for concessions in the social realm. Arafat in fact allowed Hamas to expand its social and welfare programs and gave his consent to the appointment of Sheik Hamad Bitawi, a prominent Hamas religious scholar, to head the religious courts in the West Bank, as well as to the creation of a special Vice Section (*Surtat al-Adab*) composed of Hamas activists, to oversee morality in Gaza.[569]

The PA's leadership attempts to manipulate foreign supervision of international aids and the negotiated expansion of Hamas' *Da'wa* system, in conjunction with the Israeli lack of control over initiatives in the economic and social spheres, rendered extremely complex the successful coordination of military and non-military activities in a 'full-spectrum' effort against Hamas already in the first half of 1994.

The signing on May, 4, 1994 of the 'Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area' prompted a withdrawal of IDF forces as well as a clearer commitment on the part of the PA to prevent terrorist attacks against Israel (contained in articles 8 and 18 of the agreement).[570] As the IDF forces started to withdraw from the Gaza Strip, Hamas immediately intensified attacks against Israeli military personnel, something which led both prime minister Rabin and IDF CGS Ehud Barak to publicly criticize the PA's determination to contain the Islamic Resistance Movement and prompted the IDF to conduct another round of arrests of about 400 Hamas militants in the week following the withdrawal from Gaza.[571] The main reason which prompted the IDF's 'backlash' just a few days after the redeployment was the awareness of the adverse impact which the withdrawal would have on Israel's intelligence posture at the tactical and operational level. Relations among the intelligence agencies had grown extremely tense in the wake of the signing of the DOP, and the situation had only partially been placated by the signing of the so-called 'Magna Carta' agreement, whereby the Shabak became responsible for intelligence collection in the Territories and AMAN only for political intelligence.[572]

Until the 1987 Intifada, thanks to the occupation regime, Israel ran approximately seven thousand informers the West Bank and Gaza.[573] Control of the territory not only made the Israeli security services acquainted with the

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[569] Yehezkel Shabbat, *Hamas and the Peace Process* (Ramat Gan: BESA, 1996), 82-86; Menachem Klein, 'Competing Brother: The Web of Hamas-PLO Relations', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 8 (1996), 111–132; Sara Roy, 'Beyond Hamas. Islamic Activism in the Gaza Strip', *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 2/1 (1995), 1-39.

[570]http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Agreement%20on%20Gaza%20Strip%20and%20Jericho%20Area

[571] Naomi Weinberger, 'The Palestinian National Security Debate', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 24/3 (Spring, 1995), 16-30; Boaz Ganor, 'Israeli Counter-terrorism in the Shadow of Oslo', 51, 54; Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 79.

[572] Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism* (New York: Columbia UP, 2009),97.

[573] Ed Blanche, 'Israel Uses Intifada Informers to Abet Assassination Campaigns', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 13/12(2001), 22-24.

'mood' of the Palestinian street, but also allowed the Shabak to obtain the cooperation of Palestinians by rewarding them with financial benefits, licenses, permits and jobs as well as by threatening to withdraw them. The relinquishment of even small portions of territory to the PA undermined the whole system. The Shabak, therefore, had to resort to any conceivable means of gathering intelligence, as for instance 'family reunification' permits for Palestinians who had relatives in Jordan, job offers in Israel, admission to universities in Israeli areas of control, medical treatments and import-export licenses.[574]

The adverse impact of the redeployment of the IDF in the Gaza-Jericho area on Israel's intelligence capabilities clearly emerged on October 1994, when a hard-line group within the Izz-al-din-al-Qassam Brigades' coordinated by Mohammed Deif kidnapped and killed an IDF soldier in a bid to release Shaykh Yassin and Hamas carried out a suicide attack in Tel Aviv, killing 22 people and injuring over 50.[575]

The events of October prompted a first shift in the Israeli approach to the fight against the Islamic Resistance Movement. Taking advantage of the right to act on its own as granted by the accords, the government authorized a more proactive stance by the IDF and the intelligence services. Mass arrests of Hamas members were carried out, with the Shabak and the IDF concentrating the crackdown against Hamas civil array, raiding institutions, mosques and private homes.[576] Moreover, in an emergency session of the security cabinet attended by the heads of the Mossad, the Shabak and AMAN the prime minister authorized a discreet employment of undercover units and Special Operations Forces (SOF) for covert 'pinpoint' operations against senior members of Hamas and the PIJ. This policy was clearly announced by Rabin in the aftermath of the October 1994 suicide bombing in Tel Aviv.[577] Concurrently, it was decided to reinforce defensive security measures, especially in urban centers, in order to balance the loss of intelligence. This led to an increased use of the measure of 'closure', that is hermetically sealing the Territories. Closure was considered an effective and useful defensive measure because of its economic disruptive effects on the Palestinian civilian population. In fact it allowed at the same time to pressurize the PA into adopting a tougher stance against Hamas, as well as to impose punishment on the civilian population in the attempt to deter it from providing any form of support to Hamas.[578]

The Israeli government had drawn a clear distinction between the PA and the Islamists: Hamas was the enemy, and the PA's police and intelligence services

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[574] Daniel Byman, *A High Price: the Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, 83; Boaz Ganor 'Terrorism as a Military Factor: The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process era, 1993-2000', 113-114.
[575] Wendy Kristianasen, 'Challenges and Counterchallenges: Hamas's Response to Oslo', 23.
[576] Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*, 83.
[577] Boaz Ganor, 'Israel Hamas and Fatah', in Robert J. Art & Louise Richardson, *Democracy and Counterterrorism, Lessons from the Past* (Washington DC: Institute of Peace, 2007), 279.
[578] Daniel Byman, *A High Price: the Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, 105.

were partners in security cooperation.[579] Nevertheless, at the end of 1994, after two more suicide bombings carried out by Hamas, the debate within the security establishment was growing more intense. Citing multiple episodes of lenient behavior and anti-Israeli incitement, the AMAN and the Mossad started to openly question the PA's very willingness to fight and contain Hamas and the other rejectionist groups.[580] By contrast the Shabak was convinced that Israel had no other feasible option than more vigorously pursuing security cooperation with the PA. According to the security service's view, while the grievances at the base of PLO's employment of terrorism were basically political and could be solved by a political (territorial) compromise between the disputants, Hamas' ideology questioned Israel's very existence and there was no chance, in the present or the future, of forcing a change in its ideological stance. Having Israel subscribed accords which limited the use of force and demanded responsibility for CT to the PA, the best possible course of action, at the operational level, was trying to enhance the Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation.[581]

The implementation of the economic aspects of the Oslo agreements, whose application was already encountering some difficulties, was also depending on security cooperation. In fact, the Palestinian economic elites, 'intelligencija' and labor leaders turned out to be uncomfortable with the economic model of the Paris Protocol. The Palestinian General Trade Union Federation (GTUF) publicly opposed foreign investments and, accusing Israel of economic imperialism, boycotted the signing ceremony of the Paris Protocol in December 1994. Though not anti-capitalistic, many Palestinian businesspeople opposed cooperating with Israel on nationalist grounds.[582] Economic cooperation was further troubled by the eagerness of the government and the IDF of being relieved of the economic and administrative burden of the Territories, as well as by a certain insensitivity on the part of the Israeli officials, who on several occasions proved incapable of understanding the difficulties and suspects of the Palestinian public and elites.[583]

In such precarious conditions, and with the percentage of Palestinians who worked in Israel falling from 11% to 7% after 1994, it was of the utmost importance to prevent the imposition of unilateral security measures such as border closures and the dissemination of checkpoints which further damaged

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[579] Boaz Ganor, 'Terrorism as a Military Factor: The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process era, 1993-2000', 106.

[580] Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure - The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process*, 85.

[581] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue* (Paris: Hachette, 2005), 75; Carmi Gillon, *Shin Bet Between the Schisms*, 196; Yaacov Bar-Siman Tov et al., *The Palestinian Violent Conflict 2002-2004. The Transition from Conflict Resolution to Conflict Management* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2005), 15.

[582] Adel Samara, 'Globalization, the Palestinian Economy and the Peace Process', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29/2 (2000), 20-34.

[583] Author's personal interview with former AMAN Officer, Herzliya , January, 10, 2012; Ohad Leslau, 'The New Middle East from the Perspective of the Old Middle East', *Middle East Review of International Affairs* (MERIA) 10 (September 2006), 43-44; Daniel Pipes, 'Imperial Israel: Nile to Euphrates Calumny', *Middle East Quarterly* 1 (1994), 29-40; Eytan Ben-Zur, *Making Peace: A First Hand Account of the Arab-Israeli Peace Process* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), 153.

the Palestinian economy. This however could be averted only through an effective security cooperation between Israel and the PA.[584]

By January 1995, after a double suicide attack carried out by Hamas in cooperation with the PIJ, Rabin reached the conclusion that the employment of terror by Islamic groups represented a 'strategic threat'. Openly acknowledging that Islamic terrorism in the Territories was linked to a powerful transnational phenomenon which contributed to preserve an elevated degree of friction between Israel and the Arab and Islamic worlds, the government confirmed its determination to employ offensive means, including 'draconian measures' (in the words of Shimon Peres), in the fight against Hamas and the other Palestinian extremist groups.[585] The military however was clearly growing impatient with the security situation, complaining about the conspicuous decrease of Israel's intelligence capabilities as well as questioning the ability and willingness of the PA's security services to effectively curb Islamic terrorism.[586]

Impatience further grew in the following months, after another suicide attack on a bus in Kfar Darom. Exponents of the political and military establishments repeatedly blamed the PA for the indecisiveness of its approach to the fight against Hamas as well as for not holding up its end of the accords. Criticizing Arafat's attempts to reach some sort of *modus vivendi* with Hamas, Rabin and CGS Lipkin-Shahak explicitly asked the PA to attack the terrorist infrastructure as a pre-condition for the peace process to continue.[587]

By mid-95 the Israeli government was increasingly split in its assessment of Arafat's capability and willingness to curb terrorism. The most skeptical and pessimistic position was expressed by AMAN under the new leadership of Maj. Gen. Moshe Ya'alon and Brig. Gen. Ya'akov Amidror (in charge of the research branch). New AMAN estimates put support for Hamas close to 50%, a figure considerably higher than Oslo supporters had suggested. Both Ya'alon and Amidror believed that, at best, Arafat was playing a complex game of 'multiple narratives' to his various audiences, maintaining a negotiated political order. At worst, he was willingly colluding with Hamas as part of a two-phased strategy aimed in the long-term at regaining all of Palestine.[588]

The strategic community was divided not only in its assessment of the Palestinian leadership, but also on the overall military approach. The IDF saw

[584] Anton La Guardia, *War Without End: Israelis, Palestinians, and the Struggle for a Promised Land* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001), 309; Samir Huleileh, 'Restructuring Palestinian-Israeli Relations', *Palestine-Israel Journal* 6/3 (1999).

[585] *Yedioth Aharonoth,* January, 30, 1995, 9.

[586] Boaz Ganor, 'Israel Hamas and Fatah', 272.

[587] Daniel Byman, *A High Price: the Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism* 90; Boaz Ganor *Israeli Counter-terrorism in the Shadow of Oslo*, 23-27. OC Southern Command Shaul Mofaz adopted a very critical tone of the PA strategy of threat and persuasion, see, *Haaretz*, April, 14, 1995.

[588] *The Jerusalem Post*, February 11, 1994; Yaacov Bar-Siman Tov (ed.), *The Transition from Conflict Resolution to Conflict Management* (Jerusalem: Leonard Davis Institute, 2004), 30; Ya'akov Amidror, 'Israel's Security: The Hard-Learned Lessons', *Middle East Quarterly*, 11/1 (Winter 2004), 33-40.

in fact defensive measures as insufficient if not complemented with a more aggressive approach against the Hamas infrastructure. At the same time whereas the Shabak was convinced that the reintroduction of some old well-established CT measures, such as the deportation of the families of the suicide bombers, could actually prove useful, the IDF remained convinced that suicide bombers were almost un-deterrable given the operational constraints to which Israel was subject.[589]

In light of the government's determination to continue to negotiate with the PA, the main consequence of these rifts within the Israeli strategic community was ultimately a stalemate, and the continuation of the security policy of the previous months. In fact, up to Rabin's assassination in November 1995, Israel maintained its approach based on the concept of *Havlagah* pursuing its covert war against Hamas' military infrastructure, avoiding the employment of some measures, as for instance deportation, but making a considerable use of closures, increasingly with punitive intent, in order to attempt to deter potential suicide bombers and the population at large. [590]

In the summer of 1995 the PA attempted to open a dialogue with Hamas to settle their disputes, especially over the use of violence against Israel. Although the dialogue proved unfruitful and the Islamic Resistance Movement carried out two more suicide attacks on July 24 and August 21, the combination of IDF undercover activities, closures and curfews with the PA's pressures and arrests of Hamas' leaders, and the fear of frustrating the Palestinian people's expectations regarding the peace process led Hamas to self-impose a truce on attacks in the attempt to use it as a bargaining chip with the PA and, indirectly, with Israel.[591] This allowed the signing, on September 28, of the Oslo II agreement whereby the West Bank was divided in three different kind of zones: A, under the full control of the PA; B, under administrative sovereignty of the PA, but joint Israeli-Palestinian security, and C, still under full Israeli control. The accord envisioned also the IDF withdrawal from the main Palestinian cities of the West Bank and the takeover of full Palestinian responsibility for the prevention and repression of any terrorist activity.[592]
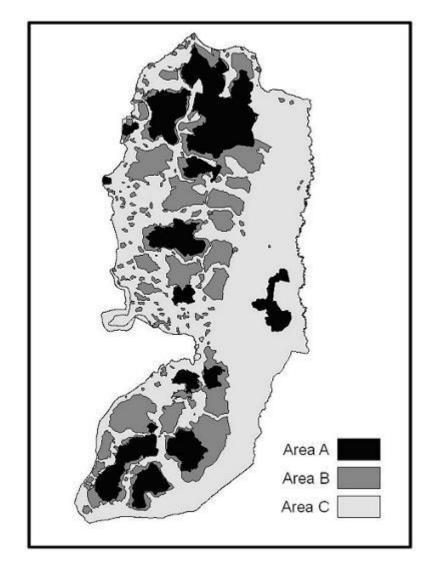
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[589] Zeev Maoz, *Defending the Holy Land: A Critical Analysis of Israeli Security and Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 2006), 261.

[590] Or Honig, 'The End of Israeli Military Restraint: Out with the New, in with the Old', *Middle East Quarterly,* 14 (Winter 2007), 63-65.

[591] Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, 74; **Anat** Kurz & Nachman Tal, *Hamas: Radical Islam in a National Struggle*, 39

[592]http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/THE+ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN+INTERIM+AGREEMENT.htm especially Annex I, articles 1 and 2 regarding IDF redeployment and security arrangements.

Area A ■
Area B ▓
Area C ░

In the course of the Cairo talks on December, 21, 1995 however, the PA and Hamas were unable to sign an agreement, and issued only a joint communiqué, implying that Islamic Resistance Movement would avoid embarrassing the PA. Accordingly, Hamas would halt military operations against Israel from PA-controlled areas and refrain from publicly announcing or admitting responsibility for them.[593]

At the end of 1995 many in the Israeli strategic community saw the security situation as extremely dangerous: the IDF withdrawal from the main Palestinian urban centers and the PA agreement with Hamas would in fact allow the Islamic Resistance Movement to operate almost freely in the A zones. As long as the attacks were carried out in the B and C zones or in Israel, the Izz-al-din-al-Qassam brigades could implant explosive laboratories, operate training, and maintain logistics under the (often negligent) eyes of the PA.[594]

The government reacted to the perceived increase in the threat with an intensification of covert operations against Hamas and the other Palestinian

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[593] Daniel Byman, *A High Price: the Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, 105.
[594] Boaz Ganor, 'Israeli Counter-terrorism in the Shadow of Oslo

extremist groups and the enhancement of security cooperation with the PA. Between February 1995 and March 1996, 23 names were removed from the Shabak list of priority targets, of which 10 were killed and the others arrested in the course of covert operations for which Israel did not claim responsibility.[595] Moreover, on January, 5, 1996 the Shabak succeeded in assassinating Hamas' master bomb-maker, Yahya Ayyash, known as the 'engineer'.[596] Concurrently in January 1996 the *Mate Lohama ba'Terror* (Headquarters for fighting Terrorism) was established under the new Shabak director Ami Ayalon, and an agreement was signed for sharing intelligence in real-time with the PA's security services. Ameliorations in the field of CT culminated, on April 17 1996, in the signing by Arafat and prime minister Peres of a comprehensive (informal) agreement on CT cooperation.[597]

And yet, these measures apparently produced limited results. In fact, between the end of February and March 1996 Hamas retaliated for the killing of Ayyash with a series of 4 suicide bombings in less than 10 days and continued to publicly defy the PA even in the face of a harsh crackdown, the arrest of more than 1,200 activists and conspicuous confiscation of illegal weapons in coordination with the Israeli intelligence services. Only heavy criticism by the public opinion following the series of suicide bombings convinced Hamas to adopt a passive stance and temporarily halt its suicide bombings campaign.[598] Despite some intermittent successes, the effectiveness of the Israeli new approach to the fight against Hamas during the Rabin and Peres government remained rather limited. Defensive measures continued to be envisioned as means of last resort while deterrence of terrorist organizations' leaders, activists and collaborators was accorded, whenever possible, a higher priority.[599] Furthermore, civilian and police involvement remained limited, the IDF continued to hold a central role in CT, and relatively poor attention was given to the struggle against Hamas' civil array. In fact, after the initial difficulties in the implementation of the Paris Protocol, the government preferred to focus on CT and security cooperation, rather than on the more ambitious program outlined in the aftermath of the signing of the DOP, aimed at drying the swamp of Islamic radicalism through economic development and improved standard of living.[600] As a consequence, since the beginning of the peace process, Hamas had the opportunity to continue developing an autonomous network of charitable social, educational and welfare institutions, which the PA had a hard time in containing, partially as a

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[595] Boaz Ganor, 'Israel Hamas and Fatah', 280.

[596] Samuel M. Katz, *The Hunt for the Engineer: How Israeli Agents Tracked the Hamas Master Bomber* (New York: Lyons Press, 2002)

[597] Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure - The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process*, 102; Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue*, 47.

[598] Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, 73-76.

[599] Boaz Ganor, 'Israel Hamas and Fatah', 280.

[600] Yoram Peri *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy* (Washington DC: Institute for Peace Studies, 2006), 223.

consequence of a lack of will, but also due the dire economic conditions of the Territories, further exacerbated by the Israeli closures.[601] Although between the end 1993 and mid-1996 Israel exerted some pressure on the PA to close down these institutions, the nexus between Hamas' civil and military branches had not been clearly understood, and remained still relatively nebulous.[602]

Political Pressure and Counter-terrorism: the Netanyahu's Government, 1996-1999

On May 29, 1996, Binyamin Netanyahu was elected prime minister of Israel with 50.4 percent of the vote, a narrow 29,500 majority out of some 3 million votes.[603] Netanyahu repeatedly emphasized how his government's approach to the peace process would differ from his predecessor's. Consequently, though formally respecting the accords, the new Prime Minister immediately attempted to change their content and essence.[604] Consistently with Likud's tradition in fact, Netanyahu attributed considerable importance to the terrorist threat, advocating far-reaching goals for counter-terror policy, that is 'systematic reduction and suppression of terrorism'.[605] Taking advantage of every opportunity to pass threatening messages to the Palestinian public, particularly to the PA, Netanyahu attempted to motivate the Palestinian leadership to fight Hamas, creating a linkage between security and the continuation of the peace process through the application of a principle of reciprocity. *De facto* the Israeli Prime Minister tried to use the political channel as a lever to control terrorism and achieve security.

Netanyahu, along with a significant number of ministers in his government, was dismissive of IDF upper echelons' support for the peace process, as he believed that the IDF' position derived mainly from its inability to professionally handle the challenges of quelling insurgent warfare in the Territories.[606] Analogously, the new prime minister was unsatisfied with the performance of the intelligence services, particularly the Shabak, which was asked by the government to reexamine its approach and to demonstrate greater initiative in the field of counter-terror activities,[607] particularly vis-à-vis Hamas.[608]

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[601] Author's personal interview with Col. (res.) Yonathan Fighel former governor of Jenin, Ramallah and Tulkarem, Herzliya, February 22, 2012.

[602] Author's personal interview with Dr. Barak Ben-Zur, former Head of Division and Special Assistant to the Shabak Director 2000-2006, International Institute for Counterterrorism, Herzliya, January, 22, 2012.

[603] Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 641.

[604] Efraim Karsh, 'Introduction: From Rabin to Netanyahu', *Israel Affairs*, 3/3-4 (1997), 1-7.

[605] Quoted in Boaz Ganor, *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle: A Guide for Decision-Makers* (New York: Transaction Publisher, 2005), 28.

[606] Yoram Peri *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy*, 81-89.

[607] Uri Bar-Joseph, 'A Bull in a China Shop: Netanyahu and Israel's Intelligence Community', *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 11/2 (1998), 154-174; *Ha'aretz,* August, 12, 1996.

[608] Avi Dichter, 'Components of Domestic Security in the Age of Global Jihadism', *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs Papers, 7/2, (2007).*

The new prime minister continued to respect the commitments of the Oslo accords with regard to CT and maintained *Havlagah;*[609] nevertheless, sensitive as it was to the 'perceived' sense of security of the Israeli citizens, the government opted for an increased resort to closures with the aim of preventing terror attacks, as well as of generating indirect pressure on Hamas through economic damage to the civilian population.[610] In fact, already in 1996 the number of closures soared to approximately 121 days, making normal life and economic activity almost impossible for the Palestinians, especially for the 80.000 who still worked in Israel. Closures and curfews created unemployment for approximately 45% of the Gaza workforce and 30% of the West Bank workforce.[611]

The Palestinians' first reactions to Netanyahu's attempt to modify the substance of the Oslo Accords were rather negative. On September 24, 1996, the resumption of the excavations of the Hasmonean tunnel in the Old City of Jerusalem resulted in three days of riots in Jerusalem and several cities in the West Bank in the course of which PA police and security services joined the rioters, the worst fighting episode since Oslo. The IDF found itself tactically unprepared to face a mix of unarmed civilian demonstrators and hostile security personnel, resulting in an elevated number of Israeli and Palestinians casualties.[612] A few days later, on January 17, 1997, the signing of the 'Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron' whereby Netanyahu's government transferred control of 80% of Hebron to the Palestinian Authority, appeared to many within the Israeli strategic community as a political reward to the Palestinian leadership for fomenting violence. The AMAN director, Maj. Gen. Amos Malka, concluded that Arafat took advantage of the Hasmonean tunnel riots to obtain political concessions and to instill a sense of urgency in the negotiations.[613]

In March suicide bombings beyond the Green Line were resumed. Whether an expression of despair at the economic deterioration and continued state of occupation, a direct action of an Hamas local military squad in response to the Israeli decision to authorize constructions of a Jewish settlement in Har Homa (Jabal Ghneim) or, as some within the Israeli strategic community believed, a 'green light' given by Arafat, on March 21, 1997 a suicide bomber from Hamas blew up the Apropo cafe in Tel Aviv.[614] A few days afterward, the head of the IDF counterterrorism bureau, Maj. Gen. Meir Dagan, declared that only heavy pressure on the part of Israel (as well as the US) would lead

[609] Benjamin Netanyahu, 'Defining Terrorism', in Benjamin Netanyahu (ed.), *Terrorism: How the West Can Win* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986), 9; Israeli Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Annex I, Protocol Concerning Redeployment and Security Arrangements, art. XI, sec. 3b, Sept. 28, 1995.

[610] Boaz Ganor, 'Israel Hamas and Fatah', 285-287.

[611] Daniel Byman, *A High Price: the Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, 110.

[612] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue*, 65.

[613] Akiva Eldar, 'Popular Misconceptions', *Ha'aretz*, June, 11, 2004.

[614] Boaz Ganor, 'Terrorism as a Military Factor: The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process era, 1993-2000', 125; Or Honig, 'The End of Israeli Military Restraint: Out with the New, in with the Old', 65.

the PA to fight terror firmly and diligently.[615] This however was not the only position within the Israeli strategic community, as many were convinced that continuous military occupation and dire economic conditions actually created the conditions for terrorism to breed. Israeli closures had a rather negative impact on the Palestinian economy which was highly dependent on raw materials from Israel and import/export products through Israeli ports. The cost of Israeli closures for the Palestinian economy was in fact about 1-2 million dollar per day and selective grant of permits and foreign aid did not manage to redress the situation.[616]

The debate continued even after an Hamas suicide bombing in Jerusalem's Mahane Yehuda market on July, 30, 1997. The security cabinet convened for an emergency session during which it was decided to take action against the Islamic organizations. Various proposals were made to take steps against the Islamic Resistance Movement, including using combat helicopters against Hamas' targets in the territories, but they were rejected at the recommendation of the prime minister and defense minister.[617] The government decided however to pressure the PA into cracking down on Hamas through a general closure of the Territories and the delay of the transfer of customs, VAT, and other taxes. This attempt to indirectly pressurize the PA was condemned by the Shabak, whose political assessment, presented by the director to the government on August, 3, 1997 clearly stated that such measures were liable to increase Palestinian support for Hamas and terrorism in general and, furthermore, that they risked to provoke the organizational and economic collapse of the PA.[618]

On September 4, 1997, following a multiple Hamas suicide attack in Jerusalem, it was decided that Israel would not transfer any additional territory to the Palestinians until the PA radically changed its approach to security cooperation with Israel. Nevertheless apparently on this occasion the PA was readier to cooperate. The fact that Hamas two suicide bombings in Jerusalem in August and September 1997 had originated from the B area (under joint administration of Israel and the PA) prompted the security services to carry out arrests of Hamas' activists and to raid the movement's offices in the Gaza Strip.[619] In addition to the arrests, for the first time the PA closed sixteen Hamas charitable and educational institutions.[620]

After absorbing the third suicide attack without any forceful reaction, the Israeli government considered necessary to enforce unilateral steps not only in light of the intense public pressure, but also in order to prevent further deterioration of the Israeli deterrence. On September 25, 1997, a Mossad squad attempted to assassinate Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal as he walked to

[615] *Ha'aretz,* March, 28, 1997, A3.

[616] Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure - The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process*, 43.

[617] *Ha'aretz,* December, 4, 1998

[618] *Yedioth Aharonoth,* August, 1, 1997; *Yedioth Aharonoth,* August, 22, 1997.

[619] *Ha'aretz,* September, 26, 1997, A4.

[620] *Ha'aretz*, September 28, 1997.

his office in Amman. The operation completely failed, two Mossad agents were captured and Jordan threatened to abrogate the peace treaty and try the Mossad agents as murderers. In exchange for their release it was demanded, among other things, that Israel released Hamas' founder and spiritual leader Shaykh Ahmad Yassin from jail and allowed him to return to Gaza.[621]

Shaykh Yassin's triumphant return to Gaza City marked the beginning of a new phase of ascendancy of Hamas in the Palestinian society. Though politically and militarily constrained by the PA since the beginning of the Oslo process, Hamas benefited from early 1997 from a sort of negotiated political order set up by Arafat.[622] In fact, unable to compete with Hamas in the civil realm and prevented from ejecting Hamas from the mosques and from limiting its social and communal activities, the PA gradually allowed the Islamic Resistance Movement to operate almost freely in the civil realm, something which was in turn exploited by Hamas to consolidate its position within the Palestinian society and lay the foundations for a new political and military upsurge as soon as the conditions were ripe.[623] The dire economic conditions of the Territories contributed in fact to swell Hamas' social, educational, and welfare institutions and provided ready recruits for the Islamist cause.

Less constrained by censorship, the Islamists' media began to harshly criticize the Palestinian proto-state and the PA economic measures, propagating by contrast a blend of Muslim and egalitarian principles developed by the Iranian thinker Ali Shariati.[624] More than three years of government had in fact clearly showed the PA's economic ineptitude and profound corruption. Organizationally, the PA had not managed to develop a solid and competent bureaucratic infrastructure, continuing to rely on the skills and competencies of the 5,000 employees who had worked in the Israeli Civil Administration during the occupation years.[625] This despite the fact that, in the course of the PA's first years of activity the public sector (mostly security) had grown up to some 120,000 workers, a high figure even by regional standards.[626] Besides, the PA created a system comprising 27 different monopolies including gasoline, car, metal, cement, meat, electronics, tobacco products, and flour, and granted import/export licenses to businessmen and public officials

[621] P.R. Kumaraswamy, 'Israel, Jordan and the Masha'al Affair', *Israel Affairs*, 9/3 (2003), 111-128; Paul McGeough, *Kill Khalid: The Failed Mossad Assassination of Khalid Mishal and the Rise of Hamas* (London: New Press, 2009); Efraim Halevy, *Man in the Shadows: Inside the Middle East Crisis with a Man Who Led the Mossad* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2008), 165.

[622] Anat Kurz, 'Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: Determinants of a Confidence-Destruction Linkage', *INSS Strategic Assessment*, ½ (June 1998).

[623] Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*, 74.

[624] Ervand Abrahamian, 'Ali Shariati: Ideologue of the Iranian Revolution' in Edmund Burke and Ira Lapidus (eds.), *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993); Ali Rahnema, *An Islamic Utopian. A Political Biography of Ali Shari'ati* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

[625] Shimon Peres, 'Better Let Democracy Tire Us than Tyranny Energize Us," in Oded Eran and Amnon Cohen (eds.) *Israel, the Middle East and Islam. Weighing the Risks and Prospects*, (Jerusalem: Truman Institute, 2003), 104.

[626] Ouassama Kanan, 'The Palestinian Authority. Friend or Foe of Private Investors?' *Middle East Policy* 9/1 (2002), 55.

connected with Arafat and Fatah. As a consequence, the prices of several essential economic products circulating in the PA's administered Territories were greatly inflated. The virtual absence of an appropriate legal framework further depressed any market activity.[627]

The PA leadership's 'neopatrimonial' approach further weakened the very economic infrastructure of the West Bank and Gaza, making sure that the Territories could not absorb and/or contain the economic spillover effects of the Israeli closures.[628] With unemployment reaching 40% in Gaza and 24% in the West Bank and the per capita gross national product declining from 2,425 dollars before the Accord to 1,480 in 1996, the gap between the Palestinian privileged elites and the population at large had grown into one of the largest in the world.[629]

Ultimately, the PA's inability to evolve from an insurgent group to the leadership of a developing proto-state, together with Israel's difficulties in understanding the Palestinian political order and socio-economic problems had a profoundly detrimental impact on the state-building process.[630] In fact, instead of developing into a cohesive state, the fragmented Palestinian society further shattered along tribal, clan, and political cleavages, a process which generated unprecedented strife and significantly undermined the legitimacy of the state already in its embryonic stage.[631] In turn, this legitimacy deficit profoundly affected the PA's ability to engage in the peace process and fulfill the Israeli requests for more effective CT measures without appearing a puppet who fought its own people for the sake of the enemy.[632]

After the botched Mossad operation in Amman, security cooperation between Israel and the PA apparently improved. On January 13, 1998, the PA in conjunction with the Israeli security forces uncovered a Hamas network of cells and operational facilities, including an 'explosives laboratory' near Nablus. A number of Hamas's political leaders were arrested, and some of the movement's charitable organizations were closed down.[633] A few days later,

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[627] Sara Roy, 'The Seeds of Chaos and of Night: The Gaza Strip after the Oslo Agreement', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 23/3 (1994), 85-89 and 'Civil Society in the Gaza Strip: Obstacles to Social Reconstruction', in Augustus Richard Norton (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 221-58; Hillel Frisch, *Countdown to Statehood: Palestinian State Building in the West Bank and Gaza* (New York: SUNY Press, 1999), 125; Barry Rubin, *The Transformation of Palestinian Society: From Revolution to State Building* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

[628] Rex Brynen, 'The Neopatrimonial Dimension of Palestinian Politics' *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25/1 (Fall 1995), 23-36.

[629] Mahdi Abdul Hadi, *Domestic Constraints on Negotiations. A Palestinian Perspective* (Jerusalem: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Relations—PASSIA, 1995), 12; Sara Roy, 'The Seeds of Chaos and of Night: The Gaza Strip after the Oslo Agreement', 85-90; Sara Roy, 'Civil Society in the Gaza Strip: Obstacles to Social Reconstruction', in Civil Society in the Middle East, ed. Augustus Richard Norton (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 221-258.

[630] Rex Brynen, 'Buying Peace? A Critical Assessment of International Aid to the West Bank and Gaza' *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 25/3 (Spring 1996), 79-92.

[631] Dan Connell, 'Palestine on the Edge: Crisis in the National Movement', *Middle East Report* 194/195 (1995), 6-9.

[632] Gershon Baskin, *What Went Wrong: Oslo, the PLO, Israel and Some Additional Facts* (Jerusalem: Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information, 2001).

[633] *Ha'aretz*, August 20, 22, 1998 and September 28, 1998.

following violent demonstrations, some of Hamas's key figures, including Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi and Izz-al-din-al-Qassam commander Imad Awadallah, were arrested.[634] The Israeli strategic community however continued to have serious problems in correctly analyzing and evaluating the PA's conduct towards Hamas, as well as the very danger posed by the Islamists. Relations among player in the Palestinian arena were in fact extremely fluid and articulated, taking place through subtle signaling and bargaining processes which were extremely complex to decipher: compared to the Rabin/Peres period, the very distinction between enemies and allies was becoming rather blurred. This in turn prevented the IDF from recommending clear and consistent courses of action to the political establishment.[635]

Generally speaking a conspicuous part of the Israeli strategic community was not well acquainted with the Palestinian political culture and remained relatively indifferent to any true appreciation of the PA's difficulty in fighting Hamas.[636] Pressing requests for an all-out confrontation with Hamas clearly threatened the PA's domestic power base; these in turn were not counterbalanced by adequate political concessions which could allow the Palestinian leadership to justify repressive measures against the extremist organizations as necessary for the entire Palestinian people.[637] Both the IDF and the intelligence community, moreover, were troubled by their double role of participants in the peace-process and analysts of that same reality which they contributed to shape.[638] Combined with a tradition of political appointment of key positions within the strategic community these difficulties further complicated the Israeli security decision-making process.[639]

The rifts within the Israeli strategic community clearly surfaced in mid-98. Though conjecturing about the PA's interest in maintaining a low-level of violence and terror under its strict supervision, Shabak's director Ami Ayalon attributed the decline in terror attacks since September 1997 to improved security cooperation with the stronger Palestinian security services as well as

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[634] Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*,79.

[635] Efraim Halevy, 'The Role of the Intelligence in Shaping Israel's Strategic Alternatives', *Ma'arachot*, no. 390 (July 2003), 38-42 (Hebrew); Eliakim Rubinstein, 'Intelligence and the Peace Process', *Ma'arachot*, no. 322 (November 1991), 23-29 (Hebrew); Efraim Halevy, *Man in the Shadows: Inside the Middle East Crisis with a Man Who Led the Mossad*, 181.

[636] Shlomo Gazit, 'Are Real Coexistence and Normalization Possible?', in Joseph Ginat Edward Perkins Edwin Corr (eds.), *The Middle East Peace Process: Vision vs. Reality* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2002), 60-61.

[637] Robert L. Rothstein, 'Oslo and the Ambiguities of Peace', in Joseph Ginat Edward Perkins Edwin Corr (eds.), *The Middle East Peace Process: Vision vs. Reality*, 31.

[638] For the intelligence community double roles created epistemological and methodological difficulties as they complicated reaching conclusions based on incontrovertible evidences and isolating reality from the personal belief of the analysts, see Sherman Kent, The Thoery of Intelligence (CIA: 1968); Willmore Kendall, 'The Function of Intelligence'. World Politics, 1/1 (July 1949), 542-552; Davis, Jack. "The Kent-Kendall Debate of 1949," *Studies in Intelligence* (1991). For an Israeli perspective see Yoel Ben-Porat, 'Reality and Intelligence Assessment', *Ma'arachot*, no. 309 (August 1987), 22-23.

[639] Yoram Peri *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy*, 87-89; Yossi Kuperwasser, 'Lessons from Israel's Intelligence Reforms', *The Saban Center for Middle East Policy Analysis Paper*, no. 14 (October 2007).

continuous operational activity by the Shabak.[640] Conversely, AMAN's director Maj. Gen. Ya'alon, was convinced that the absence of terror attacks was ascribable, rather than to an effective security cooperation, to increased Shabak vigilance, improved cooperation between the Shabak, the AMAN and the Mossad as well as to decisions based on cost-benefit considerations, interests, and *motivation*[641] by the Hamas leadership.[642] Such a split within the intelligence/security establishment determined a double view about security cooperation with the PA: part of the IDF high ranks and the Shabak argued that the PA was doing his utmost to fight terror, whereas Netanyahu's government and some more hawkish IDF officers were convinced that operationally and politically the Oslo process was failing.[643]

Throughout late 1998 and 1999, although continuously improving, security cooperation between Israel and the PA did not succeed in significantly curtailing Hamas' military activities or irreversibly damaging its operational infrastructure. In fact, the huge crackdown carried out in September 1998 by Israel in cooperation with the PA, though leading to the killing of Adel Awadalah, Hamas' leading commander in the West Bank, only apparently devastated Hamas' military wing.[644] Shortly after the Israel-PA Wye accord, signed in Washington on October 23, 1998, which made Israel's land transfer to the PA conditional on the latter's unequivocal commitment to fight terrorism and to collect illegal arms, a member of Izz al-Din al-Qassam attempted a suicide bombing on a school bus and, a week later, the PIJ exploded a car bomb in downtown Jerusalem.[645]

These events, which were followed by another extensive roundup of senior Hamas leaders by the PA security services, with Sheikh Yasin himself placed under house arrest,[646] clearly indicated that the Islamic groups still possessed

[640] Boaz Ganor, 'Terrorism as a Military Factor: The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process era, 1993-2000', 133; Lia Brynjar, *Implementing the Oslo Peace Accords: A Case Study of the Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process and International Assistance for the Enhancement of Security*, FFI/Rapport 98/01711 (Kjellar: Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, June 1998).

[641] Scholarly studies on terrorism and insurgency often distinguishes between *motivation* and *capability* of terrorist or insurgent organizations. *Motivation* can be defined as an organization' 'will continue the struggle', whereas *capability* can be defined as the resources available to it to continue the struggle. See Boaz Ganor, *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle: A Guide for Decision-Makers* (New York: Transaction Publisher, 2005), 133-134 and Boaz Ganor, 'Terrorist Organization Typologies and the Probability of a Boomerang Effect', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 31/4 (2008), 269-283.

[642] Carmi Gillon, *Shin Bet Between the Schisms*, 199; Ami Ayalon, 'The Broken Dream: Analyzing the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process' Amos Gilad, 'Evaluation of Developments in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict', both in Yaakov Bar-Siman-Tov (ed.), *As The Generals See It: The Collapse of the Oslo Process and the Violent Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Jerusalem: The Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, 2004).

[643] Ronen Bergman, Why There Are no Strikes', *Haaretz* weekly supplement, June 5, 1998; Leslie Susser, 'History Repeating Itself?', *The Jerusalem Post*, June 22, 1998.

[644] Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*, 121.

[645] Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, 80.

[646] Zaki Chehab, *Inside Hamas: The Untold Story of Martyrs, Militants and Spies* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 107.

organizational and planning capability and had access to abundant material and human resources.[647]

Despite the fact that progress in security cooperation continued up until the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada, the Netanyahu government remained incapable of improving the operational approach to CT initiated under the Rabin and Peres government, which by then was blatantly failing.[648] Even though continuous pressure applied on the PA by the government on the political level produced some results, a complete lack of trust in Arafat and the growing public awareness of the elevated degree of corruption within the PA made an already ideologically-biased government even more reluctant to complement CT with further measures to improve the Palestinian socio-economic standards of living. The Israeli insistence in asking the PA to close down Hamas' institutions was not tempered by a more cautious employment of closures or complemented by an expanded mandate for the COGAT concerning cooperation with the PA in the field of economy, health and infrastructures.[649]

As a consequence even though in 1999 Hamas was a battered organization, with perhaps just a handful of full-time operatives, its military infrastructure survived and, most of all, its civil branch was not only intact, but thriving.[650]

Re-conceptualizing the Threat: the Craft of the IDF Low-Intensity Conflict Doctrine

Despite the fact that the state of Israel had to face Low-Intensity Conflict (LIC) from the earliest days of its existence, as we have seen,[651] the management of phenomena such as terrorism, guerrilla and insurgency (categorised in the Israeli unwritten security doctrine under the rubric of *batash, bitachon shotef* – current security threats) was never considered worthy of intellectual attention.[652] Such situation continued to persist well

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[647] Ely Karmon, 'Hamas's Terrorism Strategy: Operational Limitations and Political Restraints', 1; Author's personal interview with Dr. Reuven Paz, former Head of the Shabak Research Department, Herzliya, January, 12 ,2012.

[648] Shaul Mishal, 'How Hamas Thinks', in Joseph Ginat Edward Perkins Edwin Corr (eds.), *The Middle East Peace Process: Vision vs. Reality*, 100.

[649] Author's personal interview with former AMAN Officer, Herzliya, January, 10, 2012. Pter Hilsenrath, 'Health Policy as Counter-Terrorism: Health Services and The Palestinians', Defence and Peace Economics, 16/5 (2005), 365-374.

[650] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue* 64; Zaki Chehab, *Inside Hamas: The Untold Story of Martyrs, Militants and Spies*, 52; Reuven Paz 'Sleeping with the Enemy: A Reconciliation Process as Part of Counter-Terrorism Is Hamas Capable of 'Hudnah'?, *International Institute for Counter-Terrorism Papers* August 1998 and 'Islamic Palestine or Liberated Palestine? The Relationship between The Palestinian Authority and Hamas', *Peacewatch* no. 337 (July 2001).

[651] See chapter 1 on the Israeli Strategic Culture.

[652] *Batash* were considered less relevant as opposed to *Bitachon Yisodi* ('fundamental security'), that is High-intensity Conflicts which posed an existential threat to the state, Stuart Cohen, *Israel and Its Army: From Cohesion to Confusion* (London: Routledge, 2008), 4; Erez Weiner, 'Who Needs the Doctrine?' *Ma'arachot*, no. 385 (September 2002), 42 (Hebrew).

into the 90s notwithstanding the IDF experience of guerrilla in Lebanon and the civil disturbances of the Palestinian Intifada of 1987.[653]

While failing to develop any form of indigenous theoretical and doctrinal thinking about LIC, the IDF did not even draw on foreign sources.[654] Retaining a strong sense of appropriateness of its own methods and operational concepts the IDF always displayed a relative indifference to foreign combat practices.[655] This resulted in little inclination to borrow operational frameworks, methodologies and doctrines borne out of the Western experiences and even to assimilate its own strategic context with those faced by other countries.[656] Such was the case for the concept of *Counter-insurgency*, around which from the time of colonial wars of liberation Western military thinking had conceptualized the practise of asymmetric warfare.[657] Up to the beginning of the 90s, this paradigm remained relatively alien to the IDF professional lexicon, with asymmetric warfare understood simply as warfare against irregular foes, or more narrowly equated with 'struggle against terror', rather than being associated with the precepts of 'classic' western counter-insurgency thinking.[658]

The geostrategic changes of the 90s in conjunction with the confluence of factors of different nature prompted a restructuring of the IDF and a redefinition of the Israeli approach to military affairs in the early 1990s.[659] With regard to LIC the very birth of the PA and the future prospect of an autonomous Palestinian state, as well as the spread of Islamic radical

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[653] Itay Brun, 'Where has the Manoeuvre Gone?' *Ma'arachot* no. 420-421 (September 2008), 8-9 (Hebrew).

[654] Zvi Lanir, 'The Limits of Strategic Thinking', *Ma'arachot*, no. 326 (September 1992), 2-11 (Hebrew); Eliot Cohen, Michael Eisenstadt, Andrew Bacevich, *Knives, Tanks & Missiles*(Washington: the Washington Institute for Near Policy, 1998), 50-51; Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution in Military Affairs in Russia, the US, and Israel* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 124.

[655] British and Soviet influences at the tactical and operational level can be discerned in the first years of the armed forces' existence. Later on the Wehrmacht's Blitzkrieg served as an intellectual inspiration for the IDF operational art. See Shimon Naveh, *Operational Art and the IDF: A Critical Study of a Command Culture* (Centre for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment, September, 30, 2007); Eliot Cohen, Michael Eisenstadt, and Andrew Bacevich, *Knives, Tanks, and Missiles: Israel's Security Revolution*, 23-24; 127; Yigal Allon, *The Making of Israel's Army,* (London: Valentine, Mitchell, 1980), 8-11; Moshe Dayan, *Story of My Life*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1976), 44-48.

[656] Yehuda Wagman, 'Israel's Security Doctrine and the Trap of Limited Conflict', *Jerusalem Viewpoints*, no. 514, March 2004, http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp514.htm.

[657] Classic' COIN thinking generally refers to the wave of literature focusing on decolonisation and revolutionary wars see David Martin Jones & M. L.R. Smith, 'Whose Hearts and Whose Minds? The Curious Case of Global Counter-Insurgency', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33/1 (2010), 81-121.

[658] Author's personal interviews with IDF Officers, Tel Aviv, February 20-22, 2012; Aharon Yaffe, 'Dealing with Guerrilla Warfare', *Ma'arachot* no. 363 (March 1999) 54-58; Lt. Col. A, 'Asymmetric Warfare', *Ma'arachot*, no. 371 (July 2000), 10-23.

[659] Stuart A. Cohen, 'The Israel Defense Forces (IDF): From a "People's Army" to a "Professional Military" Causes and Implications', Armed Forces & Society, 21/2 (Winter 1995), 237-254; 'The Peace Process and its Impact on the Development of a "Slimmer and Smarter" Israel Defense Force', *Israel Affairs*, ¼ (1995), 1-21; 'Towards a New portrait of the (new) Israeli Soldier, *Israel Affairs*, 3/3-4 (1997), 77-114; 'Small States and Their Armies: Restructuring the Militia Framework of the IDF', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 18/4 (1995), 78-93; Eliot Cohen, Michael Eisenstadt, Andrew Bacevich, *Knives, Tanks & Missiles*, x, 92; Gabriel Ben-Dor, 'Responding to the Threat: The Dynamics of Arab-Israel Conflict', in Daniel Bar-Tal, Dan Jacobson, and Aharon Klieman (eds.), *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience* (London: JAI Press, 1998), 130-133.

ideologies and actors in the wider Middle East were increasingly perceived as posing new security challenges to the Jewish state. In fact, though capable and willing to fight extremist organizations and terrorists, any future Palestinian state was likely to remain a hotbed of extremist and militant movements.[660]

Such a shift taking place in the perception of the strategic context and of the security problems should have stimulated a certain intellectual attention to asymmetric warfare and, possibly, consequent adjustments in doctrine. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the lack of significant strategic results in the face of enormous tactical efforts generated increasing dissatisfaction, the IDF proved slow in developing its own concept of LIC. Such a situation was further complicated by the IDF self-imposed cultural isolation, whereby the view that no foreign military or civilian institution could contribute to the development of military knowledge relevant to the IDF, was widely shared.[661]

Early in 1994, a special task force, the Advanced Operational Group, was established within the framework of the National Security College in Glilot. The group embarked on scientific research on operational theory, and its mission was approved by the IDF GHS in 1995 when the group was upgraded to Operational Theory Research Institute (OTRI).[662] Although OTRI's main field of inquiry was operational theory as a domain of knowledge between tactics and strategy, their critique of the poor state of the IDF intellectualism and of Israel's security doctrine and operational concept involved also the IDF understanding and practice of LIC. Particularly relevant in this realm were in fact OTRI's criticism of the predominant tendency among IDF commanders to perceive the desired outcome of any combat activity as the 'mechanical destruction of the opposing force', which was considered as absolutely irrelevant and even detrimental in LIC. Equally criticized was the IDF traditional operational concept based on armored offensive maneuver, which could not deter and was unsuitable to the threat of LIC.[663]

In September 1996, as we have seen, the Hasmonean Tunnel riots caught the IDF unprepared, spurring new interest in the topic of LIC.[664] The IDF immediately developed contingency plans for dealing with LIC in the Palestinian arena code-named *Kesem Mangina* (Charm of Music) *Plada*

[660] Shimon Naveh, 'Israel's Defense in the 21st Century', *Ma'arachot*, no. 355 (Janaury 1998), 50-52 (Hebrew).

[661] Shimon Naveh, *Operational Art and the IDF: A Critical Study of a Command Culture*' (Centre for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment, September, 30, 2007), 89.

[662] Amir Rapaport, 'The IDF and the Lessons of the Second Lebanon War', *The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies Mideast Security and Policy Studies*, no. 85 (December 2010), 7.

[663] Shimon Naveh, 'The Cult of Offensive Preemption and Future Challenges for Israeli Operational Thought', in Efraim Karsh (ed.), *Between War and Peace: Dilemmas of Israeli Security* (London: Frank C ass, 1996), 170-177, and 'Was Blitzkrieg a Military Doctrine?' *Ma'arachot* no. 330 (May– June 1993), 28-54, and *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 105-138.

[664] Ami Ayalon, 'The War against Terror – Towards a New Model of Civil-Military Relations' in Ram Erez (ed.), *Civil-Military Relations in Israel in Times of Military Conflict*, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies Memorandum no.82 (October 2006), 63-64; Shimon Naveh, *Operational Art and the IDF: A Critical Study of a Command Culture*', 1-6.

Lohetet (Blazing Steel) and *Sdeh Kotzim* (Field of Thorns).[665] Concurrently Maj. Gen. Dagan was put in charge of a team to improve the IDF's deterrent posture and intellectual efforts to develop a more coherent and larger body of theoretical and doctrinal thinking were initiated.[666]

In 1996 the only doctrinal document dealing with LIC was still a short chapter in the IDF Land Forces' combat doctrine. Multiple factors, such as the lack of basic knowledge over how to write military doctrine, lack of suitable mechanisms for managing operational knowledge, poor coordination among the Land Forces Command, the GHS and the Training and Doctrine Division (TOHAD) and tendency to provide *ad hoc*, mostly technical solutions to complex military issues accounted for such a situation.[667] In the course of that year however, the TOHAD started to publish a considerable amount of writings related to LIC. Particularly prominent among them were an issue of the publication *Tatzpit* completely dedicated to the analysis of foreign armies' experiences in counter-insurgency and, later on in 1999, an issue of the journal *Zarkur* which contained a historical survey of the most relevant lessons of the Lebanese experiences.[668] This intellectual trend would increase, with the number of publications dealing with LIC in the IDF professional publications rising approximately to 20% of the total between 2000 and 2005.[669] In 1998, moreover, full courses on the history and theory of guerrilla warfare and tactics were inserted into the curriculum of the IDF staff college.[670]

In the process of re-conceptualizing LIC and of developing doctrinal thinking, a particularly influential figure was that of Col. Shmuel Nir who in the course of over a decade of service in the IDF Northern Command AMAN had the opportunity to acquire considerable knowledge on the topic and whose ideas influenced the IDF tactical approach to the fight against Hizb'allah.[671]

Refusing the application of the paradigm of *batash* as inappropriate Nir coined the concept of *Ha-Imut Ha-Mugbal* (the Limited Conflict), which he felt better conveyed the singularity of asymmetric conflicts.[672] Nir's writings

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[665] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue*, 68.

[666] Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure - The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Proces*, 127.

[667] Erez Weiner, 'From Confusion to Sobriety: the Development of Combat Doctrine for Fighting against Irregular Forces, 1996-2004', *Ma'arachot*, no. 409-410 (December 2006), 4, 7-8. (Hebrew).

[668] Yehuda Wagman, 'Israel's Security Doctrine and the Trap of Limited Conflict'.

[669] Avi Kober, 'The Intellectual and Modern Focus in Israeli Military Thinking as Reflected in Ma'arachot Articles, 1948-2000', *Armed Forces & Society*, 30/1 (2003), 154; Stuart Cohen, *Israel and Its Army*, 48.

[670] Yaakov Banjo, 'Is it Necessary to Review the Principles of War? The Debate between the Traditional School of Thought and that of "Limited Conflict", Who is Right?', *Ma'arachot*, no. 402 (August 2005), 10-17 (Hebrew).

[671] Boaz Zalmanovich, 'The establishment of Special Forces for LIC', *Ma'arachot*, no. 369 (February 2000), 33 (Hebrew); Ehud Lesloi, 'IDF Special Units in the 21st Century', *Ma'arachot* no. 440 (December 2011), 36-43; Clive Jones, 'Israeli Counter-Insurgency Strategy and the War In South Lebanon 1985-1997', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 8/3 (1997), 82-108; Shmuel L. Gordon, 'The Vulture and the Snake, Counter-Guerrilla Air Warfare: The War in Southern Lebanon', *BESA Mideast Security and Policy Studies*, no. 39 (1998).

[672] Stuart Cohen, *Israel and Its Army*, 48.

analyzed asymmetric warfare at the tactical, operational and strategic level, outlining a conceptual framework for understanding the very nature of the 'Limited Conflict', and recommending courses of actions with regard to force structure, training, intelligence, tactics and operations. The 'Limited Conflict' was envisioned as a long-term confrontation in which the attainment of a political goal required wearing down the opponent's will to fight and achieving a cognitive change in its society.[673] Such an understanding of asymmetric warfare led Nir to reappraise the relevance of the three pillars of deterrence, early warning and battlefield decision, over which the Israeli approach to national security was founded. In 'Limited Conflict', their relevance was considerably more limited, as deterrence was inherently unstable and temporary, early warning remained primarily tactical in its essence (though it could rapidly generate strategic repercussions) and no battlefield decision, as traditionally understood by the Israeli strategic community, could be achieved.[674] According to Nir, in LIC contexts the notion of battlefield decision (*Hakhraa*) was almost irrelevant. In fact, decision could not be achieved at the tactical and operational level, but only at the national level, in the consciousness of the opponent's society: rather than the result of a mechanical blow to the enemy's physical system, victory was the byproduct of a cognitive change in the opponent's behavior. Envisioning a multidimensional battle based on the employment of all the elements of national power, Nir's writings called for an holistic 'unity of effort' approach in lieu of the IDF's traditional 'concentration of effort' and for the cumulative infliction of physical, economic and psychological damage in order to influence the 'consciousness' or 'hearts and minds' (*Toda'a*) of the opponent, to erode its determination to fight and to finally lead him to give up its goals.[675]

A decade of Col. Nir writings finally resulted in 2000 in the publication of a document officially entitled the 'Limited Conflict' (*Ha-Imut Ha-Mugbal*). Although later defined as the General Headquarters Staff (GHS)'s doctrine for waging LIC, originally the 'Limited Conflict' was only a summary of insights, a historical survey about counter-insurgency and LICs and was not designed to fulfil the role of an official doctrine.[676]

Almost in parallel with the TOHAD, a new focus on LIC began to emerge also in the cadre of the intellectual efforts promoted by OTRI. In a search for new ways to redefine Israel's national security, in 1998 David Ivry, director general of the Ministry of Defense, launched a project teaming up military and academic strategists, including prominent OTRI members, with the aim of

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[673] Shmuel Nir, 'The Nature of the Limited Conflict', in Haggai Golan & Shaul Shay (eds.), *The Limited Conflict* (Tel viv: Ma'arachot, 2004), 21 (Hebrew) and 'There is No Trap', *Ma'arachot*, no. 387 (January 2003), 68-70 (Hebrew).

[674] Shmuel Nir, 'The Nature of the Limited Conflict', 39.

[675] Shmuel Nir, 'The Nature of the Limited Conflict', 22-23, 27; Shmuel Nir, 'There is No Trap', 69; Danny Reshef, 'A New Approach to Low-Intensity Conflict', *Ma'arachot*, no. 388 (April 2003), 9-11 (Hebrew).

[676] Erez Weiner 'From Confusion to Sobriety: the Development of Combat Doctrine for Fighting against Irregular Forces, 1996-2004', 4-5.

developing new concepts and methodologies for understanding and fighting LIC.[677] Consistently with the center's main research area, OTRI's focus on LIC concerned the operational and strategic aspects of the fight rather than the doctrinal features. Criticizing Israel's traditional approach to LIC based on punishment and retaliation as being tactically-oriented and driven by siege-mentality, OTRI's experts claimed that the geostrategic changes of the 90s had deprived of any strategic foundation a LIC approach based on mechanically striking against enemies whenever the opportunity presented itself and without giving too much attention to political or diplomatic considerations.[678] Elaborating on systems theory and on post-modern research frameworks and introducing elements of complexity theory and non-linearity in the analysis, OTRI identified a series of weaknesses which had an adverse impact on the IDF understanding and practice of LIC.[679] Among the most crucial were the epistemological deviations deriving from the lack of a suitable theoretical framework for understanding LIC, the lack of cultural understanding of the opponent's system and the inability to properly shape the operational and strategic environment in a way consonant with Israel's political goals and strategic aims.[680] Acknowledging the primacy of the political over the military dimension of the conflict, OTRI claimed that the IDF, by its very nature of institutionalized army operating on the base of a linear, unified, simple logic, remained structurally incapable of adequately addressing the complexities of the LIC environment. As a consequence the IDF, the intelligence services and the COGAT continued to merely respond to developments on the ground, trying to shape the strategic reality almost exclusively relying on the use of force.[681]

In the attempt to move beyond mere tactical virtuosity in LIC and secure a better connection between the use of military force and Israel's national interests, political goals, and strategic objectives, OTRI tried to promote a new wave of operational thinking in asymmetric conflicts drawing on architectural researches.[682] On such a base they hoped to promote a process

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[677] Ami Ayalon, 'The War against Terror – Towards a New Model of Civil-Military Relations', 63.

[678] Shimon Naveh, 'Israel's Defense in the 21st Century', 51.

[679] Among OTRI's most relevant sources of inspiration: Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus - Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (University of Minnesota Press, 1988), especially chapter "Treatise on Nomadology – The War Machine"; Paul Virilio & Sylvere Lotringer, *Pure War* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997); James Der Derian, (ed.), *Virilio - The Virilio Reader* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998); James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro (eds.), *Intemational/Intertextual Relations - Postmodern Readings of World Politics* (New York: Lexington Books, 1989); Ben Goertzel, *From Complexity to Creativity - Explorations in Evolutionary Autopoietic, and Cognitive Dynamics* (New York: Plenum, 1997). For the Application of non-linearity and the science of complexity to military affairs see Alan Beyerchen, 'Nonlinear Science and the Unfolding of a New Intellectual Vision', Papers in Comparative Studies, 6 (1988-89), 26-29; R.G. Coyle & C.J. Millar, 'A Methodology for Understanding Military Complexity: The Case of the Rhodesian Counter-Insurgency Campaign', *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 7/3 (Winter 1996) 360-378.

[680] Shimon Naveh, 'Asymmetric Conflicts: an Operational Critique of the Hegemonic Strategies', in Haggai Golan & Shaul Shay (eds.), *The Limited Conflict*, 102-104, 120.

[681] Zvi Lanir, 'The Failure of Military Thought in Low-Intensity Conflict', *Ma'arachot*, no. 365 (September 1999), 4-12 (Hebrew).

[682] Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction,* The MIT Press, *1999*; William Mitchell, *The Logic of Architecture - Design, Computation, and Cognition,* The MIT Press, 1996; Robert Venwri, "Complexity and

of re-conceptualization of the cultural and strategic features of asymmetric conflicts and a different understanding of the operational space.[683] Essentially OTRI advocated the application of a systems approach to the design, planning and execution of military operations centred not only on simple attrition of enemy forces, but on the full range of direct, indirect, and cascading effects that could be achieved by the application of military, diplomatic, psychological, and economic instruments.[684] As for strategy-making, prominent OTRI members Maj. Gen. (res.) Dov Tamari and Dr. Zvi Lanir argued that the challenges of LIC required an improved level of coordination and synchronization between the political echelon and the security establishment, based on a new model of 'conceptualization' of the strategic context, something which could be achieved only through continuous interaction between the echelons.[685]

The activities of OTRI, the TOHAD and other military experts rapidly began to intersect, with research groups and experts exchanging views and influencing each other in a joint intellectual effort which from the late 90s started to directly impact on the security establishment's understanding and practise of LIC.[686] In fact, within the IDF, two successive Officers Commanding (OC) of the IDF's Central Command, Maj. General Uzi Dayan and Moshe Ya'alon, adopted a series of independent decisions and initiatives clearly influenced by OTRI's works and methodologies.[687] In 1997, Maj. Gen. Dayan started to apply the package offered by OTRI as the theoretical and practical basis for planning and conducting the campaign against Palestinian extremist organizations and promoted, always in cooperation with OTRI, the creation of a Center for Low Intensity Conflict Studies.[688] In 1998 its successor, Maj. Gen. Moshe Ya'alon, in collaboration with prominent OTRI members, amended the Estimation of the Situation (EOS) procedure, the most relevant component in military knowledge creation, through the introduction of 'conceptualization' and 'discourse'.[689]

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contradiction in Architecture", in Kate Nesbitt, (ed.). *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture - An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995,* Princeton Architectural Press, 1996. pp. 72-7.

[683] Shimon Naveh, *Operational Art and the IDF: A Critical Study of a Command Culture'*, 23-26; Gershon Hacohen, 'The Commander and Campaign Design: From Engineering to Architecture', *Ma'arachot*, no. 376 (April 2001), 10-15 (Hebrew); Ofra Grainzer, 'Wingate's Deep-Range Penetration Paths in Burma as an Alternative Foundation for the Operational Space', *Ma'arachot*, no. 392 (December 2003) 42-47.

[684] Shimon Naveh, *Operational Art and the IDF: A Critical Study of a Command Culture'*, 1; Nadir Tsur, 'The Test of Consciousness: The Crisis of Signification in the IDF', *INSS Military and Strategic Affairs*, 2/2 (2010) , 11.

[685] Ami Ayalon, 'The War against Terror – Towards a New Model of Civil-Military Relations', 64; Zvi Lanir, 'Doctrines and Systems of Conceptualization and Interpretation', *Ma'arachot* no. 355 (January 1998), 56-59. (Hebrew); Kobi Michael, The Dilemma Behind the Classic Dilemma of Civil-Military Relations: the "Discourse Space" Model and the Israeli Case during the Oslo Process', *Armed Forces & Society*, 33/4 (2007), 518-546.

[686] Author's personal interview with IDF officers, Tel Aviv, February 22, 2012.

[687] Shimon Naveh, *Operational Art and the IDF: A Critical Study of a Command Culture'*, 1.

[688] David E. Johnson, *Hard Fighting: Israel in Lebanon and Gaza* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2011), 27.

[689] Kobi Michael, 'The Israel Defense Forces as an Epistemic Authority: An Intellectual Challenge in the Reality of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 30/3 (2007), 431-437; Shimon Naveh, 'Asymmetric Conflicts: an Operational Critique of the Hegemonic Strategies', 102-104.

Thus, through the application of new concepts and methodologies the Central Command started to implement military operations articulating them through three stages: design (definition of brainstorming and basic concepts), planning (formulating plans and operational orders) and execution (implementation of the campaign).[690] Criticism of Israel's approach to LIC emerged even outside the armed forces, as Shabak director Ami Ayalon claimed that Israel's cumulative deterrence doctrine was totally inapplicable to asymmetric warfare which, by contrast, imposed a new conceptual framework based on closer interaction and mutual learning between the civilian and military echelons.[691]

Notwithstanding the difference of approach as well as the different research areas (doctrine and operational art) of the two research *foci* on LIC within the IDF, it is possible to discern a certain number of contact points which ultimately led to a (partial) re-conceptualization of LIC by the Israeli strategic community. From an examination of public statements of IDF and security establishment's members and of the most relevant publications in the professional journal *Ma'arachot* in the period under scrutiny, it seems possible to conclude that they have contributed to codify existing concepts and practices as well as to promote adaptive changes to the existing LIC paradigm through the acknowledgment of at least three hitherto neglected dimensions.[692]

First, by stressing the importance of framing, at the operational and strategic level, combat power within a broader non-military framework in order to more effectively influence the relevant civilian populations.[693] Second, by acknowledging the need, while conducting counter-insurgency operations, to devote more attention to their impact on the daily life of the civilian population, whose role came to be considered as crucial to secure victory.[694] In particular, this marked at least a partial departure from the well-rooted conviction that 'the disruption of the frameworks of daily life' had a key role in quelling an insurgency. Finally, by the introduction in the intellectual discourse of the concept of *Toda'a*.[695] Although priority remained persuading the hearts and the minds of the opponents of the hopelessness of their struggle rather than convincing them of the potential benefits deriving from the relinquishment of violence, the *Toda'a* can be considered as an embryonic

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[690] Erez Weiner 'From Confusion to Sobriety: the Development of Combat Doctrine for Fighting against Irregular Forces, 1996-2004', 9.

[691] Ami Ayalon, 'The War against Terror – Towards a New Model of Civil-Military Relations', 61-69.

[692] Author's personal interview with IDF officers, Tel Aviv, February 22, 2012.

[693] Aharon Zeevi-Farkash, 'The Nature of Asymmetric Warfare', Presentation at the 'Land Warfare in the 21st Century Conference', Latrun, September 16, 2008, Col. Efi Ido & Major Maria Packer-Rinat, 'Constraints on the Use of Force in the West Bank during the Accords', *Ma'arachot*, no.372 (August 2000), 3-4 (Hebrew).

[694] Remarks by Moshe Ya'alon at the 'Land Warfare in the 21st Century' Conference, Latrun, September 16, 2008.

[695] Miri Eisin, 'The Struggle over Consciousness in Post-Modern War', in Haggai Golan & Shaul Shay (eds.), *The Limited Conflict*, 347-376 (Hebrew); Yossi Kuperwasser, 'Battling for Consciousness', INSS Strategic Assessment, 12/2 (2009), 41-50.

Israeli version of the concept of 'hearts & minds' as understood in western military thinking.

At the same time though, it does not seem that these intellectual efforts, whose character was eminently practical, were successful in promoting a comprehensive theoretical picture of LIC which could be employed as a frame of reference for improving operational performance, and the IDF continued to be affected by a 'cognitive gap'.[696] With some notable exceptions in fact[697], the professional publications concerning LIC seem to suffer from a certain degree of ethnocentrism. Even more prominently, many of the available sources appear limitedly attuned to Israel's actual strategic environment, reflecting by contrast a sort of undeclared 'system of conceptualisation and interpretation' still conspicuously influenced by Israel's formative LIC experiences of the early 50s, in a sort of 'first war syndrome'.[698]

Although the LIC doctrine was never released to the public, an examination of its author's writings suggests that it might suffer from similar shortcomings. Envisioning a multidimensional battle based on the employment of all the elements of national power to achieve the physical and cognitive strategic collapse of the opponent, col. Nir's writings outlined a more sophisticated and holistic conceptual framework for the use of force in LIC.[699] Despite these upgrades however, the conceptualisation of the nature of LIC illustrated in the writings did not represent a significant evolution from the traditional Israeli conception. LIC was in fact still envisioned as a prolonged struggle aimed at exhausting the opponent's will and persuading it of the futility of its fight building on the aggregate impact of Israel's show of force, resolve, and of multiple tactical engagements over an extended period of time, in many ways reminiscent of the 'cumulative deterrence' doctrine.[700]

Conclusion: Culture and Adaptation

In hindsight, though the concept of 'counter-insurgency' was never explicitly mentioned by members of the Israeli political and military establishments, Israel's approach in the first part of the Oslo years resembled under many aspects a classic counter-insurgency context. The Jewish state as the foreign power and the PA as the local ally/proxy to which security responsibilities are gradually devolved in parallel with a state-building process. There are

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[696] Author's personal interview with IDF officers, Tel Aviv, February 22, 2012; Zvi Lanir, 'The Failure of Military Thought in Low-Intensity Conflict', 12; Shimon Naveh, 'Asymmetric Conflicts, 104.

[697] Eado Hecht, 'Low-Intensity Wars: Some Characteristics of a Unique Form of War' in Haggai Golan & Shaul Shay (eds.), *The Limited Conflict*, 45-68.

[698] Zvi Lanir, Doctrines and Systems of Conceptualization and Interpretation', 59. (Hebrew); ; Shimon Naveh, 'Israel's Defense in the 21st Century', 50-51; Austin Long, *First War Syndrome: Military Culture, Professionalization and Counterinsurgency Doctrine* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, PhD Dissertation, 2010) 51-63.

[699] Shmuel Nir, 'The Nature of the Limited Conflict', 27; Shmuel Nir, 'There is No Trap', 69.

[700] Moshe Bar-Kochba, 'Strategic Decision on the Terms of the State of Israel', *Ma'arachot*, no. 317 (November 1989) 6-14 (Hebrew); Munir Daher, 'Cumulative Deterrence Model to deter Low-Intensity Conflict', *Ma'arachot*, no. 388 (Februray 2003) 12-17 (Hebrew); Doron Almog, 'Cumulative Deterrence and the War on Terrorism', *Parameters*, 34/4 (2004), 4-19.

however two fundamental differences. First of all the fact that the PA was not eager to fulfill the role of the proxy, acting as the executive arm of Israel's intelligence services in the fight against other Palestinian organizations. This difference can be ascribed to the essentially inter-communal nature of the conflict, a confrontation between Israel seeking to obtain final legitimization for its self-determination and an indigenous Palestinian population which regarded the same land, where they have been present for centuries, as belonging to them. The second relevant difference from a 'classic' counter-insurgency context is the fact that Israel was only limitedly involved in the state-building process, which saw by contrast a conspicuous role of the international community and was therefore only partially able to coordinate military operations and security cooperation with the state-building process.

At the tactical level, Israel managed, to the extent it was possible, to adapt to Hamas' employment of suicide bombings against the 'soft underbelly' of the Israeli heartland. Deviating for the well-rooted Israeli preference for offensive measures in war, the strategic community gradually acknowledged the relevance of defensive measures in coping with the Islamic Resistance Movement's terrorist tactics. At the same time though, the Israeli siege-mentality and the obsession for providing maximum security to the civilian population led to an indiscriminate use of defensive measures, such as for instance closures, irrespective of their grave consequences on the life of the Palestinian population and, therefore, of their political ramifications.

At the operational level, the enforcement of *Havlagh* was from many points of view complicated. Both the IDF and the political establishment found it hard to adapt to a constrained use of force in fighting Hamas. Consequently on several occasions, albeit through a use of force qualitatively tailored to the political context, they turned to the familiar paradigm of strategic deterrence through tactical offense, retaliating following Hamas' attacks. This, notwithstanding the impressive capability to absorb punishment showed by the Islamic Resistance Movement and the perceived difficulty (especially by the IDF) to deter Hamas' militants.

On the other hand, neither the Rabin/Peres nor the Netanyahu government seriously invested in trying to complement CT with state-building. After some initial enthusiasms for the paradigm of the 'New Middle East' the Rabin government reverted to a much narrower focus on security cooperation, rather than trying, as declared by Rabin himself, 'to dry the swamp of Islamic radicalism through economic development and improved standard of living'. On the one hand, the PA's ineptitude and corruption discouraged the already reluctant Israeli governments from seriously investing in the non-military aspects of security. On the other however, economic cooperation with the Palestinians was often undermined by the Israeli difficulties in understanding the Palestinian leadership, society, habits, political language and culture at large. The Israeli proclivity to ethnocentrism and relative lack of interest, knowledge and empathy with the Arab/Palestinian culture can in fact be

considered a key factor in shattering the prospects of success in the field of economic cooperation, and, indirectly, a successful combination of CT and state-building.

At the strategic level adaptation took place quickly but at the same time precariously. The Oslo process was in fact generated by mutual fatigue, rather than reciprocal trust. Profound shifts in the regional and international strategic context favored a conciliatory approach toward the Palestinians by the Israeli strategic community, but it was exhaustion, as well as the realization of the limits of military power in quelling the Palestinian insurgency rather than the consolidation of mutual trust, that was crucial in triggering the Israeli-Palestinian political dialogue leading to the Oslo accords.

The agreement focused on procedures for gradual confidence-building, but the very fact that the two parties managed to reach an agreement raised enormous expectations, as though deep-held negative beliefs and convictions about the counterpart could disappear overnight. Indeed, an immediate and total end to violence was widely perceived by Israelis as a precondition for their compliance with the directives of the accord.

Constantly suspicious of a double game by the PA and obsessed with the potential repercussions of the 'salami' strategy, the Israeli strategic community progressively allowed for terrorism and violence to become both the pretext and the context for derailing the accords. Thus, terrorist attacks became the standard for the Israeli assessment of the Palestinian's real intentions, and the backdrop for the process of confidence-destruction that came to dominate Israeli-Palestinian relations. In such a condition, uncertain whether Hamas' was acting as a 'spoiler', attempting to derail the negotiations or whether conversely the Islamic Movement was trying to accelerate their course in order to secure more maneuvering space and pursue a phased strategy of low-intensity warfare against the Jewish state, Israel found increasingly hard to adapt to adapt to the strategic conditions of combat between 1993 and 1999.

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The al-Aqsa Intifada

It is not possible to analyze the Israeli approach to the fight against Hamas during the al-Aqsa intifada (2000-2005)[701] independently from the overall development of Israeli counter-insurgency campaign.[702] In the case of the 1987 intifada, the difference between the terrorist tactics of Hamas and the predominantly non-violent nature of the insurgents' activities allowed to make a clear distinction between the main counter-insurgency effort and operations to counter the Islamic Resistance Movement. Conversely, the al-Aqsa intifada was characterized by an elevated threshold of generalized violence, a mixture of mass demonstrations, terrorist attacks and guerrilla warfare carried out by all the Palestinian organizations.[703] As a consequence, despite its spearheading role in the insurgency, until 2002 the fight against the Islamic Resistance Movement was conducted within the framework of a military strategy centered almost exclusively on the PA. Only from the beginning of 2003 Israel developed a specifically-designed approach to counter Hamas.

The al-Aqsa intifada can be divided in four phases, roughly corresponding with the IDF classification and patterns of engagement: the 'containment' stage (September 2000-beginning of 2001); the stage of 'leverage' or ongoing continuous pressure (2001); the stage of the 'systematic dismantlement of the terrorist infrastructures' (January-March 2002), 'counterblows' of Operation Defensive Shield (March-April 2002) and 'security control' of Operation Determined Path (June 2002-May 2003); and the stage of 'regularization and operational stabilization' (second half of 2003 and afterward).[704]

The Warning Signs

The period comprised between the election of Ehud Barak to prime minister and the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada on September, 29, 2000, was marked by rising skepticism about the possibility of reaching an agreement with the Palestinians, as well as an overall increase in threat perception on the part of the Israeli strategic community. Mossad's director Efraim Halevy had serious

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[701] Jonathan Schachter, 'The End of the Second Intifada?' *INSS Military and Strategic Affairs*, 13/3 (October 2010), 62-71.

[702] Anat Kurz, 'The Political Process Entangled in the Triangular Gordian Knot', *INSS Military and Strategic Affairs*, 13/3 (October 2010), 49-62.

[703] Shaul Shay, '"Ebb and Flow" versus 'the Al-Aqsa Intifada': The Israeli Palestinian Conflict, 2000–2003', in Mordechai Bar-On (ed.), *Never-Ending Conflict: Israeli Military History*, (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2006); Michael Milstein, 'Twenty Years since the Intifada: The Palestinian Arena, Then and Now', *INSS Strategic Assessment*, 10/4 (2008); Michael Milstein, 'A Decade since the Outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada: A Strategic Overview', *INSS Strategic Assessment*, 13/3 (2010).

[704] Gal Hirsch, 'From 'Cast Lead' to 'A Different Way': The Development of the Campaign in the Central Command, 2000-2003', *Ma'arachot*, no. 393 (February 2004), 27-29. (Hebrew).

doubts about Arafat's intentions regarding final status agreements and OC Central Command Maj. Gen. Moshe Ya'alon was convinced that the PA's leadership would not discard the use of terrorist tactics to extract more concessions from Israel in case of a stalemate in the negotiations.[705] Maj. Gen. Amos Gilad, head of the AMAN research unit categorically excluded the possibility of reaching a sustainable peace agreement with Arafat.[706]

Although the IDF as an institution continued to support the peace process, the skeptics' and hard-liners' positions were strengthened in the period preceding the al-Aqsa intifada by a number of events. In 1996 the Hasmonean tunnel riots created, according to an IDF internal document, a new situation in the territories whereby 'the basic assumptions over which the Israeli-Palestinian relations and the principles of coexistence were based, collapsed'.[707] In May 2000, the withdrawal from Lebanon had far-reaching consequences on the military's strategic thinking. CGS Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz and most of the GHS resolutely opposed Barak's decision, estimating that Hizb'allah would continue to carry out attacks on Israel's northern frontier once Israel retreated from the security zone. Even worse, they also predicted that such a move would weaken Israel's deterrent posture as its enemies would regard withdrawal as a cowardly Israeli retreat and see its own violent actions as having led to this victory, a claim that would have in turn further strengthened the Palestinians' notion that they could similarly drive Israel out of the West Bank and Gaza.[708] Furthermore, the intellectual efforts initiated in the mid-90s led many within the IDF and the security establishment to believe that the very nature of LIC as well as constraints by the political echelon and the media, prevented the IDF from achieving victory in this kind of conflict. Such a conclusion should have, theoretically, further strengthened the IDF's support for the peace process and the diplomatic agreements as a means of enhancing Israel's security.[709] Nevertheless, continuous insurgent warfare in Lebanon and terrorist attacks in the Territories rendered many within the IDF dubious about the fact that the peace process could provide a sustainable solution to Israel's security problem of LIC. Increasingly aware of its complexities and worried by the prospects of failure of the peace process,

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[705] Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure - The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process* (Westport CT: Praeger, 2009), 129.

[706] Amos Gilad, 'Evaluation of Developments in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict', in Ya'akov Bar-Siman-Tov (ed.), *As The Generals See It: The Collapse of the Oslo Process and the Violent Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Jerusalem: The Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, 2004), 47-59; for a general overview see Shlomo Shpiro, 'Intelligence Services and Political Transformation in the Middle East', *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 17/4 (2004), 575-600.

[707] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue* (Paris: Hachette, 2005), 68.

[708] Uzi Dayan, 'What is Needed and What Prevails in the Relations between the Political and Military Echelons'; Ehud Barak, 'Withdrawal From Lebanon: A Case Study in Civil-Military Relations', both in Ram Erez (ed.), *Civil-Military Relations in Israel: Influences and Constraints* (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 2003), 23-27 and 29-39.

[709] Major-General (res.) Ya'akov Amidror, '**Can a Conventional Army Vanquish a Terrorist Insurgency?'** *Jerusalem Viewpoints, no. 550 (January 2007);* Zaki Shalom and Yoaz Hendel, 'The Unique Features of the Second Intifada', *INSS Military and Strategic Affairs* 3/1 (May 2011), 17-19.

the self-confidence that had enabled the IDF's General Staff to promote negotiations with the Palestinians started to erode.[710]

Though the 'skeptics' expounding diminished enthusiasm for the peace negotiations within the Israeli strategic community remained a minority, the IDF began to prepare itself for the possibility that the conflict would resume, assessing that the next confrontation would be more violent than the first intifada, when the Palestinians' weapons had consisted mainly of stones. Following the first intifada, IDF planners reached the conclusion that an irresolute policy and the absence of a sharp response in the initial days of unrest were perceived by the insurgents as weakness on Israel's part, encouraging them to continue fighting.[711] For this reason, the IDF devised a much more resolute response to suppress a future insurgency from the outset. It was based on a simple premise: an intense show of strength immediately following a spate of violence would make the insurgents realize the heavy price they would pay if the hostilities continued. This, it was assumed, could cool their ardor at once and avoid an escalation of violence. These were the assumptions at the base of the IDF contingency plan known as 'Field of Thorns'. In 2000, AMAN noted that the PA had repeatedly violated the Oslo agreements with regard to purchases of weapons and size of the security forces which had reached 40.000.[712] CGS Mofaz was convinced that this increase was offensive in nature and promoted an intensification of the IDF's training, with the implementation of a vast scale exercise 'Frontal Gear' to test Field of Thorns.[713]

The Israeli political echelon was slower in changing its perception of the Palestinian partner. Although Likud exponents repeatedly manifested their lack of trust and satisfaction for the PA's behavior in the realm of Counter-Terrorism (CT), the Israeli political left was still confident in the prospects of a successful accord.

Nevertheless, a first change in the perception and a certain tension can be discerned from Barak's first days in office.[714] This appears in fact testified by the prime minister's decision, once elected, to prioritize negotiations with Syria, rather than the Palestinian track, in the conviction that an eventual success could mollify the Palestinian demands and make them readier to compromise.

After the failure of the Camp David summit, on July 25, 2000 (and even more after the failure of the Taba summit, in January 2001) all the doubts and

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[710] Yoram Peri *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy* (Washington DC: Institute for Peace Studies, 2006), 91-103.

[711] Ami Ayalon, 'The War against Terror – Towards a New Model of Civil-Military Relations' in Ram Erez (ed.), *Civil-Military Relations in Israel: Influences and Constraints*, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies Memorandum no.82 (October 2006), 63-64.

[712] Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure - The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process*, 144.

[713] Daniel Byman, *A High Price: the Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism* (New York: Oxford UP, 2011), 125.

[714] Ehud Barak, 'More an Actor Than a Leader', *Newsweek*, May 12, 2003; Ari Shavit, interview with Ehud Barak, *Haaretz* September, 6, 2002.

uncertainties of the Israeli left with regard to the Palestinian partner immediately emerged, best summarized in Barak's statement that failure of the summit 'unmasked' Arafat's and the PA's true nature.[715]

Such an increase in the Israeli strategic community's threat perception did not, however, concern Hamas. The Islamic Resistance Movement appeared on the eve of the al-Aqsa intifada dramatically weakened, both militarily and politically. Constantly pressurized by the joint action of the Israeli intelligence and the PA's security and with a conspicuous part of its leadership jailed, Hamas managed nonetheless to survive, weaving its social networks thanks to the *Da'wa* system which continued to offer a broad array of social, health and economic services to the needy, especially in the refugee camps.[716]

The Outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada

The First Phase: Containment

As happened in 1987, the al-Aqsa Intifada broke out in September 2000 as a popular uprising, involving only limited use of weapons on the part of the Palestinians. Except for some ominous tensions in joint Israel-Palestinian patrols (culminating in the killing of an Israeli border policeman by his Palestinian counterpart), security incidents initially remained local, circumscribed to stone-throwing, burning of tires, and erection of barriers.[717]

The Israeli intelligence services, however, disagreed in their assessments on the initial wave of disturbances. In January 1999, the second Magna Carta agreement among the intelligence agencies, focusing on the separation of powers in the realm of CT, had given exclusive priority to AMAN's assessments, circumscribing the role of the Shabak to tactical intelligence in the Palestinian arena.[718] The accord immediately proved unstable and led the various agencies to provide different evaluations on the outbreak of violence.[719] In fact, despite agreement among the Shabak, AMAN and the

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[715] Shimon Shamir & Bruce Maddy-Weitzman (eds.), *The Camp David Summit – What Went Wrong? Americans, Israelis, and Palestinians Analyze the Failure of the Boldest Attempt Ever to Resolve the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), especially Ehud Barak, 'The Myths Spread about Camp David are Baseless' and Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, 'The Role of Barak, Arafat and Clinton'; Robert Malley & Hussein Agha, 'The Palestinian-Israeli Camp David Negotiations and Beyond', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31/1 (2001), 62-85; Jeremy Pressman, 'The Second Intifada: Background and Causes of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict', *Journal of Conflict Studies* 23/2 (2003), 114-141; Ron Pundak, 'From Oslo to Taba: What Went Wrong?', *Survival* 43/3 (2001), 31-45; Jeremy Pressman, 'Visions in Collision—What Happened at Camp David and Taba?', *International Security,* 28/2 (2003), 5-43.

[716] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue* (Paris : Hachette, 2005), 64 ; 87-88.

[717] Ibid., 66.

[718] Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism* (New York: Columbia UP, 2009), 110.

[719] Ephraim Kahana, 'Reorganizing Israel's Intelligence Community', *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 15/3 (2002), 421-422; Daphna Sharfman & Ephraim Kahana 'Combating Terrorism With Intelligence: The Normative Debate in Israel', *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 25/3 (2012), 546-570; Yossi Melman, 'Disagreement in the Committee for the

Foreign Ministry that the uprising had originally started as a popular eruption from below, the leadership of AMAN was convinced that it had been deliberately inflated by the PA, which was now orchestrating it.[720] The developments on the ground related to both the difficulty in restarting the negotiation process and the escalation of violence were identified by the AMAN as the ultimate proofs of this assessment. These in turn evolved into a highly rigid and stereotyped 'conception' claiming that the PA never truly had the intention to accept a diplomatic solution and had deliberately planned to launch a violent confrontation in order to extract concessions from Israel.[721] Through the influence exerted in the decision-making process at the cabinet level, the AMAN managed to transform this assessment in the dominant view within the security establishment.[722]

Consequently, during the period of the Barak government (from September 28, 2000 until February 2001), the Israeli political echelon envisioned the al-Aqsa intifada as a struggle by the Palestinians to improve their bargaining position.[723] Thus, negotiations were allowed to continue while, at the same time, restrained military activity was initiated in order to deny the Palestinians political gains through violence and to ensure reasonable security for the Israeli citizens.[724] The political echelon expected from the IDF a policy of containment aimed at avoiding any development liable to negatively influence the political process and lead to the conflict's internationalization. This approach was still underpinned by the conviction, matured for the first time in 1987, that the confrontation with the Palestinians could not be resolved by military means and that even repeated cumulative defeats would not have led them to substantially change their basic political demands.[725]

Despite using the same language, and fashioning its campaign around the newly-coined concept of *Hachala* (containment), the IDF did not act according to the government directives.[726] Applying the methodologies

Reorganization of Intelligence', *Haaretz*, June, 29, 2000; Yossi Melman, 'Committee of Directors of the Intelligence Services', *Haaretz*, October, 6, 1999.

[720] Yossi Melman, 'Dispute between Shin Bet and MI on Arafat's Part in the Disturbances', *Haaretz* November 16, 2000.

[721] Yosef Kuperwasser, 'The Identity of the Other: The Complex Structure of the Palestinian Society'*,* 35-46 and Amos Malka, 'The Regional Arena under the Test of Stability', 20-21, both in Ya'akov Bar-Siman-Tov (ed.), *As The Generals See It*; Yonatan Dahuah-Halevy, 'The Palestinian Point of View vis-à-vis the Resolution of the Conflict', *Ma'arachot,* no. 383 (May 2002), 16-25.

[722] Maj. Yaron Nir, 'Necessity of a Complex Approach with regard to the Palestinian Perspective for Solving the Conflict' *Ma'arachot*, no. 388 (April 2003), 18-23.

[723] Shay Feldman, 'The October Violence: An Interim Assessment', *Institute for National Security Studies Strategic Assessment*, 3/3 (November 2000).

[724] Gideon Alon, 'MI Chief: Arafat Will Continue with Terrorism', *Haaretz,* November 22, 2000; Akiva Eldar, 'Previous MI Chief Malka: Major General Amos Gilad Falsified MI Evaluation on the Causes to the Intifada', *Haaretz* June 10, 2004; Akiva Eldar, 'His Real Face' *Haaretz,* June 11,2004; Yoav Stern, interview with Amos Gilad, *Haaretz,* June 15, 2004; Danny Rubinstein, 'Mistaken Evaluation Proves Self-Fulfilling', interview with Matti Steinberg, *Haaretz,* June 16, 2004.

[725] Ya'akov Bar-Siman-Tov, Efraim Lavie, Kobi Michael and Daniel Bar-Tal, 'The Israeli-Palestinian Violent Confrontation – An Israeli Perspective', in Ya'akov Bar-Siman-Tov (ed.), *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: From Conflict Resolution to Conflict Management* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 70-74.

[726] Gal Hirsch, 'From 'Cast Lead' to 'A Different Way': The Development of the Campaign in the Central Command, 2000-2003', 28.

elaborated in cooperation with OTRI in the Central Command, the IDF came to define the military-strategic goal as bringing about a rapid end of the Palestinian violence or reduce it to a level that would deny the Palestinians any military and political achievement and would 'burn into their consciousness' the lesson that they could never make military or political gains through violent means.[727] The goal was thus defined in cognitive terms, that is changing the mindset of the Palestinians and having them internalizing the insight that violence bear no fruit. It was therefore essential to overcome the terrorist threat as quickly as possible by means of Israel's military superiority and the society's endurance, and to restore Israel's deterrent posture.[728]

The result of this mismatch in the perception and aims of the government and the IDF was a confused and incoherent approach to the initial phase of the intifada. In fact, while Barak's official policy focused on reducing violence, the IDF, having devised a completely different understanding of what was militarily required to bring about the return of the Palestinians to the negotiating table, actively sought to impose a battlefield decision over the Palestinians and suppress the insurgency.[729]

In this phase, the IDF *bitsuist* ethos and the consolidated tendency to grant ample freedom of action to tactical commanders proved particularly detrimental to the horizontal coordination of tactical activity, fostering lack of unity of effort (prescribed by the new LIC doctrine) and leading the IDF to provide a highly incoherent initial response to the insurgency, with operations varying from one sector to another.[730]

'Field of Thorns' fueled the flames of the uprising. In the first few months of the al-Aqsa Intifada the IDF reportedly shot 1.3 million bullets, causing an extremely high number of Palestinian casualties even though, as the Mitchell investigation report subsequently found, much of the violence initially consisted of unruly demonstrations and only occasional use of firearms.[731] The IDF's reaction was not intended, as the political echelon had asked, to contain the confrontation, but to force the Palestinians to surrender. The goal was to punish them for engendering the violence and make clear that it would not advance their political goals but conversely it would bring them to the

[727] Shmuel Nir, 'The Nature of the Limited Conflict', in Haggai Golan & Shaul Shay (eds.), *The Limited Conflict* (Tel viv: Ma'arachot, 2004), 22-23; 27 (Hebrew) and 'There is No Trap', *Ma'arachot*, no. 387 (January 2003), 69.

[728] Ari Shavit, interview with Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon, *Haaretz Magazine*, August, 29, 2002; Ya'akov Amidror, 'Winning Counterinsurgency War: The Israeli Experience,' undated, The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, http://www.jcpa.org/text/Amidror-perspectives-2.pdf.

[729] Avi Kober, 'From Blitzkrieg To Attrition: Israel's Attrition Strategy and Staying Power', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 16/2 (2005), 222; Sergio Catignani, 'The Strategic Impasse in Low-Intensity Conflicts: The Gap Between Israeli Counter-Insurgency Strategy and Tactics During the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 28/1 (2005), 57-75.

[730] Shmuel Nir, 'The Nature of the Limited Conflict', 27; Sergio Catignani, *Israeli Counterinsurgency and the Intifadas: Dilemmas of a Conventional Army* (London: Routledge, 2008), 57-59.

[731] 'Report of the Sharm El-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee ('the Mitchell Report')', (2001), 7, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/ACF319.pdf.

negotiating table weaker and more debilitated.[732] Particularly in its initial stages the al-Aqsa intifada was in fact perceived as an 'external' war, rather than a counter-insurgency campaign. Consequently, the civilian population was regarded an treated almost exclusively as a potential source of dangers for the troops and the Israeli civilian population and, in some instances, even as an enemy.[733]

At the tactical level the IDF was simply not prepared to face a new popular uprising. Basing on the tactical lessons of the Hasmonean Tunnel riots, the IDF had trained snipers to serve with regular units, reinforced fixed military positions, and armored its vehicles, rather than planning and equipping for crowd control of riots and demonstrations.[734] Moreover, whereas some theatre commander actually managed to tailor operational planning to the directives emanating from the political echelon, exerting restraint, trying to contain collateral damage and maintaining strict regulations for opening fire,[735] others proved much less compliant with the political directives, showing persistent patterns of 'self-authorisation' for operations underpinned by specific assumptions concerning their rationales to advocate certain courses of actions.[736] Despite the prohibition of operating in A Areas under Palestinian sovereignty, occasional raids were carried out by low-level commanders without central guidance and unauthorized measures such as demolitions of private houses, destruction of PA's properties and disarming of the Palestinian security services were unilaterally implemented on the initiative of sector commanders.[737]

The major result of the IDF's behavior in the first weeks of the uprising was the failure of *Hachala*. The high casualty ratio which the IDF was seeking was meant to demonstrate strength and restore Israel's deterrent posture, yet rather than deterring the Palestinians, the brutality and scope of the IDF's response increased their determination to absorb punishment and resist a ceasefire from a weakened position.[738] As a consequence, only two months after its outbreak the uprising changed its character becoming a full-blown armed struggle. The PA security forces started to support rioters and Hamas, set out to yoke the confrontation to its ideological agenda of armed struggle, moved to the frontline, seizing the initiative, attacking civilians and security forces on the roads, planting IEDs, shooting at settlements and IDF bases and reintroducing their ultimate weapon: suicide attacks in the midst of the Israeli

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[732] Alex Fishman, Interview with Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz, *Yedioth Ahronoth* January, 30, 2004.

[733] Author's personal interview with IDF officers, February, 20, 2012; Ido Rechnitz, 'The Definition of the Enemy in the Fight against Terror'.

[734] Boaz Zalmanovich, 'Tactical Unit's Combat in Limited Conflict', *Ma'arachot*, no. 405 (February 2006), 31 (Hebrew); Steve Rodan, 'Interview: Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz', *Jane's Defence Weeekly*, 36/16 (October, 17, 2001), 32.

[735] Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Eitan et al., 'The Strategic Planning Process in the Military Campaign' *Ma'arachot* no. 380-381 (December 2001), 46-53.

[736] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël,* 51-132.

[737] Ibid.*,* 85.

[738] Jeremy Pressman, 'The Second Intifada: Background and Causes of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict', 123.

heartland.[739] On October 26 in fact, the PIJ launched its first suicide bombing, rapidly followed in November by three more suicide attacks, of which two by Hamas. In response the IDF retaliated with strikes against PA' infrastructures and facilities by attack helicopters and combat aircrafts, and carried out, on November 9, its first targeted killing operation.[740]

In a little bit more than two months the popular uprising faded and the confrontation became more violent, organized and institutionalized.[741] The rapid shift in the nature of the insurgency from popular uprising to a terrorist-led insurgency significantly influenced the Israeli strategic community's understanding of the conflict. In fact, the IDF switched from 'containment' to another approach more focused on the PA as a political actor in order to coerce it into controlling Hamas and the most extremist factions. Up to that moment in fact, even though the Islamic Resistance Movement was considerably involved in the uprising's most violent activities since its inception, Hamas had not represented the primary focus of the IDF operations.[742]

The Second Phase: Leverage

On February 6, 2001, Likud's candidate Ariel Sharon won a landslide victory over Labor's Ehud Barak, with 62,5% of the vote. Following the change of government several factors, such as lack of trust in the continuation of the peace process, rising terrorist attacks and limited effectiveness of the IDF in coping with the threat favored the molding of a new, more pessimistic, political-strategic conception more in tune with the strategic-military one.[743] The new government was in fact convinced that Arafat and the PA were not partners for a political process, making these assumptions the base of its new policy approach. Even though Israel still adhered to the principle of two states for the two nations, a political agreement was considered in the short or intermediate term *de facto* unattainable, as the Palestinians had in effect rejected it. In the absence of any prospect to resolve the conflict, Israel would focus on managing it, trying to reduce terrorism and guerrilla warfare, while denying the Palestinians any military or political achievement in the confrontation.[744] Though seeing the PA as an adversary, and not yet as an enemy, Sharon's government totally rejected his predecessor's position that

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[739] Graham Usher, 'Facing Defeat: The Intifada Two Years On', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32/2 (2003), 21-40.

[740] Gal Luft, 'The Logic of Israel's Targeted Killing', *Middle East Quarterly*, 10/1 (2003) http://www.meforum.org/515/the-logic-of-israels-targeted-killing.

[741] Kirsten E. Schulze, 'Camp David and the Al-Aqsa Intifada: An Assessment of the State of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, July-December 2000', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 24/3 (2000), 220; Yonatan Dahuah-Halevy, 'The Palestinian Point of View vis-à-vis the Resolution of the Conflict', 16-25.

[742] Beverley Milton-Edwards & Stephen Farrell, *Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 114.

[743] Gal Hirsch, 'From 'Cast Lead' to 'A Different Way': The Development of the Campaign in the Central Command, 2000-2003', 28.

[744] Ya'akov Bar-Siman-Tov, Efraim Lavie, Kobi Michael and Daniel Bar-Tal, 'The Israeli-Palestinian Violent Confrontation – An Israeli Perspective', 76; Yoram Peri *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy*, 109-114.

negotiations should be conducted even under fire; consequently he did not instruct the IDF to contain violence, rather he ordered it to completely stop it.[745]

Such a change in the political echelon's position led the IDF to adopt a new stance, 'leverage' (*Minuf*) or 'ongoing continuous pressure', aimed at exerting pressure on the PA and the population in order to restore the *status quo ante*.[746] In this stage, which lasted throughout the whole 2001, the operational conception continued to be based on intelligence assessments claiming that the Palestinians were interested in reaching a political settlement, however, consistently with an Israeli consolidated practice, the strategic goal was to stop violence by coercing the PA's leadership and the institutions it controlled into cracking down on extremist groups, especially Hamas.[747]

The PA was in fact perceived as bearing direct responsibility for the acts of terrorism and violence originating in its territory. The 'leverage' was intended to generate unrelenting and continuous pressure on the PA through direct military actions against its security forces and through indirect pressure on its leadership in order to compel it to fight terrorism, while at the same time not denying Palestinian sovereignty or targeting the PA's civilian apparatus.[748]

Notwithstanding the profound nature of the political and strategic changes, the shift in the Israeli operational approach was gradual. Though strongly convinced of the need to expand military activity and increase retaliatory attacks in order to prevent further intensification of the insurgency, the government was in fact subject to multiple constraints by the USA, the international media and by the political left.[749] These ultimately forced it to oscillate in setting his policies. As a result the Sharon government, zigzagging between restraint and retaliation, implemented in the first phase of his premiership a policy of 'mixed signals'.[750]

The new prime minister initially continued Barak's policies, encouraging the PA to crack down on terrorism, and carrying out occasional targeted killings of insurgent leaders. Nevertheless, as suicide bombers actively began to infiltrate the Israeli civilian population centers, public demands for revenge began to influence Sharon's course of action. At a cabinet's meeting in March 2001 the prime minister started to put pressure on the IDF for dealing with the immediate problem of suicide bombings, demanding the CGS to prioritize CT and to carry out not only retaliatory attacks but also pre-emptive operations.[751]

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[745] Alex Fishman, 'Interview with Brigadier General Gadi Eizenkot', *Yedioth Ahronoth*, April, 11, 2004.

[746] Gal Hirsch, 'From 'Cast Lead' to 'A Different Way': The Development of the Campaign in the Central Command, 2000-2003', 28.

[747] David Rodman, 'Regime-targeting: A strategy for Israel', *Israel Affairs*, 2/1 (1995), 153-167.

[748] Gal Hirsch, 'From 'Cast Lead' to 'A Different Way': The Development of the Campaign in the Central Command, 2000-2003', 28-29.

[749] Lt. Col. Munir Daher, 'Cumulative Deterrence Model to deter Low-Intensity Conflict', *Ma'arachot*, no. 388 (Februray 2003) 14 (Hebrew).

[750] Moshe Arens in *Ha'aretz*, January, 7, 2002.

[751] Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism*, 111; Shaul Shay, '"Ebb and Flow" versus 'the Al-Aqsa Intifada': The Israeli Palestinian Conflict, 233.

Thus the IDF started to pursue a double-track approach, concurrently trying to coerce the PA into controlling violence and to uphold deterrence vis-à-vis Hamas.[752] At the tactical level, this took the shape of incursions in the PA-administered areas to target infrastructures, facilities and checkpoints of the PA forces; sealing off of Palestinian towns and villages to extract commitments to stop violence from the PA ('zipper policy')[753], tightening restrictions on the population's movement through increased mobile checkpoints, closures and civil curfews, and selected attacks against Hamas and the other extremist factions.[754]

Due to the evacuation of 'A' areas and the reduced operational activity of the Oslo years however, Israel lacked a solid HUMINT (human intelligence) network in the Palestinian Territories.[755] Consequently, at the outbreak of the al-Aqsa intifada, the available intelligence derived mostly from a (still underdeveloped) network of sensors of various types disseminated through the West Bank and Gaza.[756] These assets proved inadequate to provide the steady and precise flow of tactical intelligence needed to conduct precision-attacks in densely populated urban areas on a sustained scale.[757] In conjunction with the government's constraints and the need for maximizing troops security, such a situation led the IDF and the Shabak to opt for the employment of airstrikes against Hamas.[758] In fact, encouraged by improved capabilities and techniques for 'Diffused Warfare' based on the employment of assault helicopters, fighter jets and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) linked to a sophisticated ISR (Intelligence-Surveillance-Reconnaissance) platform,[759] the IDF high ranks appeared convinced that the application of precision standoff fire allowed to avoid taking significant risks while at the same time fostering effective deterrence against the Islamic Resistance Movement. Strikes were therefore concentrated, whenever possible, against 'ticking bombs', that is militants on the verge of carrying out terrorist attacks, but also against political members of Hamas. The IDF and the Shabak attempted in fact to exploit the high visibility of Hamas' political wing and

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[752] Or Honig, 'Explaining Israel's Misuse of Strategic Assassinations', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 30/6 (2007), 568; Ron Ben-Yishai, 'Changing the Strategy to Combat Terrorism', *INSS Strategic Assessment*, 6/4 (2004).

[753] Yoram Peri *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy*, 120.

[754] Moshe Ya'alon, 'Lessons from the Palestinian "War" Against Israel', *Policy Focus*, no. 64 (January 2007), 9.

[755] Boaz Ganor, 'Israel Hamas and Fatah', 272; Boaz Ganor, 'Israeli Counterterrorism in the Shadow of Oslo', *Shalem Center Policy View* no. 17 (December 1995).

[756] Clive Jones, 'One size fits all: Israel, Intelligence and the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*', 276-277.

[757] Anthony Cordesman, *Escalating to Nowhere: The Israeli-Palestinian War* (Wesport: Praeger 2005), 343; Amos Harel, 'Former Commander of the Yamam: There is no Significance to Sector A Territories', *Ha'aretz*, January,1, 2002.

[758] Seth G. Jones, 'Fighting Networked Terrorist Groups: Lessons from Israel', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 30/4 (2007), 281-302; Gabi Siboni, 'The Operational Aspects to Fighting the Qassam', *INSS Strategic Assessment*, 9/3, November 2006.

[759] Yedidia Groll Ya'ari and Haim Assa, *Diffused Warfare: The Concept of Virtual Mass* (Haifa: Haifa UP, 2007).

Da'wa infrastructure to carry out attacks which could compensate for the lack of intelligence on high-value military targets.[760]

Faced with surgical application of force as punishment, the Islamic Resistance Movement appeared somehow galvanized rather than deterred, proving able to absorb punishment and ready to take the risks of an escalation.[761] Such kind of application of force was in fact not only more precise, lethal and usable, but resulted also more bearable for Hamas. Moreover, the fact that the IDF and the Shabak decided, for the reasons outlined above, to operate mostly on the base of windows of opportunity led to frequent strikes against figures whose elimination, being them alien or marginal to Hamas' military activities, did not degrade the organization's *capability*. Consequently, Hamas disposed not only of the will to retaliate and/or intensify its attacks, but also of the *capability* to do so.[762] This resulted between March and December 2001 in 25 suicide bombings and countless guerrilla attacks.[763]

On the other hand, the Israeli decision to apply 'levers' on the PA and to retaliate to suicide bombings through strikes against its security personnel, facilities, and institutional infrastructure compromised its ability to crackdown on extremist groups. This, in conjunction with the fact that part of the PA police and security officials joined the insurgency and others just dismissed the uniform, caused a breakdown in public order and a consequent increase in the 'street power' of Hamas, and the other extremist factions.[764] According to Shabak expert Matti Steinberg in fact the destruction of the Palestinian security infrastructure paved the way for the Islamic Resistance Movement.[765]

A brief lull followed the terrorist attacks in the US of September, 11, 2001 as Arafat publicly called for a complete cessation of military activities. In the three-week period after Arafat's declaration, while Israel restrained military activity and withdrew its troops from A Areas, Palestinian attacks within the Israeli territory ceased and a significant decrease occurred in even in the

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[760] Araj Bader, 'Harsh State Repression as a Cause of Suicide Bombing: The Case of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 31/4 (2008): 284-303; Mia Bloom, 'Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding', *Political Science Quarterly*, 119/1 (2004): 61–80; Gordon H. McCormick, Steven B. Horton, Lauren A. Harrison, 'Things Fall Apart, the 'Endgame' Dynamics of Internal Wars', *Third World Quarterly*, 28/2 (2007), 9.

[761] Patrick Morgan, *Deterrence Now* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 220-222; 224; Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 39; Shmuel Gordon, 'Deterrence in the Limited Conflict with the Palestinians', in Haggai Golan, & Shaul Shay, *The Limited Conflict* (Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 2004), 189-200.

[762] Charles D. Freilich, 'National Security Decision-Making in Israel: Processes, Pathologies and Strengths', *Middle East Journal*, 60/4 (2006), 642-643; Samy Cohen, *Tsahal à l'épreuve du Terrorisme* (Paris : Hachette, 2009), 201-202 ; Samy Cohen, 'Les Assassinats Ciblés Pendant la Seconde Intifada: une Arme à double Trenchant', *Critique Internationale*, 2008/4, 76-77.

[763] Israel Security Agency, 'Spotlight on Hamas - Ideology and Involvement in Terror', January, 15, 2009, www.shabak.gov.il;

[764] Clive Jones, '"One Size Fits All": Israel, Intelligence, and the *al-Aqsa Intifada*', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* 26/4 (2003), 273-288.

[765] Daniel Byman, *A High Price : The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, 133 ; Samy Cohen, *Tsahal à l'épreuve du Terrorisme* (Paris : Hachette, 2009), 201-202.

Territories.[766] Nevertheless, on October 16, 2001, the murder by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), of Israel's tourism minister Rehavam Ze'evi prompted the collapse of the truce and the IDF conducted multiple incursions into the West Bank, briefly occupying the major cities of Ramallah and Tulkarem.[767]

As the intifada drag on, evolving from a suicide bombings campaign into a broader terrorist-led, urban insurgency, the government voiced dissatisfaction with the IDF's inability to lower the number of terrorist attacks and started exerting pressures on the intelligence organizations and the military to offer novel solutions. Criticizing the new sophisticated thinking and language associated with LIC in vogue in the officer corps, prime minister Sharon demanded direct action against the terrorist infrastructure.[768] Yet, the security establishment was still adapting to the new strategic and operational context. On the one hand, IDF high ranks retorted to the government its incapability to understand the complexity of LIC; on the other the officer corps, particularly brigades and battalion commanders, who bore most of the operational burden, complained about the political constraints preventing them from entering into the areas controlled by the PA.[769]

The urgency felt in stemming the terror campaign and the need to provide novel solutions to the terrorist threat led to the development of an intense debate among the IDF high ranks about the operational framework best suited for generating strategic effectiveness.[770] The debate contemplated the employment of an indirect operational framework, based on a conspicuous use of air assets and standoff fire or conversely the application of a more direct approach based primarily on targeted ground operations. Strongly influenced by the US armed forces' concepts of Revolution in Military Affaris (RMA) and Effects-Based Operations (EBO) proponents of the indirect approach advocated an 'effects-oriented' quantitative and target-centric approach.[771] They argued that the IDF superior technological capabilities in long-range precision strike and its robust SIGINT network allowed to conduct a continuous and systematic campaign of targeted air-strikes which would ultimately devastate the insurgent network as well as cripple its will to

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[766] Shaul Shay, '"Ebb and Flow" versus 'the Al-Aqsa Intifada': The Israeli Palestinian Conflict, 2000–2003', 234 ; Graham Usher, 'Facing Defeat: The Intifada Two Years On', 30.

[767] Samy Cohen, *Tsahal à l'épreuve du Terrorisme*, 184-187.

[768] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue*, 114-115; Lt. Col. Raz, 'The Dangerous Language of Limited Conflict', *Ma'arachot*, no. 388 (December 2001), 54-56 (Hebrew).

[769] Yoram Peri, 'The Israeli Military and Israel's Palestinian Policy: From Oslo to the Al-Aqsa Intifada', *Peaceworks*, no. 47 (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2002), 37; Stuart A. Cohen, 'Why Do They Quarrel? Civil-Military Tensions in LIC Situations', *The Review of International Affairs*, 2/3 (Spring 2003), 21-40.

[770] Erez Weiner, 'The Struggle against Terrorism: Direct Contact or Fighting from Afar?', *Ma'arachot*, no. 406 (April 2006), 22-28 (Hebrew); Gabi Siboni, 'The Military Battle against Terrorism: Direct Contact vs. Standoff Warfare', *INSS Strategic Assessment*, 9/1 (2006).

[771] David E. Johnson, *Hard Fighting: Israel in Lebanon and Gaza* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2011), 33; Alon Ben-David, 'Debriefing Teams Brand IDF Doctrine 'Completely Wrong," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, January 3, 2007.

fight.[772] By contrast, skeptical about the ability to obtain the tactical intelligence required for effective air-strikes, supporters of the direct approach strongly emphasized how only through direct attrition of the enemy forces on the ground it was possible to generate an operational advantage. According to its proponents, the continuous and systematic conduct of ground raids and special operations in Palestinian-controlled areas could disrupt the insurgent networks, preventing them from adapting through operational improvisation and creativity, while at the same time it could potentially generate an intense deterrent effect, thus affecting also the insurgents' *motivation.*[773] The result of this debate was a hybrid operational concept which incorporated both these frameworks, privileging whenever possible the direct approach, but not ruling out the employment of air strikes. At the same time the resume of the intelligence apparatus in the Palestinian Territories was sped up. Priority funding allocated in early 2000 for the Field Intelligence Corps led to the ameliorations in intelligence-gathering capabilities through electronic surveillance platforms.[774] Moreover the Shabak, which was successfully rebuilding a HUMINT network in the Palestinian territories, managed to sensibly improve the information-sharing process with AMAN SIGINT Unit 8200 (the Central Collection Unit of the Intelligence Corps).[775] HUMINT sources were therefore increasingly exploited in close coordination with intelligence produced by air assets, such as UAVs, ground sensors and cameras. The parallel processes of pushing down military intelligence personnel until the company level and inserting Shabak officers in special operations teams allowed to quickly relay information to tactical commanders.[776]

Consequently, the IDF was able to intensify the deployment of small high-tech infantry units for surgical raids to kill and/or capture Palestinian fighters.[777] Rather than trying to control territory, the operational logic was to minimize the IDF's visible presence, deploy for a short time, and then withdraw.[778] This process witnessed not only the deployment in the

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[772] Ilan Hershkowitz, 'Air Force in Low-Intensity Conflict', *Ma'arachot*, no. 380-381 (December 2001), 68-72 (Hebrew); Eytan Ben Eliyahu, 'The Assassinations Will Win the War', www.ynet.co.il, June 9, 2006; Harry Kemsley, 'Air Power in Counter-insurgency: A Sophisticated Language or Blunt Expression?', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 28/1 (2007), 113; 117-118.

[773] Gabi Siboni, 'The Military Battle against Terrorism'; Ron Tira, 'The Limitations of Standoff Firepower-Based Operations', *INSS Memorandum* 69 (2007); Ze'ev Schiff, 'The Qassam Strip', *Ha'aretz*, December 31, 2005;

[774] Steve Rodan, 'IDF Steps Up Intelligence War Against Palestinians', *Jane's Defence Weekly,* January 10, 2001, 19.

[775] Giora Eiland, 'The IDF in the Second Intifada', *INSS Strategic Assessment* 13/3 (2010), 37.

[776] Yaakov Amidror, 'Conditions Necessary for Success in the War on Terror', *Ma'arachot*, no. 412 (2007), 34-35 (Hebrew); Seth Jones, 'Fighting Networked Terrorist Groups', 285.

[777] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation: The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution in Military Affairs in Russia, the US, and Israel* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 107; Seth Jones, 'Fighting Networked Terrorist Groups', 281-302; Shlomo Brom, 'Operation "Defensive Shield": An Interim Assessment', *INSS Tel Aviv Notes*, no. 35 (April 11, 2002).

[778] Gal Hirsch, 'From 'Cast Lead' to 'A Different Way', 29; Tamir Libel, 'IAF's Small Wars: Israeli Air Force Experience in Low Intensity Conflicts, 1982-2006', *Baltic Security & Defence Review*, 11/2 (2009), 45-49;

Palestinian territories of Special Operations Forces (SOF) generally not assigned to counter-insurgency operations, but the very majority of IDF elite infantry units involved at various levels in special operations.[779]

Yet, this operational shift affected only to a limited extent the fight against Hamas. Up to March 2002, the Israeli security forces recurred with increasing frequency to targeted killings against Hamas' human infrastructure, focusing more intensively on pre-emption and directing targeted strikes against ticking bombs. Overall nonetheless, the Islamic Resistance Movement still was not considered an operational priority.[780] Despite the intensification of strikes and occasional attacks against Izz-al-Din-al-Qassam commanders (as a failed attempt against Muhammad Deif on August 2001, or the killing of Mahmud Abu Hanoud on November, 23, 2001), targeted attacks against the Hamas infrastructure continued to be inspired by a logic of deterrence by denial and/or punishment.[781]

Towards the end of 2001, both the political echelon and the military establishment started to realize that the 'leverage' approach was failing. In the course of 2001 in fact, violence, especially by Hamas, steadily increased. Despite the ceasefire brokered by Arafat on December 16, the prevalent conclusion was that Israel should no longer expect the PA to fight Hamas and the other militant groups but should, conversely, take this task solely upon itself.[782]

The Third Phase: Systematic Dismantlement of the Terrorist Infrastructures

The December 16, 2001 ceasefire between Israel and the PA collapsed in the first days of 2002, prompted by two events. On January 3, the IDF Shayetet naval commando intercepted the ship *Karine-A*, which was transporting fifty tons of weapons from Iran to the Palestinian Territories, hiding among mattresses, sandals, and sunglasses, Katyusha rockets, antitank mines, C-4 explosives, sniper rifles, and various types of missiles.[783] On January, 14 Tanzim commander Raed Karmi was killed in a joint IDF/Shabak operation.

Matt Frankel, 'The ABCs of HVT: Key Lessons from High Value Targeting Campaigns Against Insurgents and Terrorists', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 34/1 (2011), 24-26

[779] Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism,* 113-116; Ami Pedahzur & Cassy Dorff, *The Inverse Effects of Military Innovations*, APSA 2009 Meeting Paper; Moshe Kaplinski, 'The IDF in the Years Before the Second Lebanon War', *Institute for National Security Studies Military and Strategic Affairs*, 1/2, (2009), 34; Amos Harel, 'The Navy's Convinced it Belongs in the Territories' *Ha'aretz*, July, 7, 2005; Maj. Michael Seng, 'Fighting Characteristics of Limited Conflict' *Ma'arachot*, no. 402 (August 2005), 42 (Hebrew).

[780] Moshe Ya'alon, Avi Dichter and Dennis Ross 'Lessons from the Fight against Terrorism', *Peacewatch* no.533, December, 29, 2005; Adam Stahl, 'The Evolution of Israeli Targeted Operations: Consequences of the Thabet Thabet Operation', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 33/2 (2010), 111-133.

[781] Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, Ephraim Lavie, Kobi Michael and Daniel Bar-Tal, 'The Israeli-Palestinian Violent Confrontation : An Israeli Perspective', 84, Anthony Cordesman, *Escalating to Nowhere*, 343-344.

[782] Daniel Byman, *A High Price: the Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, 134.

[783] James Bennet, 'Seized Arms Would Have Vastly Extended Arafat Arsenal', *New York Times*, January, 12, 2002; Amos Harel, 'Elite Shayetet Unit Often Carries Army's Heaviest, Most Secretive Burdens', *Ha'aretz*, June, 1, 2010.

After his death Hamas further increased suicide bombings and, giving birth to hybrid local networks together with the PIJ, Fatah, segments of the PA's security services and even criminal gangs, intensified guerrilla warfare.[784] In conjunction with rising support among the Palestinian civilian population for armed struggle, these events determined a further upsurge in Palestinian attacks.[785]

Consequently, at the beginning of 2002 Israel discarded any constraint, and embraced a strategy relying on disruption and force in the attempt to inflict enough damage and coerce the Palestinians to completely stop violence: 'We must cause them losses, victims, so they feel the heavy price, so they understand that they won't achieve anything through terror', declared the prime minister.[786]

The realization that the PA was not susceptible to 'leverage' and a dramatic increase in terrorist activity led the government to authorize the IDF to implement a new approach aimed at the 'systematic dismantlement of the infrastructures of terrorism'. This new approach which was implemented through the stage of the 'counterblows' of Operation Defensive Shield (March-April 2002) and the stage of 'security control' of Operation Determined Path (June 2002-May 2003) was intended to vanquish the Palestinian insurgency by military means.[787]

From the beginning of 2002 the al-Aqsa intifada was in fact no longer perceived as a popular armed uprising but a genuine war 'war of no choice' (*eyn breira*), forced on Israel, an existential war that allowed no compromises.[788] For the first time since the beginning of the insurgency Israel managed to clearly define its enemies.[789] The PA, no longer perceived as a potential partner to renew the political process, was, as of December 2001, defined as a supporter of terrorism that actively employed its security organizations for terrorist and guerrilla activities.[790]

Initially this change had only a moderate impact on the Israeli operational approach, with the government authorizing the IDF to strike targets in Area A

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[784] Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, 'The Changing Nature of Suicide Attacks: A Social Network Perspective', *Social Forces* 84/4 (2006), 1987–2008; Hillel Frisch, 'Debating Palestinian Strategy in the al-Aqsa intifada', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 15/2 (2003), 61-80.

[785] Assaf Moghadam, 'Palestinian Terrorism in the Second Intifada: Motivation and Organizational Aspects', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 26/2 (2003), 65-92; Yoram Schweitzer, 'Palestinian Istishhadia: A Developing Instrument', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 30/8 (2007), 667-689; Hillel Frisch, 'Has the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Become Islamic? Fatah, Islam, and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 17/3 (2005), 391-406; Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill—The Allure of Suicide Terror* (New York: Columbia UP, 2005).

[786] Quoted in Ross Dunn, 'Sharon Vows to Hit Palestinians Until It Is 'Very Painful'', *Sydney Morning Herald,* March 6, 2002.

[787] In the first three months of 2002, 173 Israelis were killed in terrorist attacks, twenty-eight terrorist attacks were perpetrated and 11 thwarted, see Gal Hirsch, 'From 'Cast Lead' to 'A Different Way': The Development of the Campaign in the Central Command, 2000-2003', 30.

[788] Ari Shavit, interview with Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon, *Ha'aretz Magazine,* August, 29, 2002.

[789] Zaki Shalom and Yoaz Hendel, 'The Unique Features of the Second Intifada', 20.

[790] Aluf Benn, 'Sharon: Arafat Is Like the Taliban', *Ha'aretz*, October, 19, 2001; Lee Hockstader, 'Palestinian Authority Described as Terrorist', *International Herald Tribune*, March 1, 2002.

and removing restrictions on the duration of operations.[791] Rapidly however the Israeli response grew more aggressive, and policymakers instructed the security establishment to intensify the search for available targets for reprisal actions and targeted assassinations.[792] Furthermore, overcoming a consolidated tradition of avoiding, whenever possible, urban fighting, at the end of February the IDF decided to operate for the first time in the West Bank refugee camps of Jenin and Nablus.[793] In the course of the operations, taking advantage of a methodology developed by OTRI based on a re-conceptualization of the operational space called 'inverse geometry', the IDF inaugurated a new tactical combat model, progressing internally through the houses to avoid booby traps and ambushes in the narrow alleys of the refugee camps.[794]

A further increase in guerrilla activities and suicide bombings in late march 2002 led the government to approve the execution of the IDF Planning and Policy Directorate's 'Red scenario' and to launch a massive military operation, called 'Defensive Shield' (*Homat Magen*), between March 29, 2002 and April 21, 2002. 'Defensive Shield 'inaugurated a new stance, representing, in the words of then deputy CGS Moshe Ya'alon, 'the turning point of the IDF's transition to initiative'.[795] The operational plan, basically a test for the developing IDF Concept of Operations (CONOP), envisioned simultaneous operations in all the major Palestinian urban and rural areas and, according to the IDF's definition, was meant to deliver a 'strike' (*Mahaluma*) against the insurgent infrastructure through isolation of the enemy's subsystems from the super-system (*fragmentation strike*); coordination of actions across the spectrum of operations to paralyze the enemy system (*simultaneity*); exploitation of the synergetic effects produced by the two previous elements to deny the enemy system time of response (*momentum*).[796]

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[791] Ya'akov Bar-Siman-Tov, Efraim Lavie, Kobi Michael and Daniel Bar-Tal, 'The Israeli-Palestinian Violent Confrontation - An Israeli Perspective', 85.

[792] Christopher D. Kondaki, 'Down to the Wire: Tactics at the Start of the Next Middle Eastern War', *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*, 29/8 (2001).6-8;

[793] William Rosenau, '"Every room is a new battle": The Lessons of Modern Urban Warfare', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 20/4 (1997), 375-378; Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue*, 288-291; Arnon Soffer, 'The Challenges of Fighting in Densely Populated Areas: The Israeli Case', *INSS Military and Strategic Affairs*, 4/1 (April 2012).

[794] Eyal Weizman, 'An Israeli Doctrine Paper on urban Warfare: The Art of War', *Frieze Magazine*, no. 99 (May 2006), http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/the_art_of_war/ Eyal Weizman, 'Walking Through Walls: Soldiers As Architects in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict', *Radical Philosophy* 136/8 (2006), 5-6; see also Russell W. Glenn, *Proceedings of the 2010 Zvi MeitarInstitute for Land Warfare Studies "Fighting in Urban Terrain" Conference* (Latrun: Zvi Meitar Institute for Land Warfare Studies –ILWS, 2010) and *Ma'arachot*, no. 384 entirely dedicated on the issue of urban warfare.

[795] Sergio Catignani, 'The Israel Defense Forces and the Al-Aqsa Intifada: When Tactical Virtuosity Meets Strategic Disappointment', in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare,* edited by Carter Malkasian & Daniel Marston (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2008), 212; Moshe Ya'alon, 'Press Release of the Third Herzliya Conference on the Balance of Israel's National Security', Herzliya, December, 3, 2002; Gabi Siboni, 'Defeating Suicide Terrorism in Judea and Samaria, 2002–2005', *INSS Military and Strategic Affairs*, 2/2 (October 2010).

[796] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation: The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution in Military Affairs in Russia, the US, and Israel*, 101; Shimon Naveh, 'The Cult of Offensive Preemption and

Inspired by the methodology developed by OTRI, the enemy was in fact envisioned as a multidimensional system against which the attainment of battlefield decision equated to the disruption of its operational rationale and neutralization of its logic, rather than material annihilation of its forces.[797] In the specific case, the systematic dismantlement of the insurgent organizations' infrastructures, both human and physical, the elimination of the Palestinian security presence from the cities, the creation of a new security situation allowing for continuous preventive operations and Arafat's isolation were all evaluated as 'a relevant form of conclusive decision in LIC'.[798]

Through the largest troops deployment since the 1982 Lebanon war, including infantry, SOF and a conspicuous presence of armored units, the IDF reoccupied the main Palestinian population centers in the West Bank: Nablus, Tulkarem, Qalqilya, and Bethlehem.[799] Concurrently the PA's presidential compound in Ramallah, which housed the headquarters of several Palestinian security organizations, and which Israel believed had become a sort of command and control center of the insurgency, was encircled.[800] Pushing deep into Palestinian territories the IDF secured positions around the main urban centers, imposing 24-hour curfews.[801] Cordon and search operations were conducted area by area in any of the occupied cities, leading already in the first two days of operations to the arrest of hundreds of Palestinians for questioning. In the first four days of Defensive Shield the number of Palestinians into custody would have further raised, reaching 4,200 after three weeks of operational activity.[802]

Though in several Palestinian cities, as for instance Ramallah, the resistance was minimal and the Israeli forces rapidly managed to sweep in, the IDF's advance encountered stiffer resistance in Nablus and Jenin, where hundreds of fighters especially from Hamas and the PIJ, stood their ground.[803] IDF units continued therefore to maintain their positions and to surround the

Future Challenges for Israeli Operational Thought', in Ephraim Karsh, *Between War and Peace: Dilemmas of Israeli Security* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 182.

[797] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation: The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution in Military Affairs in Russia, the US, and Israel*, 103.

[798] 'PM Sharon's Address to the Knesset', April 8, 2002, www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches%20by%20Israeli%20leaders/2002/PM%20Sharons%20Addre ss%20to%20the%20Knesset%20-%208-Apr-2002; Hillel Frisch, '(The) Fence or Offense? Testing the Effectiveness of "The Fence" in Judea and Samaria', *Mideast Security and Policy Studies* No. 75, 8. Gal Hirsch, 'From 'Cast Lead' to 'A Different Way': The Development of the Campaign in the Central Command, 2000-2003', 30.

[799] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue*,301-302.

[800] Anthony Cordesman, *Escalating to Nowhere: The Israeli-Palestinian War*, 72.

[801] Nitzan Alon, 'Operation Defensive Shield: The Israeli Actions in the West Bank', *Policywatch*, no 374, April 10, 2002.

[802] 'Summary of Weaponry Captured by the IDF Thus Far in the Ramallah Operation', April 1, 2002, http://www.idf.il/english/announcements/2002/april/1.stm; Operation Defensive Shield: Special Update, March, 29, 2002-April, 21, 2002', Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.mfa.gov.il.

[803] Yonatan Dahuah-Halevy, The Battle in the Jenin Refugee Camp-The Palestinian Point of View, 2003 , www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/html/fi nal/sp/jenin/jen_ys.htm.

cities while conducting intense intelligence-gathering activity through the deployment of UAVs and rapid interrogations of captured enemy personnel and civilians fleeing from the combat areas.[804] Once acquired a sufficient degree of virtual control over the battlefield environment, IDF units started to replicate on a wider scale the tactics and techniques developed and tested in the course of the previous months.[805] Wherever possible, infantry and armored units advanced under the cover of D-9 Bulldozers and Apache helicopters, whereas in the refugee camps they progressed literally through the walls of the buildings.[806] Improved learning mechanisms and knowledge-sharing procedures within the IDF ensured in the course of the operation the diffusion across the units of knowledge relevant to the techno-tactical conduct of LIC operations in almost real-time.[807]

The overall success of the Defensive Shield in weakening the insurgent infrastructure concerned only to a limited extent Hamas.[808] The IDF and the Shabak succeeded in fact in destroying bomb and munitions factories and eliminating (through arrest and kill operations) important Hamas 'centers of knowledge', that is people with specialized knowledge who were promoted from outside the system because of their unique know-how.[809] Nevertheless the Islamic Resistance Movement's networks in some cities, as for instance Nablus, were not seriously damaged and in other areas, such as Hebron, the IDF barely touched the local Hamas' infrastructure.[810]

These surviving networks would have, in the following months, benefited from a conspicuous influx of new recruits provoked by the consequences of the operation on the civilian population.[811] Beyond its publicly declared purposes Defensive Shield aimed in fact at rehabilitating the IDF's deterrent power, putting an end to the PA's immunity from IDF retaliations in A areas and, according to the principles of the LIC doctrine, at pressurizing the weakest link, the civilian population in order to force them to stop violence against Israel.[812] Restricting media access to the West Bank areas of

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[804] Middle East Media Research Institute, "The Palestinian Account of the Battle of Jenin," 2002, http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/672071/posts; Gal Luft, 'The Seizure of Gaza-Bound Arms: Military Implications', *Policywatch*, no. 359, January 8, 2002.

[805] Martin C. Libicki & Stuart E. Johnson, *Dominant Battlespace Knowledge* (Washington DC: NDU Press, 1995); Anthony Cordesman, *Escalating to Nowhere: The Israeli-Palestinian War*, 73-74.

[806] Ofer Boukris, 'Command and Control during Operation Defensive Shield', *Ma'arachot*, no. 388 (April 2003), 32-37 (Hebrew).

[807] Gil Ariely, 'Learning to Digest During Fighting – Real Time Knowledge Management', *ICT Papers* (September 2006); Or Shavit & Gil Ariely, 'What Is Operational Knowledge Management?', *Ma'arachot*, no.303/304 (December 2005), 36-43.

[808] Amos Harel, 'Operation Hits W. Bank Terror Net Hard', *Ha'aretz*, April, 21, 2002; Matthew Levitt and Seth Wikas, 'Defensive Shield Counterterrorism Accomplishments', *Policywatch*, no. 377 April 17, 2002; Amos Harel, 'Defensive Shield won't End Terror IDF Senior Source Admits', *Ha'aretz*, April, 12, 2002.

[809] Amos Harel, 'Forces Nab Top Hamas Operative', *Ha'aretz*, April, 19, 2002; Amos Harel, 'Dozens of Terror Suspects Rounded Up in Villages' *Ha'aretz*, April, 18, 2002; Amir Oren, 'From War to Peace in Enemy Territory' *Ha'aretz*, April, 23, 2002.

[810] Amos Harel, 'Each Day Brings Fewer Arrests and the Economic Costs Continue to Grow' *Ha'aretz*, April, 18, 2002.

[811] http://www.shabak.gov.il/SiteCollectionImages/english/TerrorInfo/Terrorism2007report-ENGLISH.pdf

[812] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël Comment nous avons gagné la guerre contre les Palestiniens et pourquoi nous l'avons perdue*, 256.

operational activity, the IDF employed extremely aggressive tactics and massive firepower through artillery fire and even F-16 bombardments on densely-populated urban areas.[813] Moreover, in some instances the armed forces paid scant attention to the separation of combatants from noncombatants and the preservation of the civilian populace from the spillover effects of combat operations.[814] Equally ignored were requests from the commanders of the Israeli Civil Administration in the West Bank for minimizing harm to civilians, for allowing International Red Cross representatives into the refugee camps and bringing generators to the West Bank hospitals.[815] In fact, the IDF not only deliberately imposed punishments on the civilian population through the application of non-military measures (such as cutting of the electricity, water, prolonged closures and restrictions of humanitarian aid), but also stroke against the PA's civic infrastructure, *de facto* contributing to paralyze the Palestinian economy and social services.[816] Along with the presidential compound, during Defensive Shield, the IDF targeted several Palestinian police offices, the Legislative Council offices, the Chambers of Commerce, and the Ministries of Agriculture, Education, Trade and Industry.[817]

The destruction of the PA's infrastructure canceled the only central source of leadership, government and services in the Palestinian Territories, irreversibly shattering public order. In such a condition bordering anarchy, insurgent groups were therefore able to impose their will on the population, and the Palestinian public often had no other option than to rely on the educational, social and health services provided by Hamas' *Dawa system*.[818]

The limits of Defensive Shield emerged in a new wave of suicide bombings and guerrilla attacks between the end of May and the first weeks of June 2002. Israel reacted on June, 22 *with a new large-scale ground operation in the West Bank called* Determined Path (*Derekh Nehosh*).[819]

The primary aim of the operation, which had no scheduled deadline, was defensive, that is preventing the infiltration of suicide bombers in the Israeli heartland through security control of territory; secondary aim was

[813] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël Comment nous avons gagné la guerre contre les Palestiniens et pourquoi nous l'avons perdue*, 326; Anthony Cordesman, *Escalating to Nowhere: The Israeli-Palestinian War*, 73-74 ; Amos Harel, 'IDF Restricts Media Access to West Bank Operations', *Ha'aretz*, April, 13, 2002.

[814] Ilan Paz, 'Command Perspectives on Fighting Terrorism among Civilian Populations' in IDF and the Israel Democracy Institute (eds.) *Morality, Ethics and Law in Wartime* (Jerusalem: The Old City Press, 2003), 68-69.

[815] Eyal Ben-Ari, et al., *Rethinking Contemporary Warfare: A Sociological View of the al-Aqsa Intifada* (Albany: SUNY, 2010), 56; Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël Comment nous avons gagné la guerre contre les Palestiniens et pourquoi nous l'avons perdue*, 259.

[816] Yoram Peri *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy*, 131; Avi Kober, *Israel's Wars of Attrition* (London: Routledge, 2009), 124.

[817] Hammami, Rema, 'Interregnum: Palestine After Operation Defensive Shield', *Middle East Report* (Summer 2002).

[818] Ron Ben-Yishai, 'Changing the Strategy to Combat Terrorism', *INSS Strategic Assessment*, 6/4 (February 2004).

[819] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue,* 274-275 ; Amos Harel, 'Back to '67 or even '48', *Haaretz*, July, 22, 2002.

maintaining the pressure over the Palestinian organization's new recruits.[820] Following Defensive Shield, Hamas and the other Palestinian militant organizations went through a series of replacements of killed and captured personnel. Consequently, Shabak's knowledge of the new insurgent infrastructure emerged in the West Bank was rather limited, and the IDF had in the first days of the operation to conduct mass arrests.[821] As arrest operations generated sufficient tactical intelligence, IDF units, encircling the outer areas of the Palestinian cities, started to conduct selected raids on specific targets.[822] Intelligence acquired in the course of operation Defensive Shield had in fact led to a deeper understanding and more accurate mapping of the internal working structure of the insurgent organizations, revealing the depth of the connections between Hamas and PA. It also revealed, for the first time, clear links between Hamas' military wing and the movement's civil infrastructure, especially charitable organizations and social activities.[823] The IDF and the Shabak focused therefore against the Islamic Resistance Movement's military wing, the Izz-al-din-al-Qassam Brigades systematically attacking the local networks untouched by Operation Defensive Shield: Hebron, Jenin and Nablus.

Particularly in Nablus and the entire northern part of the West Bank, considered by the Shabak a 'generator' of terror where key strategic and tactical decisions over the suicide bombings campaign were taken,[824] the IDF engaged for more than three weeks in multiples operations against Hamas, raiding weapons workshops and explosive laboratories and targeting local commanders and bomb-makers.[825] Nevertheless, after some important operations leading to the elimination of high value targets and the capture of documents further illustrating the intermingling of Hamas civil and military wings, the IDF and Shabak's operational priorities changed.[826] Due to the lack of a clear command and control hierarchy in Hamas' networks as well as of 'hubs', the security forces proceeded to less 'personal' operations, focusing on 'ticking bombs'.[827]

On July, 8, 2002 Maj. Gen. Moshe Ya'alon became new IDF CGS. His appointment led to several relevant changes in the conduct of the counter-

[820] Amos Harel, 'In Determined Path So Far, the Orders are "Take your Time"', *Ha'aretz*, June, 26, 2002.

[821] Uzi Benziman, 'Determined Path to Defensive Shield', *Ha'aretz*, June, 30, 2002.

[822] Amos Harel and Uri Ash, 'IDF Widens Offensive in West Bank' *Ha'aretz*, June, 24, 2002.

[823] Author's interview with Dr. Barak Ben-Zur, January, 22, 2012; Author's interview with Dr. Reuven Paz, former Head of the Shabak Research Department, Herzliya, January, 12 ,2012; Aharon Ze'evi Farkash, 'A Critical Look at Intelligence', *INSS Strategic Assessment*, 9/4 (2007).

[824] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue*, 261-262; Clive Jones, 'One Size Fits All', 281; Ami Pedahzur, *Suicide Terrorism* (Cambridge: Polity: 2005), 176 ; Amos Harel and Daniel Sobelman, 'IDF Completes Takeover of Most of Area A; Demolitions in Rafah', *Ha'aretz*, July, 2, 2002.

[825] Amos Harel, 'Hamas Trying to Set Up Bomb Labs Inside Israel, IDF Says', *Ha'aretz*, October, 4, 2002; Amos Harel and Arnon Regular, 'IDF Poised to Strike Nablus, Tulkarm in Metzer Response' *Ha'aretz*, November, 12, 2002.

[826] Amos Harel, 'IDF Plans to Draft More Reservists', *Ha'aretz*, July, 1, 2002.

[827] Amos Harel, 'Hamas Vows to Step Up Attacks after Killing of Two Senior Militants', *Ha'aretz*, June, 24, 2002.

insurgency campaign. Although only fragmentarily implemented on the battlefield, more than two years of insurgency had proved the inadequacy of the LIC doctrine introduced in 2000.[828] Awareness of its limits and of the need for more appropriate methodologies led in July 2002, the newly appointed CGS, strongly influenced by OTRI, to look for novel solutions to manage the conflict with the Palestinians. As discussed in the previous chapter, the IDF had given considerable thought to developing a theory and supporting concepts to deal with the phenomena of terrorism, guerrilla warfare and asymmetric conflicts since the mid-90s. In the year 2000, along with the LIC doctrine, new concepts developed by OTRI, collected under the name of *Systemic Operational Design* (SOD), were informally introduced by the IDF in response to the perceived crisis in operational art, that is an inability to logically and purposefully bridge the gap between strategy and tactics.[829]

SOD was an operational design methodology incorporating the three phases of design, planning and implementation of military operations which, departing from a teleological positivist approach to operational art, attempted to apply systems and complexity theory.[830] Repeatedly tested in the first two years of the al-Aqsa intifada, and employed also in the planning of Operation Defensive Shield,[831] SOD became the official IDF methodology in July 2002.[832]

The conceptual innovations introduced by the new CGS had their roots in his understanding of LIC which was strongly influenced by the debates initiated in the 90s. Ya'alon behaved according to the perception, prevalent in the IDF, that the CGS had not only the right but also the authority to be a full partner with the political echelon in fashioning national policy.[833] With regard to LIC, the CGS held the view that it was an all-encompassing struggle directed against the moral strength and national consciousness of the enemy. Contradicting the official government's policy of striking only those involved in the armed struggle, he advocated employing all available civilian, economic, and social levers to raise the price the Palestinians had to pay for continuation of the conflict, in order to engender a cognitive change from a

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[828] Erez Weiner 'From Confusion to Sobriety: the Development of Combat Doctrine for Fighting against Irregular Forces, 1996-2004', 7.

[829] David E. Johnson, *Hard Fighting: Israel in Lebanon and Gaza*, 28.

[830] L. Craig Dalton, *Systemic Operational Design: Epistemological Bump or the Way Ahead for Operational Design?* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2006), 26–28; Amir Rapaport, 'The IDF and the Lessons of the Second Lebanon War', *The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies Mideast Security and Policy Studies*, no. 85 (December 2010), 8.

[831] Yotam Feldman, 'Dr. Naveh, or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Walk Through Walls', *Ha'aretz*, October 25, 2007.

[832] Shimon Naveh, 'Asymmetric Conflicts', 144; David E. Johnson, *Hard Fighting: Israel in Lebanon and Gaza* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2011), 28.

[833] Avi Kober, 'From Blitzkrieg To Attrition: Israel's Attrition Strategy and Staying Power', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 16/2 (2005), 216; Yoram Peri *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy*, 144-145.

'consciousness of struggle' to a 'consciousness of accommodation'.[834] Thus, from the second half of 2002, pressure on the Palestinian population was further intensified through the application of a broad range of non-military measures while the IDF, taking advantage of the full control of territory granted by the destruction of the PA's security apparatus, increased targeted assassinations and ground incursions, launching an all-out effort against Hamas.[835]

The almost complete lack of a clear chain of command in the West Bank persuaded the government and the IDF of the need to apply more direct pressure on the Hamas' hierarchy in the Gaza Strip. On July, 23, 2002 the IDF assassinated in fact the Izz-al-din-al-Qassam Brigades commander Salah Shehada.[836]

Salah Shehada's elimination was supposed to deter Hamas' leadership and 'signal' that they did not enjoy immunity from Israeli strikes,[837] yet the elimination of such a high profile figure backfired, leading to a dramatic intensification in Hamas' attacks.[838] Through the years in fact the Islamic Resistance Movement had progressively evolved from a hierarchical 'chain-network' organization centered on a single charismatic leader, Shaykh Yassin, into a multi-level dispersed 'hub-type' network.[839] As a result of this process, even in Gaza, Hamas lacked a vertically oriented chain of command but was characterized by a relatively flat and decentralized structure centered around local leaders, or 'hubs', who exerted distributed operational authority.[840] Within Hamas the central leadership provided vision, direction, guidance, coordination,[841] exerting command and control at the operational and strategic level, but not at the tactical level, that is over actual attacks.[842] Thus, the killing of Izz-al-Din-al-Qassam commander increased Hamas local

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[834] Moshe Ya'alon, 'Preparing the Forces for Limited Conflict', *Ma'arachot* no. 380-381 (December 2001), 24-29.

[835] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue*, 299-380 ; Amir Oren, 'Signs of Weariness on Both Sides', *Ha'aretz*, August, 15, 2002; Author's interview with Dr. Barak Ben-Zur, former Head of Division and Special Assistant to the Shabak Director 2000-2006, International Institute for Counterterrorism, Herzliya, January, 22, 2012; Erez Weiner, 'The Struggle against Terrorism: Direct Contact or Fighting from Afar?', 24.

[836] Amos Harel, 'No "Most Wanted" in West Bank for Now', *Ha'aretz*, July, 4, 2002; Amos Harel, 'PM: Israel Won't Retake Gaza; 4 PA Policemen Killed in Hebron', *Ha'aretz*, June, 24, 2002; Daniel Byman, *A High Price: the Triumphs and Failures of the Israeli Counterterrorism*, 307-310.

[837] Clive Jones, 'One Size Fits All', 280; Avi Kober 'Targeted Killings during the Second Intifada: The Quest for Effectiveness', *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 27/1, (2007), 76.

[838] Amos Harel, 'Hamas Didn't Need Shehadeh's Killing to Carry Out J'lem Attack', *Ha'aretz*, July, 31, 2002.

[839] Shaul Mishal & Maoz Rosenthal, 'Al Qaeda as a Dune Organization: Toward a Typology of Islamic Terrorist Organizations', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 28/4 (2005): 286-287; Diane Singerman, 'The Networked World of Islamist Social Movements', in Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Islamic Activism : A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Bloomington, IN, USA: Indiana University Press, 2003), 143-163,

[840] Ami Pedahzur, *Suicide Terrorism*, 176; Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, 'The Changing Nature of Suicide Attacks: A Social Network Perspective', *Social Forces*, 84/4 (2006), 1990-1991.

[841] Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, 145; Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: A Beginner's Guide* (Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2006), 122.

[842] Brian A. Jackson, 'Groups, Networks, or Movements: A Command-and-Control-Driven Approach to Classifying Terrorist Organizations and Its Application to Al Qaeda', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29/3 (2006): 244; Gal Luft, 'The Logic of Israel's Targeted Killing', *Middle East Quarterly*, 10/1 (2003) http://www.meforum.org/515/the-logic-of-israels-targeted-killing.

networks' degree of *motivation* to bring terrorist and guerrilla attacks to the level that the *capability* available at the moment allowed, possibly at full capacity.[843]

With the elimination of Shehada Israel *de facto* brought the confrontation to a new level which involved the movement's leadership in the attempt to apply 'escalation dominance' to Hamas.[844] This course of action aimed at demonstrating capability and resolve by inflicting disproportionate damage in terms of targets hit, number of casualties and scope and effectiveness of the force applied.[845] Nevertheless, 'escalation dominance' proved too gradual and resulted ultimately ineffective. In fact, due to frictions within the political and military echelons concerning the opportunity of removing any form of restraint and attacking the organization's leadership,[846] the IDF turned to apply (to a certain degree unknowingly) a form of slow and incremental pressure against Hamas' networks and leadership. This in turn provided the Islamic Resistance Movement with the opportunity to adjust which, coupled with the fact that its offensive capabilities were still considerably high, made deterrence fail.[847]

The Fourth Phase: Regularization and Operational Stabilization

From mid-2003, a sharp decline was registered in suicide bombings.[848] Operations Defensive Shield and Determined Path had in fact a profound impact on Hamas. Whereas at first the organization remained able to find new militants to replace those dead or arrested, their operational skills gradually proved lower than those of their predecessors.[849] Realizing that a new stage had been reached in the intifada, the IDF shifted to a new approach of 'regularization and operational stabilization' (*Hasdara*) aimed at re-engineering the status quo. [850]

This phase witnessed continuous CT operational activity in order to keep Hamas and the other Palestinian organizations off balance ('lawn-mowing in

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[843] For an explanation of the concepts of *motivation* and *capability* of terrorist organizations see Boaz Ganor, *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle: A Guide for Decision-Makers* (New York: Transaction Publisher, 2005), 133-134 and Boaz Ganor, 'Terrorist Organization Typologies and the Probability of a Boomerang Effect', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 31/4 (2008), 269-283.

[844] Zeev Maoz, *Defending the Holy Land: A Critical Analysis of Israeli Security and Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 2006), 324.

[845] The term 'escalation dominance' was originally coined by Herman Kahn. See Herman Kahn, *On Escalation: Metaphors and Scenarios* (New York: Praeger, 1965), 231, 290.

[846] Author's interview with Dr. Reuven Paz, Herzliya, January, 12 ,2012.

[847] Zeev Maoz, 'Evaluating Israel's Strategy of Low-Intensity Warfare, 1949-2006', *Security Studies*, 16/3 (2007), 327-328.

[848] Israel Security Agency, *Palestinian Terrorism in 2008, Statistics and Trends*, http://www.shabak.gov.il/SiteCollectionImages/english/TerrorInfo/2008-sum-english.pdf Israel Security Agency, 'Spotlight on Hamas - Ideology and Involvement in Terror', January, 15, 2009, 2-3; Yoram Schweitzer, 'The Rise and Fall of Suicide Bombings in the Second Intifada', *INSS Military and Strategic Affaris*, 13/3 (October 2010), 39-49.

[849] Daniel Byman, *A High Price: the Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, 153.

[850] Gal Hirsch, 'From 'Cast Lead' to 'A Different Way': The Development of the Campaign in the Central Command, 2000-2003', 30-31.

the IDF jargon),[851] an escalation of targeted killings and ground incursions specifically directed against Hamas, and a partial relief of pressure on the Palestinian population and attempt to unilaterally create a new situation on the ground.

The systematic dismantlement of the Palestinian insurgent organizations' infrastructures started with operation Defensive Shield and Determined Path was from the beginning of 2003 complemented by an increasing control of territory. This however took place to a very limited extent through classical 'boots on the ground', but was rather achieved through the integration of borders' sealing with a sophisticated network of 'mobile' control systems in the interior.[852] In parallel with the development of a massive ISR platform, Israel succeeded in fact in progressively sealing the Palestinian territories' external borders through the employment of Border Police units and, most of all, of surveillance assets such as UAVs, unattended ground sensors and ground-based radars. Whereas the border between the West Bank and Jordan remained to a certain degree porous, much better results were obtained in the sealing of the Gaza Strip thanks to effective cooperation with the Egyptian authorities.[853]

The improved security situation and renewed control of territory allowed in turn to shift to the employment of defensive means. In May 2002, on suggestion of the head of the Shabak and with the opposition of the AMAN which continued to favor the employment of offensive measures, construction of a separation barrier between Israel and the West Bank began.[854] Furthermore, improved coordination and unity of effort among the agencies involved in providing security (police, intelligence, military) led to the implementation of complementary defensive measures. Public transportation security was in fact strengthened through the establishment of the 'Unit for the Protection of Public Transport' and the deployment of special police units to guard public places.[855]

Along with new defensive measures, classic Israeli counter-insurgency tactics, such as mass arrests, house demolitions and permits were reintroduced. In 2003 arrest operations conducted by the IDF and the Shabak led to detain under custody over 5.000 Palestinians.[856] The partial restoration of order in the Territories achieved in 2003 made the Israeli authorities able to exploit the permits regime to deter the civilian population from getting involved in violence and terrorist activities as well as to extract intelligence.[857]

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[851] Ya'akov Amidror, 'Principles of War in Asymmetric Conflicts', *Ma'arachot*, no. 416 (December 2007), 9 (Hebrew).

[852] Eyal Weizman, 'An Israeli Doctrine Paper on urban Warfare: The Art of War', Frieze Magazine, no. 99 (May 2006), http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/the_art_of_war/; David J. Kilcullen, 'Countering Global Insurgency', 33, http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/kilcullen.pdf .

[853] Anthony Cordesman, *Escalating to Nowhere*, 393-438; Richard Galpin, 'Israel Tightens Grip on Jordan Valley', *BBC News*, March, 14, 2006 .

[854] Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism*, 123.

[855] Anat Ziegelman, 'The Transportation Security Unit Began to Operate', *Ha'aretz*, May, 27, 2001.

[856] http://www.btselem.org/statistics/detainees_and_prisoners

[857] Daniel Byman, *A High Price: the Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, 168.

Furthermore, in order to deter suicide attacks, the IDF reintroduced one of the harsher pacification tools ever applied in the Palestinian Territories: house demolitions. The program, which was restarted in 2001, led in 2002 to the demolition of over 250 homes to punish suspected terrorists and their supporters.[858] In the course of the al-Aqsa intifada over 3000 houses were demolished.[859]

The reoccupation of the main Palestinian cities in the course of operations *Defensive Shield* and *Determined Path* provided the IDF with a steady flow of intelligence. Continuously feeding intelligence through operational activity, the IDF and the Shabak moved from an 'intel-drives-operations' top-down approach, to a 'cyclical' operational posture.[860] This in turn allowed to further increase the deployment of SOF for targeted operations and to mold an aggressive targeting model resembling under many aspects what in the professional jargon of the US military is known as *find, fix, finish, exploit, and analyze* (F3EA) approach.[861] Ultimate aim of these operations was not only the physical removal (through arrest or kill) of insurgents, but also the potential insights which the operation could provide into the enemy network, laying the foundations for further operations and allowing thus to maintain offensive operational continuity.[862]

In December 2002 the head of the IDF Planning Directorate, Maj. Gen. Giora Eiland, proposed to strike against the Islamic Resistance Movement's central leadership, submitting to the IDF GHS a plan to eliminate the entire leadership of Hamas in Gaza. According to it, Israel should remove any limitation on strikes against Hamas' leaders, denying them sanctuary in Gaza. The decapitation strike was supposed to create a void within the movement and impair its functionality.[863] These suggestions were, with some hesitations, implemented from March 2003 with the elimination of senior leader Ibrahim Maqdameh, followed in June by a failed assassination attempt against political leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi and the killing of several local leaders of the Izz-al-din-al-Qassam Brigades the following day.

The attack against the leadership of Hamas was rapidly followed by measures against the *Da'wa* system, within the framework of a broader and more

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[858] Ami Pedahzur & Arie Perliger, 'The Consequences of Counterterrorist Policies in Israel', in Martha Crenshaw (ed.), *The Consequences of Counterterrorism* (New York: Russell Sage, 2010), 341.

[859] Avi Kober, *Israel's Wars of Attrition*, 131.

[860] Thomas H. Henriksen, *The Israeli Approach to Irregular Warfare and Implications for the United States*, Joint Special Operations University Report 07-3 (2007), 14.

[861] Michael T. Flynn, Rich Juergens & Thomas L. Cantrell, 'Employing ISR - SOF Best Practices', *Joint Force Quarterly*, 50 (2008), 56-61; Thomas F., William J. Tait Jr, Michael J. McNealy. 'OIF II: Intelligence Leads Successful Counterinsurgency Operations', *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin* 31/3 (July-September 2005), 10-15; Michael L. Downs, *Rethinking the CFACC's Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Approach to Counterinsurgency*, Joint Military Operations Department Naval War College Paper (2007); Moshe Ya'alon, 'Lessons from the Palestinian 'War' against Israel', *Policy Focus* 64 (January 2007), 16.

[862] Erez Weiner, 'Rules and Principles to Combat Terror', *Ma'arachot*, no. 401 (July 2005), 69 (Hebrew); Thomas H. Henriksen, *The Israeli Approach to Irregular Warfare,* 14; Gabi Siboni, 'The Military Battle against Terrorism'.

[863] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue,* 262.

sophisticated approach to the fight against Hamas. In fact, as mentioned above, in the course of Operation Defensive Shield and Determined Path, AMAN and the Shabak managed to seize documents that shed some light on the nexus between the Hamas' *Da'wa* infrastructure and its military wing. Consequently, for the first time from the outbreak of the intifada, Israel adopted a broader approach to the fight.

Intelligence acquired on Hamas' fundraising complex in Western Europe led to a series of appeals submitted by the Israeli authorities to the relevant countries in the attempt to secure the closure of foundations and associations linked to the Islamic Resistance Movement.[864] At the same time, the AMAN and Shabak started to monitor charitable associations and welfare institutions in order to ascertain their role in the radicalization and recruiting process of militants, and in some instances even to storm banks connected to Hamas and close charitable institutions in the West Bank.[865]

These measures, however, produced mixed effects. Though weakening Hamas as a whole, the closure of organizations connected with Hamas' *Da'wa* system ultimately worsened the Palestinian humanitarian emergency, removing the sole sources of basic social and health services of which the civilian population disposed after three years of war and the almost complete collapse of the PA infrastructure.[866]

In June 2003 the Palestinians and Israelis did reluctantly accept President Bush's peace initiative, the 'Road Map for Peace', which called for a cessation of Palestinian violence, the Israeli withdrawal to pre-intifada lines, the renewal of negotiations.[867] On 29 June 2003 the PA, now guided by the new prime minister Mahmud Abbas 'Abu Mazen' brokered a temporary cease-fire agreement (*hudna)* with the Palestinian militant organizations.[868] These events, in conjunction with the continuous improvement of the security situation, led many within the IDF to claim that simply thwarting terrorist and guerrilla attacks was insufficient and to advocate steps aimed at influencing the Palestinian hearts & minds, thereby dissuading the civilian population from supporting the insurgency.[869]

Already in the first days of operation Determined Path, having noticed the increasing apathy of the Palestinians vis-à-vis the IDF presence in the Territories, the top military brass and especially the COGAT had started to voice concerns about the level of pressure applied to the civilian population and the disappearing governing role of the PA. Such a situation could in fact prejudice the Palestinian population's role as 'strategic stabilizer' of the

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[864] Khaled Hroub, 'Hamas After Sheikh Yassin and Rantisi', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 33/4 (2004), 31.

[865] Author's interview with Dr. Barak Ben-Zur, January, 22, 2012; Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism*, 124-127.

[866] International Crisis Group, *Islamic Social Welfare Activism in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: A Legimitmate Target?* 2 April 2003, 16-27.

[867] 'Special Documents: The Road Map', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32/ 4 (Summer 2003), 83-99.

[868] Sergio Catignani, *Israeli Counterinsurgency and the Intifadas: Dilemmas of a Conventional Army*, 125.

[869] Ze'ev Schiff, 'Analysis / Thwarting Suicide Missions is Not Enough' *Ha'aretz*, June,3, 2003; Yossi Kuperwasser, 'Battling for Consciousness', *INSS Strategic Assessment*, 12/2 (2009), 41-50.

conflict, and positively influencing the political situation.[870] The appointment of Ya'alon as CGS led to a renewal of the debates on LIC, and especially the issue of consciousness/hearts & minds (*Toda'a*).[871] Although consistently with the LIC doctrine, priority remained persuading the hearts and the minds of the Palestinians of the hopelessness of their struggle, the CGS argued that that the time had come to give the Palestinian people a sliver of hope and relieve pressure for those not directly involved in violence in order to show that desisting from violence generated rewards.[872]

Thus, reviving a psychological warfare unit, the IDF started to conduct 'awareness operations' to influence the Palestinian public opinion.[873] Concurrently, economic restrictions were partially lifted, limitations on movement eased through removal of severak roadblocks and checkpoints, and military forces started to withdraw from the main Palestinian urban areas.[874] Furthermore, the Civil Administration started to advocate the introduction of a humanitarian perspective into the IDF military planning, arguing that the creation of socio-economic conditions for normalizing the life of the Palestinians represented a central element for ending the conflict.[875]

The Shabak harshly opposed such measures. Continuing to stick to a narrow CT perspective, the security service argued that despite the decline of violence, the Palestinian organizations still retained a certain *capability* to carry out terrorist attacks and consequently that easing security measures in the Territories could prove extremely dangerous.[876] According to the Shabak (and to some voices within the AMAN) as long as there was no shift in the militant groups' reliance on terror and as long as key Palestinian leaders proved unwilling to confront them, the chances of the Palestinian leadership adopting a different approach were rather slim. Thus, there was no reason to ease the military pressure on the Territories.[877] Consequently, Palestinian requests for freer movement and alleviation of economic restrictions were virtually ignored, the IDF only limitedly evacuated cities in which violence had ceased, and curfews, area quarantines, as well as sweeps continued. At the same time the activities of the Civil Administration were kept to a minimum, carrying the restricted humanitarian focus of meeting the dire

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[870] Amos Harel, 'IDF Operation Meets Only Minor Opposition', *Ha'aretz*, July, 5, 2002; Ze'ev Schiff, 'Easier on the Cities, Harder on the Roads', *Ha'aretz*, July, 1, 2002; Amir Oren, 'Signs of Weariness on Both Sides'.

[871] Author's personal interview with IDF officer, Tel Aviv November, 21, 2011,

[872] Moshe Ya'alon, 'Preparing the Forces for Limited Conflict', 25-26; Miri Eisin, 'The Struggle over Consciousness in Post-Modern War', in Haggai Golan & Shaul Shay (eds.), *The Limited Conflict* (Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 2004) 347-376 (Hebrew).

[873] Amos Harel, 'IDF Reviving Psychological Warfare Unit', *Ha'aretz*, January, 25, 2005; Lt. Col. Shlomit Shavit, 'Picture of Victory', Ma'arachot no. 440 (December 2010), 56-61 (Hebrew).

[874] Giora Segal, 'The US Military in Iraq and the IDF in Judea and Samaria', *INSS Military and Strategic Affairs*, 1/3 (December 2009); Daniel Byman, *A High Price: the Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, 156.

[875] Eyal Ben-Ari, et al., *Rethinking Contemporary Warfare: A Sociological View of the al-Aqsa Intifada*, 57; Moshe Levy, 'The Palestinian Civilian Population: A Key Component in Deciding Limited Conflict', *Ma'arachot* no. 395 (August 2004), 22-29 (Hebrew).

[876] Amos Harel, 'Officer Dies in Clash with Cell Behind Immanuel Strike', *Ha'aretz*, July, 18, 2002.

[877] Uzi Benziman, 'Window of Lost Opportunity', *Ha'aretz*, September, 20, 2002.

economic needs of the Palestinians by allowing a minimal level of livelihood.[878]

Friction within the security establishment, and between the IDF and the political echelon, continued to grow throughout 2003. CGS Ya'alon and part of the IDF high ranks were in fact convinced that the positive developments in the confrontation with the Palestinians were attributable to the IDF's LIC strategy; in an interview with the newspaper *Ha'aretz* Ya'alon stated that the current situation demonstrated that the Palestinian leadership and civilian population had internalized the insight that Israel was an established fact in the region and that political concessions could not be extracted from it through the use of violence. In such a view the Palestinians were therefore in transition from 'a consciousness of struggle' to 'a consciousness of accommodation'.[879] Though still holding a rather negative opinion of the Palestinian leadership, particularly Arafat, the CGS and other high-ranking officers argued that the Palestinian society would have not surrendered, that, as the stronger side, Israel carried responsibility for exerting restraint and set out the conflict in a new direction, and that persisting in the current policies would lead to sacrifice strategic interests for tactical considerations.[880]

The government however completely disagreed with the IDF's position and preferred to proceed unilaterally. Prime minister Sharon announced on December, 18, 2003 at the 'Herzliya Annual Conference on the Balance of Israel's National Security, a disengagement plan that involved completion of the security barrier along the West Bank, and the withdrawal of the IDF and evacuation of the Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip to be implemented unilaterally, without negotiations with the Palestinians.[881]

In light of the security implications (and risks) of the disengagement plan the government requested the IDF to dramatically intensify pressure on Hamas.[882] On august, 21, 2003 the Israeli government had formally adopted the decision to decapitate Hamas' leadership in Gaza, killing that same day the prominent leader Ismail Abu Shanab.[883] The attack against the leadership of Hamas would continue in the following months, taking the shape of a series of operations conducted against the Islamic Resistance Movement's top leaders, in conjunction with the intensification of targeted killings operations against high rank members of the military wing. On august, 22 Mahmud al-

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[878] Yoram Peri *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy*, 148; Eyal Ben-Ari, et al., *Rethinking Contemporary Warfare: A Sociological View of the al-Aqsa Intifada*, 57.

[879] Ari Shavit, interview with Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon, *Haaretz Magazine*, July, 10, 2003.

[880] Ron Ben-Yishai, 'Changing the Strategy to Combat Terrorism', *INSS Strategic Assessment*, 6/4 (February 2004).

[881] 'The Sharon Unilateral Disengagement Plan', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 33/4 (Summer 2004), 85-107; Sara Roy, 'Praying with Their Eyes Closed: Reflections on the Disengagement from Gaza', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 34/4 (Summer 2005), 64-74.

[882] Yair Evron, 'Disengagement and Israeli Deterrence', *INSS Strategic Assessment*, 8/2 (August 2005); Moshe Sharvit, 'The Military and Security Implications of Israel's Disengagement from the Gaza Strip', *INSS Strategic Assessment*, 8/3 (November 2005); Ya'akov Amidror, 'The Unilateral Withdrawal: A Security Error of Historical Magnitude', *INSS Strategic Assessment*, 7/3 (December 2004).

[883] Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue*, 394.

Zahar barely survived an aerial bombardment of his Gaza home. On September, 6, 2003, the IAF launched an aerial attack aimed at assassinating almost the entire leadership during a secret meeting attended by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and high ranks political and military leaders.[884] The failure of the operation led only to a postponement: Shaykh Yassin was finally killed in an airstrike on March 22, 2004 followed less than a month later by Hamas' newly appointed leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi.[885]

The operational aim of striking against Hamas' leadership in Gaza was twofold. Primarily, it attempted to create a leadership void within the movement, in this way potentially impairing its functionality. The second aim was achieving deterrence vis-à-vis the surviving members of the internal leadership and possibly deter also the more hard-lined external leadership, the *al-Maktab al-Siyasi*.[886] As we have seen, the Israeli strategic community has traditionally put a premium on deterring the leaderships of enemy non-state organizations through both pre-emptive and retaliatory attacks.[887] This emphasis on deterrence and leadership targeting, already pronounced in the Israeli strategic thinking, was further enhanced by the diffusion in the IDF of RMA-inspired theories and concepts emphasizing the need to affect the cognitive domain of the enemy system.[888] In fact, since 2003 the draft of the CONOP, later incorporating an adapted version of EBO, provided the guidelines around which the IDF counter-insurgency campaign was shaped.[889] According to the CONOP, striking against the enemy system's points of weakness would have, through cascade effects, disrupted the enemy's equilibrium, inducing a 'systemic shock'.[890] The elimination of Hamas' central leadership, in conjunction with the killing of potential 'second tier leaders' and continuous attacks against the movement's local networks was therefore supposed not only to impair the Islamic Resistance Movement's *capability*, but also to potentially affect its very *motivation* to continue the struggle.[891] As had happened after the killing of Salah Shehada however, in

[884] Amos Harel, 'Hamas's Yassin Survives Gaza Strike', *Ha'aretz*, September, 7, 2003.

[885] Esther Pan, 'The Assassination of Sheikh Yassin', *Council on Foreign Relations Online*, March, 24, 2004, http://www.cfr.org/publication/7833/middle_east.html#1; Graham Turbiville, 'Hunting Leadership Targets in Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorist Operations – Selected Perspectives and Experience', *Joint Special Operations University Report*, 07/6 (2007), 16.

[886] Shmuel Bar, Rachel Machtiger, Shmuel Bachar, *Deterrence of Palestinian Terrorism – The Israeli Experience: A Critical Analysis*, Paper Presented at the Eight Herzliya Conference, January, 20-23, 2008, 4.

[887] Shaul Shay, 'Limited Conflict and the Concept of Deterrence', in Haggai Golan and Shaul Shay (eds.), *The Limited Conflict* (Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 2004), 167-168.

[888] Patrick McGlade, *Effects-Based Operations versus Systemic Operational Design: Is There A Difference?*, Air Force Institute of Technology Thesis (June 2006), 4-7.

[889] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation: The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution in Military Affairs in Russia, the US, and Israel*, 106.

[890] Amir Rapaport, 'The IDF and the Lessons of the Second Lebanon War', 7; Nadir Tsur, 'The Test of Consciousness: The Crisis of Signification in the IDF', *INSS Military and Strategic Affairs*, 2/2 (2010), 11; Paul J. Blakesley, *Operational Shock and Complexity Theory*, School of Advanced Military Studies United States Army Command and General Staff College Fort Leavenworth, Kansas (2005), 66-69.

[891] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation*, 101; Shimon Naveh, 'The Cult of Offensive Preemption and Future Challenges for Israeli Operational Thought', in *Between War and Peace: Dilemmas of Israeli Security* edited Ephraim Karsh (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 182.

the period after the killings of Shaykh Yassin and Abdel Aziz Rantisi attacks rose: from March 2004 to February 2005 their number increased from nearly 50 to over 350. In the same period the Israeli death toll decreased from over 60 to 27.[892] Thus, despite the high level of *motivation*, Hamas seemed as though progressively suffering the consequences of a de-professionalization process of its personnel which prevented the organization from fully exploiting its (still) considerable human power.[893] Concurrently Israel continued to apply pressure on Hamas' *Da'wa* system. In February 2004 'Operation Torch Green' led to the confiscation by the Israeli security forces of 37.5 million of funds from institutions and bank accounts in Ramallah.[894]

As the IDF's and Shabak's increasingly successful dismantlement of Hamas infrastructure progressed, the Islamic Resistance Movement managed nonetheless to adjust its tactics, shifting from terrorist attacks to guerrilla warfare, especially from the Gaza Strip and intensifying the firing of mortar shells and the locally-manufactured *Qassam* rockets.[895] The first half of 2004 witnessed in fact the targeting by Hamas of IDF bases and outposts through the employment of underground tunnels as well as an exponential growth in surface-to-surface missile attacks.[896] This in turn led the IDF to conduct more frequent ground operations in the Gaza Strip along with continued targeted strikes against Hamas' leaders.[897]

Prompted by the killing of 13 IDF soldiers in Zeitoun and Rafah on May, 18, 2004 Israel launched 'Operation Rainbow' (*Keshet Be'anan*) a five-day large ground offensive in **Gaza**. Declared goal of the operation was to clear out the **Hamas** infrastructure in Gaza, destroying weapons-smuggling tunnels connecting the Gaza Strip to Egypt and creating a safer environment for the IDF soldiers along the Philadelphi Route. Additional goals were to locate smuggling tunnels connecting the Gaza Strip to Egypt and preventing Strela-2 (SA-7 Grail) shoulder-launched anti-aircraft missiles, AT-3 Sagger anti-tank guided missiles and other long-range rockets from being

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[892] Adam E. Stahl, 'Questioning the Efficacy of Israeli Targeted Killings Against Hamas' Religio-Military Command as a Counter-terrorism Tool', *Monitor Journal of International Studies*, 12/1 (2006), 63; Boaz Ganor, 'Terrorist Organization Typologies and The Probability of a Boomerang Effect', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 31/4, 282.

[893] Avi Dichter & Daniel Byman, 'Israel's Lessons for Fighting Terrorists and their Implications for the United States', *The Saban Center for Middle East Policy Analysis Paper*, no. 8, (March 2006), 10; Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, 'The Changing Nature of Suicide Attacks', 1993-1996; Daniel Byman, 'Do Targeted Killings Work?' *Foreign Affairs*, 85/2 (2006), 95-111; Michael Eisenstadt, 'Pre-Emptive Targeted Killings As A Counter-Terror Tool: An Assessment of Israel's Approach' *Peacewatch*, no. 342 (2001); Hillel Frisch, 'Motivation or Capabilities? Israeli Counterterrorism against Palestinian Suicide Bombings and Violence', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 29/5 (2006), 843-869.

[894] Segan Ravid, 'Ethical Dilemmas Concerning the Struggle against Hamas' Civil Array', *Ma'arachot*, no. 407 (June 2006), 30 (Hebrew).

[895] Ze'ev Schiff, 'The Qassam Strip', *Ha'aretz*, December 31, 2005.

[896] Sergio Catignani, *Israeli Counterinsurgency and the Intifadas: Dilemmas of a Conventional Army*, 129-131.

[897] 'Israeli Military Operations against Gaza, 2000–2008', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 38/3 (Spring 2009), 122-138; Gabi Siboni, 'High Trajectory Weapons and Guerilla Warfare: Adjusting Fundamental Security Concepts', *INSS Strategic Assessment*, 10/4 (February 2008).

smuggled into the Gaza Strip.[898] Concurrently the IDF and the Shabak launched targeted arrest operations in the Nablus area of the West Bank.[899]

Yet, the operation had also an undisclosed political goal, that is to deter the Palestinians and force the civilian population to pressure Hamas, showing them what could happen in the future should they continue to resort to violence after Israel withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. In fact, deploying a massive force of three combat brigades, accompanied by armored units and assault helicopters, the IDF chose not to replicate the 'surgical' approach and tactics frequently adopted in the West Bank, inaugurating an harsher approach which had no precedent in the Gaza Strip.[900] The IDF escalated its operations to the point of collective punishment, through extensive destruction of private property.[901] In the attempt to prove to the Palestinians that the IDF was not withdrawing from Gaza with its tail between the legs and that the pullout would not be a victory for Hamas, 56 houses were demolished, agricultural fields were razed and public streets were torn up.[902]

As the operation drew to a close its accomplishments appeared uncertain. Six days of operational activity did not allow to deliver a huge blow to the Hamas' infrastructure and only three tunnels were uncovered and destroyed, while several others remained open and well-functioning. Last but not least, the Israeli 'message of deterrence' hardly reached its intended recipients.[903] Rather than deterred and furious with Hamas, Gazans channeled their rage against the IDF and the PA as Gaza's governing body. Up to the end of 2004 in fact, the Islamic Resistance Movement gathered a strong degree of consensus and support among the Palestinians, benefiting from a high influx of new recruits and, according to some analysts, even would-be suicide bombers.[904]

And yet, from the aftermath of the operation it was possible to witness an increase in the externalities associated with Hamas' decentralized decision-making processes.[905] Despite the potential 'strategic' employment of violence, especially suicide bombings, to damage the *rapprochement* taking place in that period between PA president Mahmud Abbas and Israeli prime minister

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[898] Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 'Special Information Bulletin', 27 July 2004.

[899] 'IDF mulls expanding Gaza Strip Operations', *Ha'aretz*, July, 8, 2004.

[900] Zeev Schiff, 'Focus / Gaza Rainbow of Marginal Worth' *Ha'aretz*, May, 27, 2004; Jeffrey White, 'Examining the Conduct of IDF Operations in Gaza', *PolicyWatch*, no. 1497 (March 2009); Gabi Siboni, 'The Challenges of Warfare Facing the IDF in Densely Populated Areas', *INSS Military and Strategic Affairs* 4/1 (April 2012).

[901] Amos Harel, 'Elite Officers Criticize IDF Actions in Territories', *Ha'aretz*, September, 28, 2004; Zeev Schiff, 'Analysis / End of the Rainbow', *Ha'aretz*, May, 27, 2004; Nir Hasson, 'Gaza chief: 41 Terrorists Killed, 56 Homes Demolished in Rafah', *Ha'aretz*, May, 27, 2004.

[902] 'Question Marks, and a Bad Taste', *Ha'aretz*, May, 27, 2004.

[903] Zeev Schiff, 'Focus / Gaza Rainbow of Marginal Worth' *Ha'aretz*, May, 27, 2004; Erez Weiner, 'Rules and Principles to Combat Terror', 69.

[904] http://www.shabak.gov.il/SiteCollectionImages/english/TerrorInfo/Terrorism2007report-ENGLISH.pdf; Amos Harel & Avi Isacharoff, *La Septième Guerre d'Israël: Comment Nous l'avons gagné et Porquoi Nous l'avons Perdue*, 265.

[905] Walter Enders and Paan Jindapon, 'Network Externalities and the Structure of Terror Networks', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 54/2 (2010), 263.

Ariel Sharon,[906] Hamas' local networks found increasingly difficult to coordinate tactical activity, terrorist and guerilla attacks, with the movement's political-military strategy; terrorist and guerrilla attacks continued, especially the launching of *Qassam* rockets, but their operational and strategic value was by then decreasing.[907]

At the level of central leadership, Hamas was experiencing even more serious difficulties following the removal of almost the entire historic leadership.[908] The very structure of the Islamic Resistance Movement prevented the possibility that a decapitation strike could result in a power *vacuum* within the organization, yet the emergence of new leaders witnessed increasing internecine struggles.[909] In fact, degrading the status and prestige of the internal leadership, the killing of Shaykh Yassin and the assassinations, in the course of the intifada, of all the potential rising leaders in the Territories, led to an exacerbation of the interior/exterior dichotomy.[910] This in turn generated increasing difficulties in conciliating ideology and political practice, confusion and vacillation, sensibly compromising the organization's strategic planning capability.[911]

On the one hand the Damascus-based external leadership guided by Khaled Mashaal and Musa Abu-Marzuk, which despite its power and prestige was ultimately incapable of completely imposing its policies from afar; on the other the Gaza branch, which emerged seriously damaged by the Israeli targeted killings campaign and seemed as though it was progressively losing prestige and control over the local networks and militants.[912]

Precisely in response to the continuous firing of *Qassam* rockets from the northern Gaza Strip, in September 2004 the IDF carried out a second large scale ground operation, called Operation *Days of Penitence* (30 September – 16 October 2004) more specifically focused against Hamas' infrastructure.[913] The operation, essential for the Israeli public to approve unilateral disengagement,[914] was in fact launched in attempt to 'modify the Islamic

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[906] Israel Security Agency, 'Spotlight on Hamas - Ideology and Involvement in Terror', January, 15, 2009, 2-3, www.shabak.gov.il; Al-Ahram Weekly, 24 - 30 March 2005, Issue No. 735, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/735/re1.htm.

[907] Beverley Milton-Edwards & Stephen Farrell, *Hamas,* 114.

[908] Daniel Byman, 'Do Targeted Killings Work?', 105.

[909] Carley, Lee, Krackhardt, 'Destabilizing Networks', 89; Kathleen M. Carley, Yuqing Ren, 'Tradeoffs Between Performance and Adaptability for C3i Architectures', In *Proceedings of the 2000 International Symposium on Command and Control Research and Technology Symposium* (2001).

[910] Author's interview with Dr. Reuven Paz, Herzliya, January, 12 ,2012; Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: A Beginner's Guide*, 116; Matthew Levitt, 'Moderately Deadly, Yassin's Long History of Terror', *National Review Online*, March, 26, 2004; Khaled Hroub, 'Hamas After Sheikh Yassin and Rantisi', 31-33; Shaul Mishal & Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, xviii.

[911] On the Hamas internet site see interview by Musa Abu Marzuq, 14/09/2006; interview with Khaled Mashaal interview with Ismail Hanyeh, 27/12/2010; 11/05/2011, 05/07/2011 especially concerning Hamas strategic goals; Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: A Beginner's Guide*, 174; Shaul Mishal & Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, xx-xxv.

[912] Bar, Machtiger, Bachar, *Deterrence of Palestinian Terrorism*, 8-9. Abdul Rahman Al-Rashed, 'What is Hamas Lacking?', *Asharq Alawsat,* January, 12, 2009.

[913] Col. Gur Lish, 'Anatomy of a Continuous Limited Conflict', *Ma'arachot*, no. 419 (July 2008), 19 (Hebrew).

[914] Aluf Benn, 'Analysis / Gaza Offensive Must Yield Results', *Ha'aretz,* October, 3, 2004.

Movement's behavior' and to avoid it proclaiming victory after the Israeli disengagement.[915]

IDF ground forces entered in northern Gaza Strip focusing on the town of Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahiya and the Jabalya refugee camp, which were used as launching sites of *Qassam* rockets at the Israeli town of Sderot and other Israeli populated areas in the region. The IDF refrained from entering refugee camps limiting the actual deployment of troops in those sectors to 'combat presences', that is short-term captures of houses on the edge of the camps.[916] Through increased use of the air force, either combat aircraft and UAVs, the IDF was able to conduct 'surgical' strikes against *Qassam* launching teams, Hamas militants and operational commanders,[917] as well as the Islamic Resistance Movement's facilities.[918]

Despite not halting rocket attacks altogether, at the tactical level the operation, which led to the killing of some 50 Hamas members, especially in the area of Bet Lahiya,[919] delivered a heavy blow to Hamas.[920] Yet, it appeared doubtful whether the strategic aim of upholding deterrence was actually achieved.[921] In fact the IDF replicated the approach first applied in May with Operation 'Rainbow', paying lip service on the issue of civilian casualties and limiting to the minimum humanitarian assistance in the attempt to coerce the civilian population into pressurizing Hamas to suspend the rocket fire, even temporarily.[922] The heavy price exacted from the Palestinian population in the course of the operation actually induced some restraint in Hamas' behavior, thwarting the movement's efforts to turn the West Bank into a forward base for the launching of *Qassams*.[923] Nevertheless, apparently neither the operation itself, nor the elimination, on October, 21 in an airborne attack, of Adnan Al-Ghoul and Imad Abbas, the 'chief engineers' who supervised the development of the *Qassam,s* deterred Hamas, convincing the movement to raise a white flag and/or to stop launching *Qassams*.[924]

[915] Liraz Margalit, 'Modifying the Opponent's Behavior through the Use of Force', *Ma'arachot*, no.440 (December 2010), 44-50 (Hebrew); Amos Harel and Aluf Benn, '5 Israelis, over 30 Palestinians Killed; Ministers Approve Major Gaza Raid', *Ha'aretz*, October, 1, 2004.

[916] Amos Harel, 'Analysis / The IDF has Started to Look for a Ladder' *Ha'aretz*, October, 6, 2004;

[917] Amos Harel, 'IAF Role Grew in Days of Penitence Operation', *Ha'aretz*, October, 19, 2004; 'Witnesses: Hamas Commander in Gaza City Hurt in IAF Missile Strike', *Ha'aretz*, October, 3, 2004.

[918] Amos Harel, Arnon Regular and Nir Hasson, '3 Palestinians Killed in Gaza; Total of 85 Killed in IDF Raid', *Ha'aretz*, October, 7, 2004.

[919] Zeev Schiff, Amos Harel and Arnon Regular 'Mofaz: Combat in Northern Gaza Not Over, IDF Ready to Reenter', *Ha'aretz*, October, 17, 2004; Amos Harel and Arnon Regular, 'IDF expands Gaza raid; arrests top Hamas man in Hebron', *Ha'aretz*, October, 14, 2004.

[920] Amos Harel, Aluf Benn and Arnon Regular, '129 Palestinians Killed During IDF's Gaza Raid', *Ha'aretz*, October, 15, 2004.

[921] Zeev Schiff, 'Analysis / Be wise Hamas - Stop the Qassams', *Ha'aretz*, October, 17, 2004.

[922] Amos Harel, 'Analysis / The IDF has Started to Look for a Ladder' *Ha'aretz*, October, 6, 2004; See 'UNRWA Gaza Field Assessment of IDF Operation Days of Penitence', 20 Oct. 2004, http://www.un.org/unrwa/news/incursion_oct04.pdf4(accessed 21 Dec. 2004).

[923] Zeev Schiff, 'Keep Qassams out of the West Bank', *Ha'aretz*, October, 6, 2004.

[924] Anthony Cordesman, *Escalating to Nowhere: The Israeli-Palestinian War*, 406; Amos Harel, 'No "Most Wanted" in West Bank for Now'.

Despite the results of both these two large-scale operations were rather mixed, 2004 witnessed a generalized reductions in the number of terrorist and guerrilla attacks, especially suicide bombings. Shortly before his death Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi acknowledged that Israeli unrelenting pressure and targeted killings had created problems to the organization.[925] In February 2005, Hamas, admitting the losses suffered among its senior cadres, declared that it would abide to the Sharon-Abbas negotiated truce, defining it as a period of calm (*Tahdiya*).[926] It seems therefore that Israel ultimately succeeded in generating internal and external incentives for convincing Hamas to (at least temporarily) desist from the use of terror and guerrilla warfare in support of its political strategy.[927]

Conclusion: Culture and Adaptation

At the tactical level, though disposing of knowledge and capabilities necessary for the conduct of riot-control operations the IDF repeated at the outbreak of the al-Aqsa intifada operational mistakes analogous to those committed in December 1987 when the first intifada broke out. Yet, in this case rather than the by-product of difficulty in adapting to the tactical nature of the threat, the IDF's choice to resort to war tactics, the employment of combat aircrafts, assault helicopters and the massive use of firepower can be considered as consequences of an extremely elevated threat-perception deriving from the failure of the peace process. Up to the end of 2001, the IDF *bitsuist* ethos, the tendency to grant ample freedom of action to tactical commanders, and, later on, the preoccupation for the civilian population's stamina and the urgency felt by the political and military echelon in stemming the terror campaign, produced a reactive posture and tactical hyper-activism which fostered lack of unity of effort and, in some instances, inconsistency of military strategy.

At the operational level, as the debates which took place in the course of the al-Aqsa intifada testify, the IDF primary focus remained upholding deterrence vis-à-vis the insurgents. In fact, in the period 2000-2005, a rift developed between the supporters of a systematic campaign of targeted air-strikes against the insurgent organisations' infrastructures and those who conversely favoured the continuous conduct of ground raids and special operations in enemy areas, claiming that only through direct attrition of the enemy forces on the ground it was possible to disrupt the insurgent networks and generate at the same time a deterrent effect capable of affecting also the insurgents'

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[925] Avi Dichter & Daniel Byman, 'Israel's Lessons for Fighting Terrorists and their Implications for the United States', 10.

[926] David Eshel, "Israel's Targeted Killing, Controversy Absolved?", *Defense Update International Online Defense Magazine*, http://www.defense-update.com/newscast/1206/analysis/analysis-141206.htm; Daniel Byman, *Do Targeted Killings Work?*, 105.

[927] Shmuel Bar, Rachel Machtiger, Shmuel Bachar, *Deterrence of Palestinian Terrorism,* iii; Avi Kober, 'Israel's Wars of Attrition: Operational and Moral Dilemmas', *Israel Affairs*, 12/4 (2006), 817; Martha Crenshaw, "The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice," in Walter Reich (ed.), *Origins of Terrorism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2004), 8; Assaf Moghadam, 'Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada', 77.

motivation. In the course of the al-Aqsa intifada the Palestinian civilian population was regarded almost exclusively as a potential source of dangers and in some instances even as an enemy. Israel deliberately avoided too intense contacts with the civilian populace, limiting to implement only humanitarian measures. By contrast, the IDF attempted to drive a wedge between the insurgents and their constituencies through coercion: collective punishments, and the employment of disproportionate force with the intent of pressurising and intimidating civilians through limited collateral damage and/or extensive destruction of infrastructures.

Difficulties in promoting the assimilation of a broader conceptual grasp of the nature and requirements of LIC, made sure that many within the IDF officer corps continued to conceive and implement their operational activities through the narrow pattern of routine CT operations, something which has in turn impacted adversely on the IDF's ability to accurately predict the political and military consequences of its operations. Besides, up to mid-2002 the intelligence community did not fully understand the nexus between Hamas' civil and military infrastructures, as well as of the fact that the movement's charitable and social institutions provided the 'blood' of the organization and allowed it to avoid terminal blows.

Since 2000 the political and military echelons perceived the insurgency as a very existential threat and, therefore, conceived counter-insurgency strategic aims in extremely 'negative' terms. From the 'negative' strategic aim of generating a cumulative attritional effect which could exhaust the adversary's determination to fight, was derived an extremely aggressive operational approach almost exclusively centered on 'sticks' rather than 'carrots'. In fact, other than being useful in signaling determination and in enhancing Israeli deterrence, military superiority was regarded as instrumental in bringing the opponents from the battlefield to the negotiating table under optimal conditions for Israel.

Although many grew increasingly sceptical towards the possibility of achieving some form of battlefield decision over the intifada and advocated the need for a political horizon in order for the IDF to develop a more coherent military strategy, many others continued to hold the view that no alternative to military containment existed, judging cumulative military attrition as providing the best fit for Israel in terms of bridging ends and means and, most of all, the only viable choice for convincing the Palestinians that they had no feasible military option. This *de facto* prevented the possibility of renewing, even to some limited extent, the security cooperation with the PA in fighting against Hamas. For the very same reasons, Israel did not pay sufficient attention for preserving the PA's government infrastructure or for ensuring the preservation of its capability to fulfil security functions, to be used once the insurgency would be dwindling. As a consequence Israel created in the course of the al-Aqsa intifada a political and governmental

vacuum which only Hamas, with its pervasive *Da'wa* system, had the capability to fill.

Conclusions

In the period between 1987 and 2005 Israel conducted a military campaign against Hamas' in three different contexts: a prevalently non-violent insurgency; a diplomatic agreement which set up a security cooperation mechanism with a third actor, and a terrorist-led insurgency. Though the various contexts significantly influenced the approach implemented by Israel to the fight against the Islamic Resistance Movement, as well as the very process of adaptation, it is possible to discern a distinct and lasting impact of cultural factors in shaping a peculiar Israeli 'way of war' in counter-insurgency beyond the contextual variations taking place in each of the periods analyzed.

Generally speaking, during the 1987 intifada, the Israeli approach did not substantially differ from what might be considered the 'classic' model of counter-insurgency. After an initial phase in which the armed forces and the civilian authorities attempted to crush the intifada through military force and coercive measures, Israel gradually managed to make a use of force more in line with the nature of the threat. Furthermore, the use of coercive measures to discourage popular participation in the insurgency was increasingly accompanied by hearts & minds measures, which were intensified as the security conditions improved.

This evolutionary pattern continued in the first years of the so-called Oslo period. In fact, though to a certain extent unknowingly, as the concept of counter-insurgency was never explicitly mentioned by Israeli politicians and was relatively alien to the military establishment, Israel shaped a new approach to the fight against Hamas, very similar to a 'classic' counter-insurgency approach. State-building measures were in fact supported and implemented in conjunction with CT through a proxy (the PA) which was supposed to become gradually self-sufficient. The difficulties encountered in the application of this model led to a reappraisal during the government of Netanyahu, which marked a return of Israel's to its traditional CT approach. Such a process continued and even deepened in the course of the al-Aqsa Intifada. Israel gave in fact birth to a highly coercive and militarized counter-insurgency campaign based on massive use of firepower and aggressive tactics, accompanied by coercive non-military measures designed to deter the civilian population and the insurgents and make them aware of the price of waging asymmetric war, rather than the potential benefits of an agreement.

Assuming for the purpose of explanation the CT and COIN (or 'enemy-centric' and 'population-centric') theoretical models, whose dichotomy has in the last years marked the scholarly debate,[928] as two poles of a continuum, it could be argued that, overall, not much is present in the Jewish state's approach which could be clearly associated with the 'classic' paradigm of COIN. At the same time though, equating it with CT appears rather simplistic, as the notion of CT

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[928] David J. Kilcullen, 'Countering Global Insurgency', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 28/4 (2005), 597-617; Eitan Shamir, 'Coping with Non-state Rivals', *Infinity Journal*, no. 2 (Spring 2011), 8-11.

evokes approaches focused exclusively on the enemy, whereas the civilian population has been somehow part of the equation in the Israeli practice.

In any of the three historical periods analyzed Israel's way of war in counter-insurgency appeared prevalently 'minimalistic', generally distant from the COIN model as consolidated in the western practice and yet not properly amenable to the CT model. In fact, Israel predominantly deployed a coercive counter-insurgency model whose logic clearly recalled the deterrence-by-punishment approach of the 50s, appearing as some kind of conceptual extension of it. In the Israeli conception and practice, the tactical requirements of systematically disrupting and weakening the infrastructures of the enemy organizations were to be integrated within an operational framework aimed at deterring the insurgents and driving a wedge between them and their constituencies through coercion. The strategic goal was to generate a cumulative deterrent effect capable of imposing restrictive norms of behavior on its opponents and weakening the cycle of support that sustained the insurgencies.

Israel invariably regarded the ideological and ethno-religious factors alimenting Hamas' insurgency as seriously impairing its ability (as a religious and ethnic distinct counterinsurgent) to influence the civilian population among which the Islamic Resistance Movement recruited and found support. Despite growing awareness within the security establishment of the relevance of 'hearts & minds' in the practise of counter-insurgency, such a perception, reinforced by the Israeli proclivity to ethnocentrism and the generalized lack of empathy and understanding for the culture of the Palestinian society, resulted in overgeneralisations about Hamas' supporters as 'terrorists' whose hearts & minds remained in any case 'unwinnable'. Such an understanding inevitably led to pursue a 'negative' strategy of deterrence and an operational approach centred on coercion. The perceived impossibility of a direct political agreement and the difficulties in peace process made deterrence the only feasible and safe strategic option. On the other hand, the impossibility of 'positively' influencing the Palestinians' hearts & minds in support of a political goal, made the choice to 'negatively' influencing them through pressure and coercion inevitable.

Strategic culture appears crucial in explaining the Israeli pattern of adaptation in countering Hamas' insurgency between 1987 and 2005. In fact, while peculiar features of the Israeli 'way of war' such as the intense focus on technology and drive for tactical action fostered successful adaptation to 'how' Hamas was fighting, relative neglect of the non-military aspects of counter-insurgency, scarce intellectual interest for foreign experiences and even for the 'theory' of counter-insurgency proved detrimental to a nuanced understanding of 'why' the Islamic Resistance Movement had chosen to fight in that specific way, rendering much more complex for Israel to adapt accordingly. The strategic community's aversion to strategic planning and abstract thinking, its tendency to privilege technological solutions and to

reduce complex strategic problems to the level of discrete, technical puzzles to be solved as quickly as possible because of the pressure of events on the ground, often generated a tendency to approach counter-insurgency in a pragmatic but narrow technical perspective whereby ad hoc day-to-day considerations prevailed and problems were resolved in an isolated and sequential manner. This, in turn, often determined a phenomenon which an expert presciently labelled several years ago as 'tacticization' of strategy.[929]

The IDF demonstrated an impressive learning curve in the techno-tactical realm. Specific traits of the Israeli approach to military affairs such as the above-described elevated predisposition for introducing and testing new technologies on the battlefield, the IDF officers' proclivity to show resourcefulness when faced with complex military situations, in conjunction with the generalized inclination to experiment with new tactical configurations, favoured the development of a highly dynamic and flexible techno-tactical combat model, facilitating incremental adaptive changes through improvements in structures, techniques, operating patterns and doctrine.

Between 1987 and 2005 the IDF made in fact considerable amendments in the organisational structure and tasks assigned to the armed forces, creating several *ad hoc* units, trained, equipped and structured for specific kinds of missions related to LIC. At the same special operations assignments were often conferred to conventional units. This, in conjunction with the frequent exchanges in commanding roles between SOF and conventional units, significantly contributed to the informal spread of unconventional procedures, techniques and tactics developed and tested to suite the complexities of LIC, such as for instance fighting in the densely populated Palestinian refugee camps. A similar evolutionary path can be observed in the IDF operating patterns and techniques, with the widening of the non-military measures' repertoire, the progressive implementation of smaller-scale operations and the more precise use of firepower.

In the course of the 1987 intifada, though sometimes expounding an excessive preference for tactical offense as well as difficulties in performing constabulary duties, the IDF managed to adapt to the tactical conditions of combat through an increasing employment of non-military means. From the early 90s, the IDF was also able to reduce the conduct of massive 'cordon and search' operations and rounds-up of suspects, which represented the backbone of its counter-insurgency approach in the 80s, to the benefit of 'slimmer' surgical strikes and selective arrests integrating electronic assets, components of the air force, the intelligence services and the ground forces. Capitalising on superior command and control, intelligence-acquisition systems and the rapid sensor-to-shooter connections across the tactical command levels, in the 2000s the IDF was to become highly effective in the

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[929] Yehoshafat Harkabi quoted in Michael Handel, 'The Evolution of Israeli Strategy', 570.

application of the concepts of Effects-Based Operations and Network-Centric Warfare (NCW) in the tactical sphere, as confirmed by the assaults against the Jenin and Balata refugee camps in 2002.

Several authors have stressed how, being concerned with the very nature of the insurgency, counter-insurgency operational art requires deploying 'that which is correct', below the level of high politics, as a counter to the issues that fuel the insurgency'.[930] In the case of Israel however, perceived limits on the ability to carry out hearts & minds in conjunction with siege-mentality and strong dissonance with the surrounding Arab cultures have led to a conspicuous neglect of the social, economic, not to mention cultural, aspects of counter-insurgency. From this has derived an essentially inadequate response to the issues alimenting Hamas insurgency's cycle of support. Beyond the contextual variations described in this research it is safe to conclude that, at the operational level, the IDF prevalently focused on the approach best-suited for generating a deterrent effect vis-à-vis Hamas, and only in second instance on influencing its constituency.

The IDF 'original' operational concept, centred on offensive manoeuvre of ground forces, proved totally irrelevant in LIC already in 1987. Driven by strong aversion to casualties, an increasingly technologically-leaned quest for a qualitative edge over its enemies, as well as a conflux of societal factors, throughout the 90s the IDF undertook the first serious deviation from the 'original' operational concept, shifting to an approach prevalently based on standoff fire and refraining from deploying ground forces, except for limited SOF raids.

In the second half of the 90s as we have seen, the intellectual debates developing within the IDF regarding operational art and LIC led to some changes. OTRI tried in fact to promote a broader operational approach to counter-insurgency combining all the elements of national power (military, diplomatic, informational, economic), which in the view of its proponents would have led to improved capabilities to address the complexities of LIC strategic environment. Although contributing to codify existing concepts and practices as well as promoting some adaptive changes to the existing counter-insurgency paradigm, the intellectual debates of the 90s over LIC did not revolutionize the IDF operational approach. In fact, as the conduct of counter-insurgency operations during the al-Aqsa intifada testify, the IDF primary operational focus remained upholding deterrence vis-à-vis Hamas (and the insurgents in general). In the Israeli counter-insurgency practice Hamas' civilian constituency continued therefore to occupy at best a secondary role: they were often regarded as potential sources of dangers for the troops and for the civilian population, and in some instances even as enemies. In the period under scrutiny, Israel conspicuously avoided counter-insurgency approaches which entailed too intense contacts with the civilian

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[930] Thomas A. Marks, 'Counterinsurgency and Operational Art', *Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement*, 13/3 (2005), 168; David J. Kilcullen, 'Counter-insurgency *Redux*', *Survival*, 48/4 (2006), 117.

populace, pursuing 'hearts & minds' policies only in extremely elevated security conditions (at the end of the 1987 intifada, between 1991 and 1994), in cooperation with external actors which could assume part of the related burdens (during the Oslo years 1994-1999) or with a strictly humanitarian focus (during the al-Aqsa intifada). By contrast, whenever possible the IDF attempted to drive a wedge between Hamas and its constituency through coercion, something which took the shape of the imposition of collective punishments, such as protracted curfews and closures of the Territories and, especially in Gaza from 2004, in the employment of disproportionate force in the course of military operations with the intent of pressurising and intimidating civilians through limited collateral damage and/or extensive destruction of infrastructures.

At the strategic level, Israel only partially managed to adapt to the conditions of combat. Disregarding evaluations regarding the ability (and willingness) of the political echelon to provide clear strategic guidelines to the military in the period analyzed, it is still possible to claim that specific features of the Israeli way of war have damaged the ability to adapt to the strategic conditions of combat in LIC, causing recurring difficulties in making sure that war was actually geared towards 'the attainment of policy objectives by other means'. The IDF *bitsuist* ethos, the tendency to grant ample freedom of action to tactical commanders ensured the persistence of patterns of 'self-authorisation' for operations in several cases potentially conflicting with the directives coming from the political establishment. The constant preoccupation for the civilian population's stamina and the urgency felt by the GHS in stemming terror campaigns proved further detrimental to the horizontal coordination of tactical activity, fostering lack of unity of effort and, in some instances, inconsistency of military strategy.

On the other hand, scarce familiarity with counter-insurgency theory and, from the mid-90s, difficulties in promoting the assimilation of a broader conceptual grasp of the nature and requirements of LIC, have made sure that many within the IDF officer corps continued to conceive and implement their operational activities through the narrow pattern of routine CT operations, something which has in turn impacted adversely on the IDF's ability to predict the political and military consequences of its operations.

Even though after the 1987 intifada the Jewish state actually managed to deny Hamas' political aims through the shaping of a new political equilibrium with the Palestinians, it persistently failed in employing the various political agreements stipulated with the PA as well as the mechanisms of security cooperation as levers to end the conflict with Hamas. By contrast Israel, coherently with its negative view of political aims in war, pursued an attrition strategy aimed at containment which, though effective under many aspects, and to a certain extent even unavoidable given Hamas' ideological stance, *de facto* enabled the Islamic Resistance Movement, though terribly weakened, to

continuously aliment the insurgency's cycle of recruitment and to translate in political currency its strong popularity within the Palestinian society.

The costs associated with strategic adaptation were in fact perceived as extremely high on the part of the Israeli strategic community. The fundamentally ephemeral impact determined by the geostrategic changes of the 90s on the Israeli strategic culture clearly emerged at the beginning of the 2000s. After the outbreak of the al-Aqsa intifada, the IDF came to perceive the insurgency as a very existential threat and thus to conceive counter-insurgency strategic aims in extremely 'negative' terms. Although many grew increasingly sceptical towards the possibility of achieving some form of battlefield decision over the intifada and advocated the need for a political horizon in order for the IDF to develop a more coherent military strategy, many others continued to hold the view that no alternative to military containment existed, judging cumulative military attrition as providing the best fit for Israel in terms of bridging ends and means and, most of all, the only viable choice for convincing the Palestinians that they had no feasible military option.

Such a conduct on the part of the IDF and the tendency of policy-makers to recede in times of crisis, hampered the functioning of the *bridge* between policy and operations, splitting them in two extremely independent, discreet functions proceeding in a rigidly sequential manner and thus allowing war to unduly create 'its own momentum'.

Borrowing an often quoted metaphor from Clausewitz, the IDF managed to improve the 'grammar' much more than the 'logic' of its counterinsurgency practice, partially failing to amend its 'way of war' at the operational and strategic level.[931] Incremental adaptive changes in the means, techniques, tactics and operational configurations were not matched by comparable logical/conceptual improvements. Growing intellectual attention to counterinsurgency only partially translated into a deeper focus on its non-military aspects or a broader understanding of the operational challenges of fighting insurgents. At the same time conceptual adherence to a pessimistic strategic paradigm contributed to stiffen the strategy-making process and to complicate coordination of policy and operations.

The fact that during the 1987 intifada the Israeli intelligence community did not understand the nexus between Hamas' civil and military infrastructures, nor the grassroots nature of the Islamic Resistance Movement with its charitable and social institutions providing the 'blood' of the organization, led to somehow underestimate the threat. Only the restoration of the Civil Administration in the Territories and the hearts & minds implemented in the last phase of the intifada contributed to contain the expansion of Hamas' *Da'wa* system. Concurrently, the signing of the Oslo Accords, delegitimizing Hamas' political strategy among the 'center of gravity' represented by the

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[931] Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton UP 1984), 605.

Palestinian civilian population, proved quite effective in weakening the movement.

In the first part of the Oslo period, Israel's approach to the fight against Hamas was generally broader and more in line with the multidimensional nature of the threat. Nevertheless Israel's reluctance to bear the burden of contributing to the Palestinian state-building process generated an inability to coordinate military and non-military measures. These difficulties, in conjunction with impatience, mistrust and lack of understanding for Arafat's attempts to co-opt Hamas, led the Rabin and Peres governements to gradually abandon this broader and more ambitions approach to the fight against Hamas and to revert to a narrower one, much more focused on the security dimension. This course of action continued under the Netanyahu government which, focusing exclusively on the security dimension, reluctantly pursued security cooperation with the PA. Despite leaving the *Da'wa* system intact and thriving, security cooperation with the PA proved relatively effective, bringing at the end of the 90s Hamas to its lowest point, at least militarily.

In the course of the al-Aqsa intifada, Israel conducted a harsh counter-insurgency campaign combining highly coercive military measures vis-à-vis the civilian population with a relentless attack against the military infrastructure of Hamas. Until mid-2002 however, the Israeli counter-insurgency against Hamas was negatively affected by the limited knowledge of the organization and the lack of understanding of the links between the civil and the military components of the organizations. Although from the second half of 2002, Israel adopted a broader and multidimensional approach to the fight against Hamas, focusing on the *Da'wa* system and incorporating financial and judicial measures, the destruction of the PA's infrastructure and the refusal of the Israeli authorities to assume civil government functions in the Territories *de facto* open the way for the Hamas *Da'wa* and, consequently, for the overall strengthening of the organization. Though decapitated and with an extremely weakened infrastructure Hamas managed to survive the al-Aqsa intifada, emerging with an extremely enhanced role in Palestinian society, which in a short lapse of time the movement was able to translate on the political level.

Thus, between 1987 and 2005, despite the removal of countless key figures, the elimination of almost the entire historical leadership of the organization in the West Bank and Gaza and the dismantlement of its infrastructures, Hamas managed, nonetheless, to survive and to grow from a small spin-off of the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza, into a large and powerful paramilitary organization and political movement which, through the years, has come to be viewed as the main Palestinian political force.

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IDF Officers, Tel Aviv, February 22, 2012.

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IDF Officer, Tel Aviv, February, 25, 2012.

Dr. Barak Ben-Zur, former Head of Division and Special Assistant to the Shabak Director 2000-2006, International Institute for Counterterrorism, Herzliya, January, 22, 2012.

Dr. Barak Ben-Zur, February 22, 2012.

Col. (res.) Yonathan Fighel, former governor of Jenin, Ramallah and Tulkarem, Herzliya, February 22, 2012.

Former AMAN Officer, Herzliya , January, 10, 2012.

Former Mossad Officer, Herzliya , January, 10, 2012.

Dr. Reuven Paz, former Head of the Shabak Research Department, Herzliya, January, 12, 2012.

Former Shabak officer, Herzliya, January 16, 2012.

Maj. Gen. (res.) Daniel Rothschild, former head of the COGAT (1991-1995), Herzliya, February, 29, 2012.