

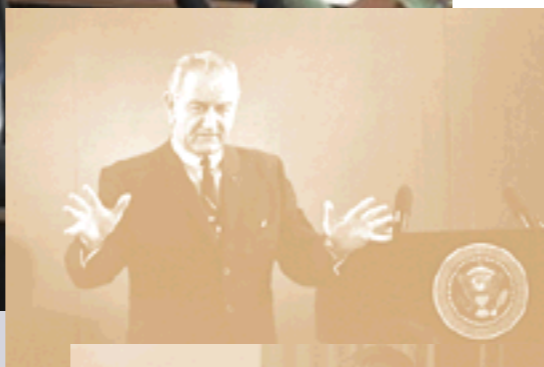
Back Cover:

U.S. and Israeli leaders who advocated Israel's rights to defensible borders after the 1967 Six-Day War (clockwise): Moshe Dayan (Israel's former defense minister and foreign minister), Yigal Allon (Israel's former deputy prime minister and foreign minister), Yitzhak Rabin (Israel's former prime minister and defense minister), President Lyndon Johnson, President Ronald Reagan, Benjamin Netanyahu (former prime minister).



Israel's decision to disengage from the Gaza Strip has placed the future of the disputed West Bank at the top of the international agenda. Prominent voices have called on Israel to withdraw fully from the West Bank and return to the 1949 Armistice Lines (1967 borders) – a move that would undermine Israel's security and even pose an existential threat. It is therefore a matter of urgency that while the debate over the future of the Middle East addresses Palestinian claims for an independent state, Israel's rights and requirements for defensible borders, as proposed by President George W. Bush, are now placed squarely on the global diplomatic agenda.

The idea of defensible borders has been at the heart of the Israeli national consensus for years. In fact, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin laid this out in his last Knesset address in October 1995 – just one month before he was assassinated. Rabin insisted that: "The border of the State of Israel, during the permanent solution, will be beyond the lines which existed before the Six-Day War." He emphasized: "We will not return to the 4 June 1967 lines." Specifically, he noted, "the security border of Israel will be located in the Jordan Valley, in the broadest meaning of that term." He concluded that Israel must retain "a united Jerusalem" and the settlement blocs of the West Bank. Rabin reflected the views of most Israeli leaders that defensible borders are the key to a durable peace in a volatile Middle East.



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Defensible Borders for a Lasting Peace

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Defensible Borders for a Lasting Peace



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**"The United States reiterates its steadfast commitment to Israel's security, including secure, defensible borders."
(U.S. President George W. Bush to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, April 14, 2004)**

Front Cover:

Joint press conference between President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on April 14, 2004, where Bush reiterated the commitment of the U.S. "to Israel's security including secure, defensible borders, and to preserve and strengthen Israel's capacity to deter and defend itself, by itself, against any threat or possible combination of threats."



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Yaakov Amidror
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Foreword

The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs study *Defensible Borders for a Lasting Peace* focuses on Israel's minimal territorial requirements to enable it to defend itself, based on a purely professional military perspective. As such, the analysis that follows provides content to the well-known phrase "secure and recognized boundaries," as stated in UN Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967, and reaffirmed as "defensible borders" by various U.S. administrations and the U.S. Congress throughout the years.

The chapters in this report are based on a conference on the subject of *Defensible Borders* held jointly by the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, headed by MK Yuval Steinitz, and the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs in November 2004. All the presentations here were updated and expanded. In his opening remarks to the conference, the Speaker of the Knesset, MK Reuven Rivlin, stressed how all of Israel's recent leaders, from Menahem Begin to Yitzhak Rabin, drew a distinction between territories like Sinai or the Gaza Strip, where they had proposed certain territorial concessions, respectively, and the area of the West Bank which was seen as critical for the defense of Israel.

This study does not consider Israel's other broader national interests such as water security – Israel's need to control the mountain aquifer that provides 30 percent of Israel's water supply. Additionally, the State of Israel maintains longstanding historical, religious, and cultural bonds with the West Bank, known as Judea and Samaria to many Israelis. These ties lie at the core of the modern-day return of the Jews to the land of their fathers. For example, many Jews feel a deep connection to such sacred sites as the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron. Recognition of these vital links is not expressed in this study.

Maj.-Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror



Executive Summary

Israel is one of the few states in the world that for most of its history has been under repeated military assault by its neighbors. Yet Israel's vulnerability is expected to increase in the future after territorial concessions that may be part of an eventual peace treaty with the Palestinians. A formula does exist to make such peace arrangements stable. When Israel originally captured the disputed West Bank in the 1967 Six-Day War, it was broadly recognized at the time, from London to Washington, that Israel had acted in a war of self-defense and was therefore entitled to new **defensible borders** that would replace the previous lines from which it was attacked. The main architects of Israel's national defense, from Moshe Dayan to Yitzhak Rabin, all embraced the idea that Israel needed new defensible lines.

While Israel's right to defensible borders has been recognized most recently by the Bush administration, unfortunately this has been largely overlooked in much of the recent public discourse on Middle East peace-making, which stresses the territorial aims of the Palestinians but rarely gives equal weight to long-held Israeli rights and defensive requirements. Indeed, in certain quarters, including parts of Europe, many of Israel's security needs are dismissed with the argument that the Middle East has changed entirely and that advanced military technology has rendered obsolete Israeli insistence on achieving defensible borders.

This study concludes that the underlying strategic logic justifying Israel's claim to defensible borders, as well as its international legal validity, is just as relevant today as in 1967, and perhaps even more so:

- **Israel's strategic planning for the future cannot be based on a short-term reading of the situation after the 2003 Iraq War.** It must take into account tremendous uncertainties about the surrounding Middle East. No one can guarantee, for example, that Iraq in five or ten years'

time will be pro-Western or whether it will resume the hostility towards Israel of previous Iraqi regimes.

- Similarly, uncertainties exist about Israel's immediate eastern neighbor, Jordan. Israel's peace treaty with Jordan is a vital strategic asset. Nonetheless, though Israel hopes the Hashemite dynasty in Jordan will remain in power for many years, its eventual replacement by a new and potentially more hostile regime, supported by Jordan's Palestinian majority, cannot be ruled out.

- **Within the 1967 lines, from a purely military standpoint, Israel loses the ability to defend itself.** According to the principles of defense adopted by armies all over the world, an adequate defensive plan allows for sufficient depth to enable defensive forces to be deployed and to preserve a suitable distance between the front and the strategic interior of the country. Within the pre-1967 lines, Israel was only nine miles wide at its narrowest point. Most of its national infrastructure (airports, cities, industries, and inter-city highways) was fully exposed to hostile fire from military forces deployed along the adjacent West Bank hill terrain, which served as an ideal platform of attack for regional military forces.

- After the Six-Day War, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff concluded: "From a strictly military point of view, Israel would require the retention of some captured Arab territory in order to provide militarily defensible borders." Regarding the West Bank, they wrote that Israel should "control the prominent high ground running north-south."

- Since the Joint Chiefs' report, the range of effective weapons fire has grown with the advent of new military technologies, such as precision-guided munitions. Indeed, the minimal defensive depth defined by the U.S. Army as necessary for its own divisions has almost doubled in recent

years. In a fully nuclearized Middle East in the future, in which deterrent forces are mutually neutralized, the importance of these conventional military considerations will only increase.

- Global terrorism is also likely to threaten the West and Israel for decades to come. Even if Israel reaches an understanding with its immediate Palestinian neighbors in the West Bank and Gaza, global *jihadi* forces are likely to continue to target Israeli civilians by infiltrating Palestinian areas and smuggling highly lethal arms. At present, it is unlikely that the Palestinians themselves will dismantle the terrorist arsenals that have accumulated in the areas under their jurisdiction. In fact, the demilitarization provisions of the Oslo Accords were fully violated by the Palestinian Authority throughout the 1990s.

- **The current West Bank security fence cannot become a future eastern border for Israel.** Israel's security fence in the West Bank was only designed to neutralize the threat of infiltration by suicide bombers; it does not affect the threat from long-range sniper fire, mortars, and other high-trajectory weapons. The security fence would also not neutralize shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles that could pose a threat to all commercial aviation. Defensible borders in the West Bank must include adequate security zones that take into account this terrorist weaponry that has been used in the past and will likely be used in the future.

- Defensible borders must also provide Israel with the capability to fight terrorism successfully, as well as to defeat a conventional military assault if Israel is once again attacked. For these reasons, defensible borders must include the following three elements (see Map on p. xx):

- | Control of the external border of the West Bank along the Jordan Valley "in the broadest meaning of that term," as Israel's late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin asserted one month before his assassination. (This applies equally to the border between Gaza and Egyptian Sinai.)

| Broadening the narrow corridor connecting Jerusalem with Tel Aviv from both the north and the south, as well as establishing a defensive perimeter protecting Israel's capital.

| Shifting Israel's boundary eastward so that militarily vital territory does not end up under Palestinian control (e.g., the hills dominating Ben-Gurion International Airport and areas adjacent to Israel's former narrow waist along the coastal plain between Tel Aviv and Netanya).

- Israel's requirements for defensible borders do not compromise the principle of Palestinian territorial contiguity.
- **Israel must retain the Jordan Valley in any future political arrangement with the Palestinians.** If Israel were to evacuate the Jordan Valley, much of the terrorist weaponry that has been smuggled into western Iraq, northern Saudi Arabia, and Egyptian Sinai would flow to the hills of the West Bank that overlook Israel's major population centers.
- Israel cannot rely on the Palestinian security services to hermetically seal off this smuggling. Indeed, the Palestinian Authority arranged for the Karine-A in 2002 to illicitly import 50 tons of weapons by sea, including 20-kilometer-range Katyusha rockets. Even under Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), in March 2005 it was disclosed that Palestinian military intelligence had smuggled shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles into the Gaza Strip.
- UN and other international forces have been completely ineffective in the past in neutralizing terrorist infiltration along Israel's other fronts (in southern Lebanon, UN forces even colluded with Hizballah). U.S. and other friendly Western forces deployed in a counter-terrorist capacity for Israel's defense could come

under a serious terrorist threat from militant Islamist groups (as did the U.S. Marines in Beirut in 1983), which could erode U.S.-Israeli relations over time.

- Palestinian control of the Jordan Valley would facilitate Palestinian irredentism into Jordan and thereby undermine the future of the Hashemite kingdom. It is a paramount Israeli interest that Jordan remains a stable buffer between Syria, Iraq, and a future Palestinian state. Any other development would pose a serious threat to regional stability in the Middle East as a whole.

- Israel's legal rights to defensible borders are enshrined in UN Security Council Resolution 242 from November 22, 1967, that remains the only agreed basis for negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The previous pre-1967 boundaries were only military lines created by the warring parties back in 1949 – they were not recognized international borders. President George W. Bush was the latest of successive U.S. presidents to fully support Israel's right to retain vital territory beyond the vulnerable 1967 lines so that Israel will be able to provide for its own defense.



Introduction: Defensible Borders for Peace

MK Dr. Yuval Steinitz

Israel's Quantitative Inferiority to Its Arab Neighbors

“Defensible borders” for Israel is a concept that has garnered international legitimacy and support since 1967. As such, it is not an Israeli idea alone. In fact, as recently as April 14, 2004, President George W. Bush reaffirmed America’s “strong commitment to Israel’s security including secure and defensible borders” (emphasis added), in an exchange of letters with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Yet while Israel has benefited from no less than a presidential commitment in this regard, there is little understanding today as to what this term means: What are the criteria for determining what defensible borders are and what makes a border indefensible? And even if Israel has a legal right to defensible borders, why should it insist on applying that right in any future territorial settlement with its neighbors?

The overall balance of forces in the Middle East is a necessary backdrop to any discussion about defensible borders. In the case of Israel and the Arab states, this balance of forces is unique in comparison with any other global conflict in the modern era. Israel suffers from an acute quantitative inferiority in comparison with its Arab neighbors, given the fact that the entire Israeli population numbers about six million, while the population of the Arab states reaches close to 300 million. Moreover, in geographic terms, Israel covers only 10,000 square miles including the disputed territories of the West Bank and Gaza, while the Arab League states have about eight and a half million square miles of territory.

Israel has not had a full-scale war with a coalition of Arab states in more than twenty years. Nonetheless, as Dan Haloutz, Israel’s incoming chief of staff, noted in 2004, “the challenge of full-scale war is not behind us,” for tremendous latent hostility towards its very existence continues to be rampant in much of the Arab world, sustained by school textbooks that teach hatred rather than coexistence, by militant mosque sermons that spread incitement rather than tolerance, and by regional satellite stations, like al-Jazeera and even Egyptian government

channels, that demonize Israel across the Arab world rather than promote peace and understanding.

Military Threats in the Middle East Shift Rapidly

It would not take long for a determined Middle Eastern leader to exploit these anti-Israel sentiments in order to create a far more threatening military situation on the ground for Israel. And Western intelligence agencies can frequently miss these rapid shifts. Indeed, in January 1967, the Arab world was polarized and mostly struggling against itself; a good portion of the Egyptian Army was fighting in distant Yemen. Yet within six months, the core Arab states around Israel were unified under Egyptian leadership and preparing for war with Israel. More recently,

military coalitions can unexpectedly form in the Middle East, the asymmetries between Israel and the Arab world have enormous strategic implications. With their large populations, the Arab states maintain the bulk of their armed forces in active-service military formations that can be made ready for battle in a relatively short period of time. In contrast, the ground units of the Israel Defense Forces are based on mostly reserve formations that require up to 48 hours for full mobilization. For this reason, on the first day of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, 177 Israeli tanks had to hold off a Syrian assault of some 1,400 tanks.

Western intelligence agencies can frequently miss rapid shifts in intentions. In January 1967 the Arab world was polarized, with a good portion of the Egyptian Army fighting in distant Yemen. Within six months, the core Arab states around Israel were unified under Egyptian leadership and preparing for war with Israel.

in 2004, King Abdullah of Jordan warned of a future military axis in the Middle East based on militant Shi'ism, stretching from Iran through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon, which reaches Israel's northern borders.

Given the rapidity with which

Israel's Primary Strategic Aim: Survival Despite Regional Hostility

There is another fundamental asymmetry that has to do with the very different intentions of each side. Israel's primary national strategic aim is survival and, as a result, its strategy is ultimately defensive. In comparison, Israel's adversaries in the Arab world (with the addition of Iran) have called for its destruction at different times. Even today, Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state is still delegitimized by most Arab societies, even among those allied with the West. Sometimes this offensive goal is disguised by political means such as calling for the "right of return" of Palestinian refugees to Israel in order to alter its demographic composition and achieve its elimination.

Given the offensive intentions that

between a state's geographic size and the vulnerability of its national independence. It is not surprising that small, vulnerable states in the Middle East such as Cyprus, Lebanon, or Kuwait have found themselves to be the repeated prey of their larger neighbors, whose well-equipped armies could create a *fait accompli* through a quick strike or political manipulation.

The real intentions of Israel's peace partners may be subject to change. As a consequence, Israel needs to incorporate a safety net into its peace agreements in order to protect itself from latent hostility that might return and dominate its neighbors' policies.

It is important to stress the difficulty of assessing the hostile intentions behind a potential adversary's overall military posture. Indeed, Israel's most costly intelligence errors are associated with the misreading of the intentions of Egypt prior to the 1973 Yom

Israel's most costly intelligence errors are associated with the misreading of the intentions of Egypt prior to the 1973 Yom Kippur War and, later, those of the PLO with the signing of the 1993 Oslo Accord. For this reason, a peace treaty cannot alone ultimately safeguard Israeli security.

have been expressed on the Arab side, the geographic proximity of Israel's population centers to any hostile force sitting along the 1967 lines would serve as a constant temptation to attack. A quick survey of the Middle East would reveal clear linkage

Kippur War and, later, those of the PLO with the signing of the 1993 Oslo Accord. (The first was an error of the IDF intelligence corps, while the second was a mistake of the political echelon.) For this reason, a peace treaty, while certainly a desirable goal,

cannot alone safeguard Israeli security. The real intentions of Israel's peace partners may, after all, be unclear or subject to changes as a result of shifts in the regional balance of power. As a consequence, the embattled Jewish state needs to incorporate a safety net into its peace agreements in order to protect itself from latent forms of hostility that might return and dominate its neighbors' policies.

Israeli Leaders Address Defensible Borders

How are these asymmetries in land, population, and strategic intent to be addressed by Israel? David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, first established the Jewish state's defensive doctrine in 1953, which stressed the need for Israel to base its strength on a qualitative military edge in order to offset its numerical inferiority. It also included the use of pre-emptive military operations in the event that Arab states had massed their armies and were preparing to attack.

However, other architects of Israel's defense doctrine recognized that pre-emption was not always an option. For example, Yigal Allon, who served as Israel's minister of foreign affairs in the first Rabin government (besides having commanded the Palmach strike forces during Israel's 1948 War of

The real intentions of Israel's peace partners may be subject to change. As a consequence, Israel needs to incorporate a safety net into its peace agreements in order to protect itself from latent hostility that might return and dominate its neighbors' policies.

Independence), wrote an article in *Foreign Affairs* in 1976 entitled "Israel: The Case for Defensible Borders." Allon argued that Israel needed defensible borders "which could enable the small standing army units of Israel's defensive force to hold back the invading Arab

armies until most of the country's reserve citizen army could be mobilized." According to Allon, Israel would need a minimum of 700 square miles out of the 2,100 square miles that make up the West Bank.

In my view, these conventional military requirements for defensible borders from Allon's day are still a part of Israel's defense doctrine. In 1997, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed his view that Israel's future borders should be based on "Allon-Plus." Additionally, most of Israel's defense ministers, from Moshe Dayan through Yitzhak Rabin, also believed that an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines, or close to them, would endanger Israel's very existence. Speaking at the Herzliya Conference in 2000, Ariel Sharon added: "As long as future wars, which we all hope can be avoided, are decided on land, like the 1991 Gulf War, topography and strategic depth will remain vital for Israel's defense." For that reason, he stated that "Israel

Defensible Borders and the Threat of Terrorism

Yet other strategic factors are necessary to consider, as well, in any discussion about defensible borders, especially the threat of terrorism. Israel learned during the Oslo years that terrorism is not a tactical problem of low-scale violence alone. Above a certain threshold, terrorism can constitute a strategic threat that must be neutralized. Moreover, it would be dangerous to rule out the threat of non-conventional terrorism, which is already being planned by al-Qaeda-related groups.

Israel has sought to partly address its unique problem of Palestinian terrorism with the security fence it has erected along parts of the West Bank and the entire Gaza Strip. But it would be an error to view the security fence as a truly defensible border. While the security fence around Gaza has succeeded in blocking

Speaking at the Herzliya Conference in 2000, Ariel Sharon declared: "As long as future wars, which we all hope can be avoided, are decided on land, like the 1991 Gulf War, topography and strategic depth will remain vital for Israel's defense." For that reason, he stated that "Israel should seek defensible borders."

should strive to obtain defensible borders." And as he explained to the Knesset on April 22, 2004, Prime Minister Sharon incorporated "defensible borders" in the West Bank into the heart of U.S.-Israeli understandings over his disengagement plan.

infiltration attempts into Israel, this was made possible due to the fact that the Israel Defense Forces were able to intercept most terrorist operations well inside the fence, where the majority of terrorists were caught. An Israeli security zone inside the fence, where tunnels

could not be constructed, contributed to its efficacy as well.

Moreover, since the Israeli government moved the route of the fence closer to the “green line” – the pre-1967 armistice line – the fence is primarily an instrument to counter infiltration, but does not address an entire array of terrorist threats from sniper fire to short-range mortar attacks. To neutralize these threats, Israeli security zones inside the fence will be absolutely vital. For that reason, the security fence in the West Bank should be seen as the “last line of defense” rather than as a potential new political border that could be easily defended in the future, in isolation from any additional security zones.

By pulling out from the Gaza Strip, Israel is taking calculated risks for peace that few nations have similarly undertaken themselves, so that the Palestinians there will have every opportunity possible to build a new life for themselves. But complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip should not serve as a precedent for the territory of the West Bank, which is adjacent to Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and the heart of Israel, where more vital security considerations are at stake.

In conclusion, Israel’s needs for defensible borders, particularly in the West Bank, are indisputable. Such borders must insure that a future peace settlement will be stable and not undermined by the combination of Israeli vulnerabilities and the remaining hostility that might be prevalent even after formal peace treaties have been signed. As a consequence, an Israel with defensible borders will promote regional stability. In contrast, an excessively vulnerable Israel can become a

flashpoint for continuing conflicts and crises that could envelop several surrounding states. In that sense, defensible borders must be seen as a vital guarantor for assuring a lasting and durable peace for Israel and the entire region.

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Israel's Requirement for Defensible Borders

Maj.-Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror

UN Resolution 242: No Restoration of the 1949 Armistice Line

Israel's struggle for "defensible borders" is unique in international diplomacy. It emanates from both the special legal and strategic circumstances that Israel faced in the aftermath of the 1967 Six-Day War, when the Israel Defense Forces captured the West Bank and other territories in a war of self-defense. The previous armistice line of 1949 that separated the Israeli and Jordanian armies was only a military boundary and not a permanent political border, according to the armistice agreement itself. The Jordanian occupation of the West Bank occurred in conjunction

I*sr****rael is an embattled democracy that has historically had to defend itself repeatedly against the armies of neighboring Arab states whose declared goal was Israel's eradication. While other nations, like France or Kuwait, have been overrun, occupied, and could survive to reconstitute themselves, Israel cannot depend on obtaining a second chance. Its situation is unique.***

with its illegal invasion of the State of Israel in 1948. In fact, Jordanian sovereignty in the West Bank was not recognized by a single Arab state. This provided the background for UN Security Council Resolution 242 of November 1967 which concluded that Israel would need "secure and recognized boundaries" that would necessarily be different from the 1967 lines. The previous status quo was not to be restored. In diplomatic shorthand, President George W. Bush stated on April 14, 2004, that Israel had a right to "defensible borders," in order to convey the same point.

There continues to be a compelling strategic logic underpinning the idea of defensible borders. Israel is in an anomalous situation. It is an embattled democracy that has historically had to defend itself repeatedly against the armies of neighboring Arab states whose declared goal was nothing less than Israel's eradication. The Israel Defense Forces could not afford to miscalculate. While other nations, like France or Kuwait, have been overrun, occupied, and nonetheless could survive to reconstitute themselves, Israel, in contrast, cannot depend on obtaining a second chance. Miscalculation on its part could have had devastating consequences and, thus, its situation is unique.

Why have Israelis been concerned with such scenarios? The backdrop of Israel's historical concerns has been the vast numerical superiority that Arab state coalitions potentially enjoyed against it throughout its history. This

army had to hold a defensive line until Israel's mobilization of the reserves was completed.

Given its narrow geographical dimensions, a future attack launched from the 1949 armistice lines against Israel's **nine-mile-wide** waist could easily split the country in two. Terrorism has also been added to Israel's concerns, in addition to the threat of a conventional military attack. From a strategic-military perspective, then, the right to defensible borders means that Israel must retain a safety zone in order to contend with a range of threats in the future, even if it reaches political agreements with its neighbors. If aggression is ever resumed, Israel requires a clear ability to defend itself, by itself, based on an appropriate location of its borders with its neighbors.

A *future attack launched from the pre-1967 lines against Israel's nine-mile-wide waist could easily split the country in two.*

problem was exacerbated by the fact that the Arab armies were based largely on regular standing formations that could be battle-ready on short notice. In contrast, the Israel Defense Forces were based mostly on reserve units, meaning that a relatively small Israeli standing

What Makes a Border Defensible?

How is it possible to evaluate whether a border is defensible? To make such a determination, a simple question may be asked: If Israel were to come under attack by a conventional army, or some combination of ground forces, ballistic missiles, and terrorist cells, would the border and the space behind it be sufficient to allow the Israel Defense Forces to fulfill their defensive mission with a high probability of success?

The answer to this question must be based purely on military considerations. Indeed, there are other factors that might be considered as part of the decision-making process when a state's borders are being determined: demography, economics, history, or water resources. But these other factors, that fall under the rubric of national security interests, are not germane to ascertaining

A Continuing Need to Defend Against External Threats

The entire discussion about defensible borders makes sense only if it is assumed that in the future Israel will indeed need to defend itself against an external enemy. If Israel could be assured that it would not be attacked from outside its borders, then there would be no need for defensible borders and no need to examine whether Israel could defend itself from within a certain border. Under such conditions, borders might be based on non-military considerations, such as demography or historical rights. Belgium does not need defensible borders, given the reality of Western Europe today (though it may have needed defensible borders seventy years ago).

The basic assumption in this discussion is that Israel is not about to find itself in a

If Israel were to come under attack by a conventional army, or some combination of ground forces, ballistic missiles, and terrorist cells, would the border and the space behind it be sufficient to allow the Israel Defense Forces to fulfill their defensive mission with a high probability of success?

whether a border is defensible. Moreover, the consideration of other factors in determining borders must not be allowed to obscure the paramount question of whether Israel will be able to defend itself and survive from within those future borders in the event of war.

Western European or North American reality – Israel is likely to face some sort of external threat in the future. Three such threats should be considered in this context:

1. The threat of classical conventional war, involving armored units, self-propelled

- artillery, and attack aircraft; increasingly in the future these platforms will be armed with precision-guided munitions.
2. The threat of long-range missiles – both conventional and non-conventional.
 3. The threat of terrorism, either by means of infiltrating terrorists, such as suicide bombers, or through the use of mortars, rockets, and other ground-to-ground fire that employs a steep trajectory.

Since there is no debate that in the future Israel will face the threat of missiles and terrorism, it is useful to ask whether the classical conventional threat to Israel continues to exist. Could the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973 return? It could be argued that conditions have entirely changed; Israel has peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan that have withstood the test of time. After 2003, the threat of Iraq seems to have been neutralized. In addition, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Syria finds it more difficult to arm itself sufficiently. However, this is only a relatively static snapshot of Israel's strategic situation over the last ten years.

Long-Term Strategic Threats

The determination of defensible borders must be based on an assessment that takes into account potential long-term strategic threats as well. In this context, the following questions need to be considered:

1. Is there any way to guarantee that Iraq will not evolve into a radical Shi'ite state that is dependent on Iran and hostile to Israel (differences between Iraqi and Iranian Shi'ites notwithstanding)? Indeed, King Abdullah of Jordan has warned of a hostile Shi'ite axis that could include Iran, Iraq, and Syria.
2. Is it not conceivable that a Palestinian state will arise in the West Bank that will ultimately take over Jordan? It is worth recalling that just as Iraq has a Shi'ite majority, Jordan already has a Palestinian majority. Can Israel defend itself if it is attacked by a Palestinian state that stretches from Iraq to Kalkilya?
3. Is it not possible that in the future, militant Islamic elements will succeed in gaining control of the Egyptian regime?

None of these possible scenarios can be discounted; each of them, and certainly their combination, requires thinking about how to defend Israel against a classical military threat. It is important to remember that during the 1990s, Middle Eastern armies continued to procure new conventional weapons, and did not just devote their resources to missiles and non-conventional armaments alone. In addition, while the Soviet Union no longer exists as a major weapons

supplier, the military industries of Russia and Europe may be expected to continue to sell their state-of-the-art weaponry to the oil-rich Middle East, while at the same time the U.S. seeks to modernize the military forces of its Arab partners as well.

Only those who can promise with complete certainty that none of these scenarios will emerge are intellectually exempt from answering the question of how Israel is to defend itself from the threat of a conventional army at its border.

What makes these challenges all the more immediate is the fact that the Middle East as a whole will be fundamentally transformed the moment Iran becomes a nuclear power, a development that is already on the horizon. Rather than replacing the traditional conventional threat, a nuclear Iran will only reinforce it. In Cold War Europe, despite being under the umbrella of mutual

added dimension of firepower, like long-range artillery, but they did not replace the ground armies of either alliance. In a future Middle East where deterrence systems neutralize one another, the conventional military balance on the ground will again become pivotal for determining the overall balance of power.

Nonetheless, despite the experience of Western armies, there is a tendency among some who analyze Israel's territorial concerns to deflect the discussion from the threat of classical conventional armies to the world of "advanced technology." According to this line of argument, even if a conventional military threat is posed against Israel in the future, the Israel Defense Forces can employ advanced technological capabilities, including precision-guided munitions, and thereby make up for any geographic inferiority. But those who adopt this reasoning ignore the possibility that eventually Israel's adversaries will become

Is there any way to guarantee that Iraq will not evolve into a radical Shi'ite state that is dependent on Iran and hostile to Israel? Is it not conceivable that a Palestinian state will arise in the West Bank that will ultimately take over Jordan? Is it not possible that in the future, militant Islamic elements will gain control of Egypt?

deterrence, both NATO and the Warsaw Pact nonetheless felt compelled to modernize their conventional armies. Furthermore, the armored corps of each alliance remained the primary military formation for deciding the outcome of wars. Missiles represented an

equipped with technologically advanced weaponry as well. Moreover, topography is highly relevant for precision-guided weapons that might require the assistance of ground-based laser indicators. In short, it is erroneous to argue that advanced military technology

obviates the need for any geographical advantage, whether this is derived from strategic depth or topography – rather, the opposite is the case.

The Necessity of Strategic Depth

The idea of defensible borders cannot refer only to the actual borderline itself. It must also include the area behind the border – the border area. When Western countries dealt with the question of creating a line of defense in Cold War Europe, their military planners understood that it is not the “borderline” that is decisive but rather the “defensive depth.” From a military standpoint, this defensive area included the entire width of Germany up to the Rhine (over 200 kilometers). This was to provide an area for retreat, were a

defensible borders for Israel would also require determining the territories from which its armed forces would conduct their operations and those from which Israeli forces would be able to withdraw. The 1967 borders do not leave a shred of this necessary flexibility. From a purely technical standpoint, within the 1967 borders Israel loses the ability to defend itself.

According to the principles of defense adopted by armies all over the world, there are three basic criteria for evaluating the adequacy of a defensive plan:

1. A battle space with the necessary depth, so that suitable defensive forces can be deployed in stages.
2. A reserve force of a sufficient level of strength to counterattack in order to restore the situation to what it was prior to the outbreak of hostilities.
3. A suitable distance from the strategic interior, predicated on the assumption

In Cold War Europe, Western military planners understood that it is not the “borderline” that is decisive but rather the “defensive depth.” In Europe this included the entire width of Germany up to the Rhine (over 200 kilometers).

defensive battle to be waged, so that a line of containment could be stabilized on the Rhine.

In Israel, too, after the Yom Kippur War, military professionals understood that the “line of containment” could never be the border itself. Therefore, establishing

that its conquest or serious damage could undermine the army’s ability to hold firm.

All of these principles presuppose one cardinal assumption about the conduct of wars: since no defensive system will

remain the same as it was at the beginning of an attack – and must break apart – there is a necessity for sufficient depth for the reserve forces to mass and there is a need for adequate space before enemy forces reach the strategic interior of a state.

Since the 1967 lines do not meet a single one of these criteria for establishing an adequate defensive plan, there cannot be any doubt whatsoever that these cannot be said to constitute defensible or secure borders. The 1967 lines may have certain other advantages from a non-military perspective; some might even think, as a result, that they are good lines. But from a professional military standpoint, relying on the 1967 lines to defend the State of Israel entails an enormous risk, because an army that is deployed along them will not be able to guarantee Israel's defense, should there be a war in the future.

Is Pre-emptive War an Option in Place of Strategic Depth?

The main alternative strategy which some military professionals advocate to make up for the weakness of the 1967 lines is that of “taking the war to the enemy's territory” by having Israel carry out a pre-emptive attack, conduct a war on enemy territory, and, by doing so, create the necessary depth for defense. However, this approach makes the acquisition of an adequate defensive capability conditional on a difficult political decision: to launch a war and conquer territory beyond a state's own political border. There is no guarantee that a future leadership will take such a decision. It is instructive, in this context, to recall that in 1973, Prime Minister Golda Meir had trouble deciding on a limited air strike, even after the Egyptians and the Syrians had already deployed their

From a purely technical standpoint, within the 1967 borders Israel loses the ability to defend itself. There is a necessity for sufficient depth for the reserve forces to mass and for adequate space before enemy forces reach the strategic interior. An army that is deployed along the 1967 lines will not be able to guarantee Israel's defense.

forces to offensive positions to Israel's south and north. Who can guarantee that a future Israeli government would decide in time to pre-empt an enemy attack – especially if there are already political arrangements in place? If the threat to Israel were to emanate

from states that formally were signatories to peace treaties, the chances that an Israeli government would violate them with pre-emptive action are nil.

That is why in the political agreement with Egypt, Israel insisted on the creation of demilitarized zones and limited forces areas in the Sinai Desert. This provided Israel with a safety net in the event that there was a change of intent on the Egyptian side in the future. Two hundred kilometers of desert, containing no significant army, gives Israel a certain amount of forward depth, within the territory of a neighboring state. It is clear, however, that there is no possibility of creating a similar space in the West Bank on Israel's eastern border, which is far closer to the most vital elements of Israel's strategic interior than is the case with the Egyptian border. In the narrower West Bank, Israel must already be positioned with its forces, utilizing

error by those responsible for Israel's security to rely on a future Israeli decision to launch a pre-emptive strike in order to gain the necessary depth to defend Israel from an imminent threat. Israel's security cannot be based on the certainty that such a "counter-attack in advance" will be conducted. Thus, it is impossible for Israel to rely on its defensive capacity at the 1967 "green line" on its eastern border.

While a policy of pre-emptive attack could theoretically create the necessary depth for defense, if the threat to Israel were to emanate from states that formally were signatories to peace treaties, the chances that an Israeli government would violate them with pre-emptive action are nil.

the high terrain available, as well as other unique topographical conditions, in order to create an adequate defense in the event of the emergence of a threat from the east.

In general, from a professional military standpoint, it would be a serious

The U.S. Military's View: Control the West Bank Mountain Ridge

The same conclusion was reached by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff back in 1967, when they were asked to express their view about what minimal territorial modifications would have to be added to Israel in order to create an effective defense line against conventional coalition attacks and against terrorism. A memorandum to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara from June 29, 1967, signed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Earl Wheeler, concluded: "From a strictly military point of view, Israel would require the retention of some captured Arab territory in order to provide militarily defensible borders." According to the Joint Chiefs, their determination of the territory to be retained was based on "accepted tactical

Chiefs of Staff regarding the West Bank was that Israel should "control the prominent high ground running north-south." The line they recommended ran "east of the main north-south highway that connects Jenin-Nablus, al-Bira, and Jerusalem." They explained that "the envisioned defense line would run just east of Jerusalem." From there the line would run southeast to the Dead Sea at Wadi al Daraja. The Joint Chiefs also voiced their view with respect to the Golan Heights, where they recommended Israel holding on to a line 15 miles east of the pre-1967 line, so that it controlled "the terrain which Syria had used effectively in harassing the border area."

Nearly forty years have passed since the Joint Chiefs of Staff prepared their memorandum for the Johnson administration. Is all of this still relevant? Clearly, the geography and topography have not changed, and military technology has

In 1967, the U.S. Joint Chief of Staff concluded: "From a strictly military point of view, Israel would require the retention of some captured Arab territory in order to provide militarily defensible borders." In the West Bank Israel should "control the prominent high ground running north-south."

principles such as control of commanding terrain, use of natural obstacles, elimination of enemy-held salients, and provision of defense in depth for important facilities and installations."

The main conclusion of the Joint

not negated their conclusions, either. Indeed, there have been significant developments in the size, quality, and structure of the armed forces of the Arab states surrounding Israel that makes the analysis of the Joint Chiefs of Staff even more compelling today:

1. Back in 1967, most Middle Eastern armies were made up of relatively slow infantry formations. Today, Middle Eastern armies are structured around highly mobile armored and mechanized formations that can fight continuously over much longer stretches of time. Today's military formations, moreover, can envelop and conquer much wider territories than in the past. These changes only reinforce the conclusions drawn by the U.S. military in 1967 about Israel's need for defensible borders.
2. The range of effective fire has also grown with the advent of new military technologies. This is true with respect to defensive weapons, such as anti-tank missiles, as well as offensive weapons, including aerial-delivered and artillery projectiles. This change lends greater force to the U.S. conclusions about Israel's defensive needs on the ground. This is also why the minimal defensive depth that the

weaponry was in Israeli hands alone, this clear-cut advantage in military technology enabled the Israel Defense Forces to cope with inferior conditions on the ground, such as disadvantageous terrain or inadequate depth. But when Israel's adversaries also possess precision-guided weapons, then defensible borders become an absolute necessity for which there is no possible substitute.

If Israel does not control the defensive line proposed by U.S. planners, the Israel Defense Forces will pay a steep or impossible price in the event of war. Israel will be unable to defend itself since all of its civilian and strategic military infrastructure, as well as Israel's own fighting forces, will be spread out as in a computer game opposite a hostile military enjoying the benefit of the dominant terrain of the West Bank. The opportunities to disperse Israeli defensive

Back in 1967, most Middle Eastern armies were made up of relatively slow infantry formations. Today, Middle Eastern armies are structured around highly mobile armored and mechanized formations that can envelop and conquer much wider territories than in the past.

U.S. Army has defined as necessary for its own divisions has almost doubled in recent years.

3. Precision-guided weapons will become a dominant factor for both sides on the battlefield in the future. As long as such

assets that might become the targets of an adversary's precision-guided munitions would be extremely limited.

In light of all these factors, it is clear why U.S. military experts and the late Prime

Minister Yitzhak Rabin, as well as Israel's current Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, have all stated that even if Israel will need to make territorial concessions, it must still maintain its ability to defend itself by holding "the high ground" of the West Bank. Rabin would refer to Israel's need to hold on to "security borders." Regardless of the terminology, the conclusion of all these former military commanders was that there is no possibility of defending Israel from within the 1967 lines in case of war, and certainly not against a modern army equipped with precision weapons. No responsible leader can promise that Israel will not have to face such a threat in the future.

In 1974, seven years after the memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a similar study was undertaken by the U.S. Army's Command and Staff College. It reached the same conclusion. In order to

The Erosion of Deterrence Increases the Likelihood of War

Finally, in the context of a discussion over classic conventional war, there is one further consequence to consider from a full Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines: after such a withdrawal the chances of war would actually increase, as Israel's ability to deter war would be eroded. A post-withdrawal Israel would offer a very tempting target, since it would be a narrow country with no strategic depth whose main population centers and strategic infrastructure would be within tactical range of forces deployed along the commanding heights of the West Bank. Whoever believes that war is impossible does not have to take this consideration into account; but all who think that it is possible, even if unlikely right now, must then understand that by returning

The range of effective fire has grown with the advent of new military technologies. This is why the minimal defensive depth that the U.S. Army has defined as necessary for its own divisions has almost doubled in recent years.

defend itself, Israel must control the high ground east of the central axis along the West Bank's mountain ridge.

to the 1967 lines, Israel increases the chances that such a scenario of renewed hostilities may actually materialize.

The Value of Territory Has Grown in the Missile Era

Some have argued that the advent of ballistic missiles has made the entire discussion about defensible borders irrelevant. In fact, the missile era creates an entirely new strategic situation precisely because missiles in flight cannot be stopped at a country's borders. In the face of such a threat, the dispersal of infrastructure installations and weapons systems, as well as command and control mechanisms, becomes critical. Only guaranteeing their dispersal ensures the survival of these systems after a missile attack. Missile defenses can blunt a missile attack, but cannot be relied upon to provide completely hermetic protection, especially if the size of the initial attack is considerable. Moreover, in the event of a nuclear missile threat, it is the survivability of a state's "second

and concealment, the greater the chances of preventing war. Conversely, the more an opponent sees that there is a realistic possibility of paralyzing Israel's response capability with a first strike, the greater are the chances that it will be tempted to launch such a strike. Thus, the value of territory and space has, in fact, grown in the missile era. This phenomenon is almost the same in the field of classic conventional warfare; the more the other side perceives its chances are greater, the more likely it is that it will risk an attack. Even if the borderline itself is irrelevant in the missile era, it is the size of the space behind the border that determines the ability of a state to disperse its forces and infrastructure in order to reduce their vulnerability and prevent them from being damaged.

In the Israeli context, there is another component of national defense affected by the vulnerability of national infrastructure to

In 1974, a study undertaken by the U.S. Army's Command and Staff College reached the same conclusion as the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In order to defend itself, Israel must control the high ground east of the central axis along the West Bank's mountain ridge.

strike" capability that determines the level of deterrence it enjoys. Only a wider space will enable Israeli forces to have the necessary level of redundancy to survive a missile strike.

Therefore, the wider the space that a state has at its disposal for dispersal

missile attack. As noted earlier, the bulk of Israel's ground forces are reserve formations. The Israel Defense Forces only reach their full strength after approximately 48 hours when reservists reach the battlefield. For this reason, the successful mobilization of the reserves is

of exceptional importance, since without them, the Israel Defense Forces lack sufficient power to defend the country. Clearly, the more the deployment sites of the reserve forces are dispersed and distant from one another and from the border itself, the greater the chances of completing the reserve mobilization and arming their formations before going to a war zone, even in the event of a missile attack. Moreover, in the borderline area itself, if the reserve mobilization is delayed in any way by a barrage of ballistic missiles, then the initial terrain conditions for the small, numerically inferior, standing Israeli forces to hold back an initial assault will be absolutely critical, especially if they must fight for an extended period of time without the benefit of reinforcement.

Since most of Israel's population is located just west of the West Bank, this is where the mobilization points must be located.

Defending Against the Threat of Terrorism

In the past, when permanent borders for Israel were under discussion, the threat of terrorism was not considered a major factor. Some have argued that in the modern era there will be no more classic conventional wars but only "low-intensity wars" involving guerrilla attacks and terrorism. Terrorism may involve firing curved-trajectory weapons (mortars or rockets) at Israeli population centers or dispatching terrorists to plant explosives or suicide bombers to blow themselves up among civilians.

With regard to terrorism by means of curved-trajectory fire on civilian centers, it is clear that the distance of population centers from the borderline is of critical importance. Only the difference in distance explains why the Kassam rockets fired by Hamas from the

In the face of the threat of ballistic missiles, the dispersal of infrastructure installations and weapons systems, as well as command and control mechanisms, becomes critical. Only a wider space will enable Israeli forces to have the necessary level of redundancy to survive a missile strike.

It is not possible to relocate them to the south, in the Negev. For this reason, the location of the border along the West Bank is critical to Israel's ability to mobilize and equip its reserve forces, and to assure they reach the battlefield as an organized military force.

Gaza Strip reach the Israeli Negev town of Sderot and not the coastal city of Ashkelon – in this case, two kilometers makes all the difference. If there is a future war against Hizballah, it will fire rockets on Haifa and not on Tel Aviv, due to the distance of each

If a terrorist has penetrated a security fence, the greater the distance he has to traverse before conducting his attack, the greater the chances of stopping him. The chances of preventing a penetration also increase if

city from the Lebanese border. If Israel's eastern border becomes the 1967 line, this will enable terrorists to fire on the suburbs of Tel Aviv even without Katyusha rockets. And should Katyusha rockets arrive in the West Bank, no Israeli city will be immune from them. Since it is impossible for Israel to stop curved-trajectory fire from a territory that is no longer under its military control, distance is the only limiting factor preventing harm to Israeli population centers.

With regard to penetrations by terrorists, the line created on the ground – whether a security fence or a barrier – is only one component of an effective defense. No less important is the distance on both sides of that line. If a terrorist has penetrated a security fence, the greater the distance he has to traverse before conducting his attack, the greater the chances of stopping him. The chances of preventing a penetration

terrorism on its home ground, as it did so successfully in the West Bank when it had full control of the territory.

For many years there was no penetration of the fence in Israel's north and no attacks on Israeli civilians until the Israel Defense Forces withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000. A short time later, a Hizballah force crossed the fence, set up an ambush inside Israel, and murdered six Israeli civilians. This has not been repeated because of the use of effective Israeli deterrence against one of Hizballah's main backers – Syria. But if someone in Damascus decides to resume such attacks inside Israel from southern Lebanon, the chances of preventing this are small as long as the Israel Defense Forces are not on both sides of the fence.

Similarly, the success of the security fence around the perimeter of the Gaza Strip in preventing the infiltration of suicide

The Israel Defense Forces only reach their full strength after approximately 48 hours when reservists reach the battlefield. If the reserve mobilization is delayed by a barrage of ballistic missiles, then the initial terrain conditions for the small, numerically inferior, standing Israeli forces to hold back an initial assault will be absolutely critical.

of a security fence also increase if the Israel Defense Forces control an adjacent zone that provides them with space, time, and the ability to act against those approaching the fence.

Furthermore, an Israeli withdrawal will greatly restrict Israel's ability to fight

bombers in the past four years emanated from the creation of a security zone inside the Gaza fence, where the movement of terrorists could be stopped even before they reached the fence itself. Additionally, the freedom of movement of the Israel Defense

Forces to thwart impending attacks from inside Gaza has contributed as well to the success of the Gaza fence. If an effective Palestinian security service does not emerge that prevents attacks from Gaza after Israel's disengagement from the area, it remains to be seen if the Gaza security fence will be able to stop hostile infiltration as successfully as it has in the past.

In short, security zones and the creation of tactical space are critical for combating terrorist infiltration; thus, territorial considerations are an inherent part of the war on terrorism, as well.

In combating terrorism, one further factor must be taken into account that directly involves the issue of defensible borders. The ability of terrorist groups to attack Israel depends to a large extent on the quality of the weaponry they possess. There is no doubt that one of the greatest successes in

Gaza Strip have not always been successful. Redeploying the Israel Defense Forces along the 1967 lines would change this situation fundamentally.

Moving Israel's eastern border from the Jordan River to the 1967 line will enable terrorists in the West Bank's hills to obtain whatever weapons they seek, increasing the threat to Israel. Quite apart from the durability of the new border, Katyusha rockets will make their way into the territories and their effect will be felt immediately. Indeed, just one mortar shell per week in the vicinity of Ben-Gurion International Airport will be enough to stop air transport completely. Without Israeli control of the relevant territory east of the 1967 line, there is no way the Israel Defense Forces can prevent such firing. Moreover, the introduction of shoulder-fired, anti-aircraft missiles in the hills dominating Ben-Gurion Airport would change the strategic equation

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O*nly the difference in distance explains why the Kassam rockets fired by Hamas from the Gaza Strip reach the Israeli Negev town of Sderot and not the coastal city of Ashkelon—in this case, two kilometers makes all the difference.*

the war on terrorism in recent years has been Israel's ability to isolate the West Bank and prevent the introduction of more escalatory weaponry to the Palestinians through Jordan. In comparison, Israel's efforts to prevent the smuggling of weapons from Egypt into the

completely. This development would also alter the ability of the Israel Defense Forces to use attack helicopters in the areas in question.

Summary

Looking at the question of Israel's borders strictly from a professional military standpoint, a withdrawal to the 1967 lines will put Israel in a grave situation for the following reasons:

- Israel will not have the ability to defend itself against a conventional military threat should it materialize in the future; given the current state of the Middle East, no one can promise that such a threat will not materialize.
- Israel's ability to prevent the destruction of its national infrastructure in the event of a missile attack will decline greatly, and its second-strike capability will significantly diminish.

Because of these two weaknesses, the chances will increase that Israel's adversaries

border from essential areas of vital Israeli infrastructure is a critical factor affecting the success of such attacks against Israel. Moreover, to prevent other terrorist attacks against Israel, security zones add a critical element to any security fence in order to make it effective against infiltration.

The importance of geography and defensible borders has been voiced by leading international figures from different political camps. During a conversation with former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, when the Barak government was contemplating a full withdrawal to the 1967 lines (with minor adjustments), I explained that the Israeli government hoped to rely on international guarantees and U.S. backing. Kissinger responded lividly that he tells everyone that Israel needs defensible borders and he adds that Israel must not be pressured to

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger tells everyone that *Israel needs defensible borders and that Israel must not be pressured to withdraw to the 1967 lines.*

will decide to exercise their capacity to attack, in one of those two ways or in a combination of both.

- With respect to terrorism, when facing curved-trajectory weapons – from mortars to rocket fire – the distance of a future

withdraw to the 1967 lines – and then Israel considers such a withdrawal and relies on guarantees. He explained that South Vietnam had international guarantees from twenty countries. Yet when North Vietnam invaded South Vietnam, no country took Kissinger's

telephone calls. His implication was clear: do not rely on guarantees and risk withdrawing to the 1967 lines.

In Israel, the same conclusion has been voiced by others. Shimon Peres told *Ma'ariv* in June 1976: "One must ensure that Israel will not only have length but width. We must not be tempted by all kinds of advisers and journalists to return to a country whose waist is 14 kilometers wide."

The late Mordechai Gur, as Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces, told *Newsweek* in May 1978 that as a military man he had no doubt that to defend Israel it was necessary to remain in the high ground of the mountains of Judea and Samaria – from Hebron to Nablus. He also explained that Israel needed to remain in the Jordan Valley. And the late Moshe Dayan, Israel's former Chief of Staff, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, was unequivocal in this

And finally, the words of the late Yitzhak Rabin in his last appearance in the Knesset, one month before his abominable murder: "We will not return to the lines of June 4, 1967 – the security border for defending the State of Israel will be in the Jordan Valley, in the widest sense of that concept." It was no surprise that this was Rabin's security legacy, for already in 1980 he determined: "Our evacuation of the West Bank would create the greatest threat we can possibly face."

Y*itzhak Rabin, in his last appearance in the Knesset, said: "We will not return to the lines of June 4, 1967—the security border for defending the State of Israel will be in the Jordan Valley, in the widest sense of that concept." In 1980 he determined: "Our evacuation of the West Bank would create the greatest threat we can possibly face."*

regard: "Whatever settlement is reached with the Palestinians and the Jordanians, the key positions that guarantee Israel's defense must be left to the free and exclusive use of the Israel Defense Forces. Those positions are the Jordan Valley and the mountain spine."

Appendix 1

Military-Strategic Aspects of West Bank Topography for Israel's Defense

Due to its location and topography, the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) has played a vital role in Israel's national security since it was captured by the IDF in 1967. The West Bank is relatively small, covering 2,123 square miles (5,500 square kilometers), but it is situated immediately adjacent to the Israeli coastal plain where more than 70 percent of Israel's population and 80 percent of its industrial capacity are located. Moreover, the West Bank is comprised largely of a north-south mountain ridge that dominates vital Israeli infrastructure along the coast, including Israel's international airport, high-tech companies, and most of the major highways connecting Haifa, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem. Rainwater flows down the slopes of this mountain ridge into underground aquifers in western Samaria that provide Israel with approximately 30 percent of its water supply.

In short, a hostile military force located in commanding positions along the West Bank could pose a threat to the center of gravity of the State of Israel, cripple or even bring to a standstill its economic life, and put at risk large portions of its population. The same cannot be said about other territories that Israel came to control as a result of the 1967 Six-Day War. Sinai is adjacent to the Israeli Negev. The Golan Heights dominates the Sea of Galilee and northeastern Israel. Military losses in these areas would seriously undermine Israeli security, but the State of Israel would continue to exist. Incapacitating and overrunning the coastal plain would terminate Israel's very existence. This is the primary factor affecting the strategic importance of the West Bank for Israel from a military perspective.

Another aspect of the strategic importance of the West Bank emanates from its role as a barrier protecting the vulnerable coastal plain from armed attack from the east. The West Bank mountain ridge may reach only 3,000 feet at its highest point, but to its east is the Jordan Rift Valley which is the lowest point on earth, dipping down to 1,200 feet below sea-level. This means that the West Bank mountain ridge forms a 4,200-foot barrier facing eastward that is relatively steep for an attacking ground force. The distance from the Jordan River to the apex of the mountain ridge is roughly 8 to 12 miles (the entire West Bank is about 34 miles wide). Given that Israel deploys mostly small, active service units that are numerically inferior to the sizable standing armies of its neighbors, the eastern slopes of the mountain ridge provide the only practical alternative for a defense line for the Israeli army while it completes its reserve mobilization to deal with an impending threat.

The West Bank mountain ridge contributes to Israeli security in other ways. Israel's military control of the Jordan Valley allows it to prevent the smuggling of advanced weapons to Palestinian terrorist groups. Israel has only to patrol an area that is 62 miles long as opposed to the 1967 line which is 223 miles. While the Jordanian armed forces seek to halt the flow of illegal weapons across the Jordanian kingdom, they do not always succeed. Hizballah is active in trying to move illegal weaponry from Lebanon through southern Syria.

Additionally, the West Bank is crucial to Israel's air defense. During a period of elevated alert, Israel can deploy its air defense systems along West Bank hilltops in order to intercept enemy aircraft from forward positions and not from the heavily populated coastal plain. Short-range radar and early-warning systems situated on the coastal plain would have their line-of-sight blocked by the West Bank mountain ridge (this is not a problem for missile-interception radars). Therefore, for years, Israel has deployed these facilities on the high ground of the West Bank. It goes without saying that if the airspace above the West Bank was in hostile hands, Israel would have no warning time to intercept attacking aircraft. Today, it would take three minutes for an enemy fighter bomber to cross from the Jordan River over the West Bank and Israel (42 miles) to the Mediterranean. If Israel had less than three minutes to react, the provision of adequate air defense by means of fighter interceptors or anti-aircraft missiles would be doubtful.

It may be asked who is going to pose these threats to Israel from the east if Israel has a peace treaty with Jordan and Saddam Hussein has been removed from power in Iraq. The answer to this legitimate question is that national security planning must be based not only on the current political situation, but also must take into account possible changes in the intentions of Israel's neighbors. Israel will need defensible borders to protect it for decades, not just for the next five years.



Understanding UN Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967, on the Middle East

Dr. Meir Rosenne

UN Security Council Resolution 242 has been the pivotal point of reference in all Arab-Israeli diplomacy for over thirty years. Every major Arab-Israeli agreement – from the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Treaty of Peace through the 1993 Oslo Agreements – refers to Resolution 242. Significantly, Resolution 242 defined, for the first time, international expectations about the extent of any future Israeli withdrawal from the territories the Israel Defense Forces captured in the 1967 Six-Day War. It linked that withdrawal to the achievement of peace between the parties. Finally, it established the basis of Israel's legal right to defensible borders.

Many articles have been written on Resolution 242 by international legal experts, government officials, and the news media. Unfortunately, since many of these interpretations have no connection whatsoever to the actual substance of the resolution itself, it is important to clarify its true meaning. Indeed, even Israeli politicians interpret Resolution 242 incorrectly and in a manner that totally contradicts the resolution's language and the express intent of its authors.

Three key questions need to be considered separately:

1. How was Resolution 242 born?
2. What is the content of Resolution 242?
3. What is the legal significance of Resolution 242?

The Birth of Resolution 242

On November 7, 1967, the United Arab Republic (Egypt) turned to the president of the UN Security Council and requested an urgent meeting of the Council, considering that Israel refused to pull its forces out of the territories it occupied in the Six-Day War of June 1967. The Security Council met for several sessions from November 9, 1967, through November 22.

The Content of Resolution 242

The Security Council,

Expressing its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East,

Emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security,

Emphasizing further that all Member States in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter,

1. *Affirms* that the fulfillment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:
 - (i) Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;
 - (ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;
2. *Affirms further* the necessity
 - (a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;
 - (b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;
 - (c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones;
3. *Requests* the Secretary General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in this resolution;
4. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of the efforts of the Special Representative as soon as possible.

Adopted unanimously at the 1382nd meeting.

Two draft resolutions were presented to the council: First, there was a draft resolution introduced by India, Mali, and Nigeria; and second, the U.S. prepared a draft resolution, as well. During the meetings, two other draft resolutions were prepared: one by the British of November 16, 1967, and a second resolution by the Soviets on November 20.

After a number of Security Council debates, there was only a vote on the British draft resolution, which was finally adopted **unanimously**. In practice, the proposed British text was a compromise between the various drafts that had been considered. Once adopted, the British draft resolution was formally numbered Resolution 242.

It should be emphasized that in the various debates that had been held previously in the UN General Assembly, where the Arab bloc enjoyed an automatic majority against

Assembly, UN Security Council resolutions are legally binding, to the extent to which they are adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. A Chapter VII resolution, according to the Charter, is an “action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression.”

But Resolution 242 did not fit into the category of a Chapter VII resolution (for Israel’s action in the Six-Day War did not merit that characterization). Instead, Resolution 242 was adopted under Chapter VI of the UN Charter that deals with “peaceful resolution of disputes.” Thus, all the efforts of the Arab bloc to have Israel branded at the UN as the aggressor in the Six-Day War completely failed. Therefore, according to Resolution 242, Israel was assigned rights and obligations with respect to the territories its forces had captured.

Resolution 242 was not a Chapter VII resolution that was reserved for acts of aggression; it was adopted under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. All the efforts of the Arab bloc to have Israel branded at the UN as the aggressor in the Six-Day War completely failed.

Israel, many anti-Israel resolutions had been adopted regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, General Assembly resolutions are only recommendations and, therefore, do not create international legal obligations. In contrast to the resolutions of the UN General

The Legal Significance of Resolution 242

Resolution 242 applies only to “every state in the area” of the Middle East. It states explicitly that it is necessary to establish “secure and recognized boundaries.” The U.S. ambassador to the UN at the time, Arthur Goldberg, clarified this point when he addressed the Security Council on November 15, 1967: “Historically, there have never been any secure and recognized boundaries in the area. Neither the armistice lines of 1949 nor the cease-fire lines of 1967 have answered this description.”

Indeed, during the debates in the UN Security Council that transpired in May 1967, all the representatives of the Arab states declared that Israel and its Arab neighbors were only separated by armistice lines and that definitive political boundaries between

states. True, in the Oslo Agreements, Israel recognized the rights of the Palestinians to self-determination. However, Resolution 242 is mentioned only as the basis for a regional peace settlement.

It is important to stress that Resolution 242 in no way called on Israel to withdraw to the lines of June 4, 1967, before the outbreak of the Six-Day War. Arab diplomats have tried to argue nonetheless that the resolution precludes any territorial modifications since the resolution’s preamble refers to the international principle that the annexation of territory by force is illegal. True, the preamble specifically refers to “the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war.” Yet this principle was placed by the drafters of Resolution 242 in the preamble and not in the operative paragraphs below. There is a ruling of the International Court of Justice (from the dispute over Danzig) that preambles of League

Resolution 242 in no way called on Israel to withdraw to the lines of June 4, 1967, before the outbreak of the Six-Day War.

them had not been established. Clearly, Resolution 242 sought to replace these truce lines with permanent political borders.

The word “Palestinian” did not even appear in Resolution 242, which, as already noted, applied only to existing

of Nations resolutions are not binding – only the operative parts of these resolutions can create legal responsibilities. This determination carried over from the era of the League of Nations to that of the United Nations.

The Acquisition of Territory Captured in a War of Self-Defense is Different from a War of Aggression

There is a further cardinal point regarding the question of whether the acquisition of captured territory from 1967 by Israel can be regarded as illegal. The great authority in international law, Elihu Lauterpacht, has drawn the distinction between unlawful territorial change by an aggressor and lawful territorial change in response to an aggressor. In drafting its preamble, the architects of Resolution 242 were referring to known international legal principles that precluded territorial modifications as a result of aggression. The preamble talks about “acquisition of territory by war.”

The case of a war of self-defense in

Hague. The preamble of Resolution 242 was a compromise that took into account the other drafts that were before the Security Council, even though it did not really apply to Israel’s case. And by keeping it in the preamble and not in the operative parts of the resolution, the architects of Resolution 242 avoided creating any legal obligations for Israel that could be construed as precluding the resolution’s call for new “secure and recognized boundaries” beyond the earlier 1967 lines.

Is the acquisition of captured territory by Israel in 1967 illegal? The great authority in international law, Elihu Lauterpacht, has drawn the distinction between unlawful territorial change by an aggressor and lawful territorial change in response to an aggressor.

response to aggression is a very different matter. This distinction was further made by Stephen Schwebel, who would later become the legal advisor of the U.S. Department of State and then serve as President of the International Court of Justice at The

Soviet Efforts to Modify Resolution 242 Failed

Another argument raised by Arab diplomats over the years is the difference between the English text of the withdrawal clause, which calls for the “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict,” and the French text which calls for “*retrait des forces armées israéliennes des territoires occupés lors du récent conflit*.” The English text intentionally left out the definite article “the” before the word “territories,” leaving indefinite the amount of territory from which Israel might be expected to withdraw. In contrast, the French text is an improper translation since “*des territoires*” has a definite meaning (a better translation would have been “*de territories*”).

True, the official languages of the UN in 1967 were only English and French

242, the original draft resolution that was voted on was a British text, which of course was written in English. There was a separate French text submitted by Mali and Nigeria over which there was no vote. The USSR proposed on November 20, 1967, to include a clause requiring Israel to withdraw to the pre-war lines of June 5, 1967, but this language was rejected. The very fact that the Soviet delegation sought to modify the British draft with additional language is a further indication that the Soviets were concerned that the British text did not require a full Israeli withdrawal. Indeed, after Resolution 242 was adopted, the Soviet deputy foreign minister, Vasily Kuznetsov, admitted: “There is certainly much leeway for different interpretations that retain for Israel the right to establish new boundaries and to withdraw its troops only so far as the lines it judges convenient.”

The USSR proposed on November 20, 1967, to include a clause requiring Israel to withdraw to the pre-war lines of June 5, 1967, but this language was rejected.

– sometime later, additional languages were added. Yet the accepted procedure to be followed in cases of clashing texts due to language differences is to give preference to the text that was originally submitted to the Security Council. In the case of Resolution

Moreover, Resolution 242 itself relates to the need to establish “secure and recognized boundaries,” which, as already noted, were to be different from the previous armistice lines. If the UN Security Council intended, as the incorrect French text suggests, that a full

Israeli withdrawal from all the territories take place, then there would be no need to write language into the resolution that required new borders to be fixed. Lord Caradon, the British ambassador who submitted to the Security Council what was to become the accepted version of Resolution 242, publicly declared afterward on repeated occasions that there was no intent to demand an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines.

From time to time, the argument is made that according to Resolution 242 the occupation of territories is illegal. As previously noted in the discussion over the preamble of Resolution 242, there is an international legal principle against “the acquisition of territory by war.” Yet there is nothing in Resolution 242 that states the occupation of territory is illegal. Thus, it is incorrect to argue that according to Resolution 242 the occupation of the territories Israel

Resolution 242 and the Refugee Problem

Resolution 242 also deals with the resolution of the refugee problem. During the drafting phase of the resolution, the Arab states demanded that there be explicit reference to “Arab” refugees, but their proposals were not accepted. U.S. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg repeatedly emphasized that the refugee clause in Resolution 242 also covers the need to take care of the issue of Jewish refugees who were expelled from Arab states since 1948 and who lost all their property.

In order to understand the extent to which Resolution 242 constituted the basis for a peace settlement in the Middle East (as well as how much Israel attached importance to what it said), there is a need to look back and remember that the U.S. and Israel indeed signed an agreement in December 1973, right

After Resolution 242 was adopted, the Soviet deputy foreign minister admitted: “There is certainly much leeway for different interpretations that retain for Israel the right to establish new boundaries and to withdraw its troops only so far as the lines it judges convenient.”

captured in the 1967 Six-Day War is illegal, especially since that war was imposed on Israel through the aggression of Arab states along three of Israel’s fronts.

before the Geneva Peace conference, in which a specific clause was included that stated:

The United States will oppose and, if necessary, vote against any initiative in the Security Council that alters adversely the terms of reference of the

Geneva Peace Conference or to change Resolutions 242 and 338 in ways which are incompatible with their original purpose. (Paragraph 4)

This commitment at the time seemed to be very unusual in the view of a number of U.S. senators, so that the legal advisors of the U.S. Senate were asked whether it was consistent with U.S. law. What disturbed them was the fact that, according to the above-mentioned clause, the Nixon administration undertook to adopt a line of foreign policy for the future that was determined through an agreement with a foreign country, rather than by the administration itself. The Senate legal advisor, nonetheless, determined that the Nixon administration's commitment to Israel had legal standing, and it should be stressed that this clause continued to be respected even when subsequent agreements were signed with the U.S.

Conclusions

UN Security Council Resolution 242 – along with Resolution 338 – serve as the only agreed legal basis for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict that is acceptable to both Israel and the Arab states (Syria agreed after the 1973 Yom Kippur War to Resolution 242 when it accepted Resolution 338 which refers to a resolution of the conflict that must be based on Resolution 242). The elements of Resolution 242 that should be considered in any discussion of the resolution's meaning include:

- Resolution 242 is not self-enforcing: Israel is not expected unilaterally to withdraw from territories to fulfill its terms. As a Chapter VI resolution, it requires direct negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors (In contrast, UN resolutions on Iraq were self-enforcing under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, requiring Iraq to withdraw from

According to Resolution 242, there is no Israeli obligation to withdraw prior to the achievement of a comprehensive peace. Nor is there any requirement of Israel to withdraw fully from the territories it captured in 1967.

Kuwait any negotiations.)

- There is no condemnation of Israel's occupation of the territories that the Israel Defense Forces captured in 1967, nor is Israel's occupation of territories defined as "illegal."
- The various elements of the resolution must

be implemented in parallel. There is no Israeli obligation to withdraw prior to the achievement of a comprehensive peace.

- There is no Israeli requirement to withdraw fully from the territories it captured in 1967. While Israel agreed to a full withdrawal in the case of its 1979 peace treaty with Egypt, the Egyptian case is not a precedent for other fronts. True, the Egyptians sought to include a reference in the Camp David Accords that the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty of Peace will constitute the principal basis of future agreements with other Arab states. However, what was finally concluded was an important caveat that limited the Egyptian model to other cases “as appropriate.”
- There is no reference to a Palestinian “right of return” in Resolution 242.
- The main principle inferred in the resolution is that everything is still open for negotiation between the parties.

Resolution 242 is not self-enforcing; Israel does not just withdraw from territories to fulfill its terms. It requires direct negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors.



The U.S. and “Defensible Borders”: How Washington Has Understood UN Security Council Resolution 242 and Israel’s Requirements for Withdrawal

Dr. Dore Gold

U.S. Policy Does Not Seek Israel’s Return to the 1967 Borders

The United States has historically backed Israel’s view that UN Security Council Resolution 242, adopted on November 22, 1967, does not require a full withdrawal to the 1949 Armistice Lines (the 1967 borders). Moreover, in addition to that interpretation, both Democratic and Republican administrations have argued that Israel was entitled to “defensible borders.” In other words, the American backing of defensible borders has been bipartisan, right up to its latest rendition that was provided by President George W. Bush in April 2004. And it was rooted in America’s long-standing support for the security of Israel that went well beyond the various legal interpretations of UN resolutions.

Why is the U.S. position so important to consider? First, while it is true that ultimately Israel and the Palestinians themselves must decide on the whereabouts of the future borders as part of any negotiation, the U.S. position on borders directly affects the level of expectation of the Arab side regarding the depth of the Israeli concessions they can obtain. To the extent that the U.S. limits its demands of Israel through either presidential declarations or statements of the secretary of state, then the Arab states and the Palestinian Arabs will have to settle for less in terms of any Israeli withdrawal. U.S. declaratory policy, then, fundamentally affects whether Arab-Israeli differences can ultimately be bridged at the negotiating table or whether they simply remain too far apart.

Second, there is a related dynamic. Historically, Arab diplomats preferred to extract Israeli concessions through international bodies, like the UN, or even through the U.S., and thereby limit the direct concessions they must provide to Israel in return. According to this scenario, the UN, with U.S. acquiescence, could set the terms of an Israeli withdrawal in the West Bank that Israel would be pressured to fulfill with only minimal bilateral commitments provided by the Arab states. In fact, it was Egyptian President Anwar Sadat who used to say that the U.S. “holds

99 percent of the cards” in the peace process, before he signed the Israeli-Egyptian Treaty of Peace in 1979. Therefore, if the Arab states understand that the U.S. won't just deliver Israel according to their liking, then they will be compelled to deal with Israel directly.

Confusion in Jerusalem About the U.S. Position

Yet despite the critical importance of America's traditional support for Israel's understanding of UN Security Council Resolution 242, historically there has been considerable confusion in Jerusalem about this subject. All too frequently, Israeli diplomats err in asserting that, according to the U.S., Israel must ultimately pull back to the 1967 lines, with perhaps the addition that minor border modifications will be allowed.

The U.S. Position on UN Resolution 242

However, a careful analysis of the development of the U.S. position on UN Security Council Resolution 242 reveals that this “maximalist” interpretation of U.S. policy is fundamentally mistaken. In fact, successive U.S. administrations following the 1967 Six-Day War have demonstrated considerable flexibility over the years regarding the extent of withdrawal that they expected of Israel. True, sometimes the State Department bureaucracy – especially diplomats in the Near Eastern Affairs division that dealt with the Arab world – adhered to a more hard-line view of Israel's requirements for withdrawal. But this issue was not decided at their level. Indeed, over time, successive administrations would even go so far as to issue explicit declarations rejecting the requirement of

Resolution 242 was a joint product of both the British and U.S. ambassadors to the UN. George Brown, who was British Foreign Secretary in 1967, said 242 “means Israel will not withdraw from all the territories.”

Those Israelis who take this mistaken position about U.S. policy tend to conclude that Israel has no alternative but to accept this policy as a given, and thereby concede Israel's right to defensible borders.

full withdrawal and backing Israel's right to defensible borders instead.

What was the source of America's support for Israel? It is important to recall that UN Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967, was a joint product of

both the British ambassador to the UN, Lord Caradon, and the U.S. ambassador to the UN, Arthur Goldberg. This was especially true of the withdrawal clause in the resolution which called on Israeli armed forces to withdraw “from territories” and not “from all the territories” or “from the territories” as the Soviet Union had demanded.

The exclusion of the definite article “the” from the withdrawal clause was not decided by a low-level legal drafting team or even at the ambassadorial level. And it was not just a matter for petty legalists. Rather, President Lyndon Baines Johnson himself decided that it was important to stick to this phraseology, despite the pressure from the Soviet premier, Alexei Kosygin, who had sought to incorporate stricter additional language requiring a full Israel withdrawal.¹

on Resolution 242 during a *Meet the Press* interview some years later: “I was engaged in the negotiation for months of that resolution. That resolution did not say ‘total withdrawal.’”² This U.S. position had been fully coordinated with the British at the time. Indeed, George Brown, who had served as British foreign secretary in 1967 during Prime Minister Harold Wilson’s Labour government, summarized Resolution 242 as follows: “The proposal said, ‘Israel will withdraw from territories that were occupied,’ not ‘from the territories,’ which means Israel will not withdraw from all the territories.”³

In the wake of the Six-Day War, President Lyndon Johnson declared that “an immediate return to the situation as it was on June 4,” before the outbreak of hostilities, was “not a prescription for peace, but for renewed hostilities.” What was needed were “recognized boundaries” that would provide “security against terror, destruction and war.”

The meaning of UN Security Council Resolution 242 was absolutely clear to those who were involved in this drafting process. Thus, Joseph P. Sisco, who would serve as the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, commented

President Johnson: '67 Line a Prescription for Renewed Hostilities

President Johnson's insistence on protecting the territorial flexibility of Resolution 242 could be traced to his statements made on June 19, 1967, in the immediate wake of the Six-Day War. In fact, Johnson declared that "an immediate return to the situation as it was on June 4," before the outbreak of hostilities, was "not a prescription for peace, but for renewed hostilities." He stated that the old "truce lines" had been "fragile and violated." What was needed, in Johnson's view, were "recognized boundaries" that would provide "security against terror, destruction and war."⁴

Ambassador Goldberg would additionally note sometime later another aspect of the Johnson administration's

U.S. administrations would at times criticize Israel's construction practices in the eastern parts of Jerusalem that it had captured.

Within a number of years, U.S. diplomacy would reflect the idea that Israel was entitled to changes in the pre-1967 lines. At first, public expressions by the Nixon administration were indeed minimalist; Secretary of State William Rogers declared in 1969 that there would be "insubstantial alterations" of the 1967 lines. At the time, Rogers' policy was severely criticized by Stephen W. Schwebel, the Executive Director of the American Society of International Law, who would become the Legal Advisor of the U.S. Department of State and later serve on the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Schwebel reminded Rogers of Israel's legal rights in the West Bank in the *American Journal of International Law* (64\344,1970) when he wrote: "Where the prior holder of

In referring to the 1967 lines, Nixon told Kissinger: "you and I both know they [the Israelis] can't go back to the other borders."

policy that was reflected in the language of its UN proposals: "Resolution 242 in no way refers to Jerusalem, and this omission was deliberate."⁵ The U.S. was not about to propose the restoration of the status quo ante in Jerusalem either, even though successive

territory had seized that territory unlawfully, the state which subsequently takes that territory in the lawful exercise of self-defense has, against that prior holder, better title." In the international legal community there was an acute awareness that Jordan, the West

Bank's previous occupant prior to 1967, had illegally invaded the West Bank in 1948, while Israel captured the territory in a war of self-defense.

President Nixon: The Israelis "Can't Go Back" to the 1967 Borders

Rogers was soon replaced, in any case, by Henry Kissinger, Nixon's national security advisor, who significantly modified Rogers' position. Already in 1973, in subsequently disclosed private conversations with Kissinger, in referring to the 1967 lines, Nixon explicitly admitted: "you and I both know they [the Israelis] can't go back to the other borders."⁶ This became evident in September 1975, under the Ford administration, in the context of the Sinai II Disengagement Agreement. While the agreement covered a second Israeli pullout from the Sinai Peninsula, Israel's prime minister at the time, Yitzhak Rabin, achieved a series of understandings with the U.S. that covered other fronts of the Arab-Israeli peace process. For example, President

President Ford wrote to Prime Minister Rabin that the U.S. "will give great weight to Israel's position that any peace agreement with Syria must be predicated on Israel remaining on the Golan Heights."

Ford provided Prime Minister Rabin with a letter on the future of the Golan Heights that stated:

The U.S. has not developed a final position on the borders. Should it do so it will give great weight to Israel's

position that any peace agreement with Syria must be predicated on Israel remaining on the Golan Heights.⁷

This carefully drafted language did not detail whether the U.S. would actually accept Israeli sovereignty over parts of the Golan Heights or just the continued presence of the Israel Defense Forces on the Golan plateau. In either case, the Ford letter did not envision a full Israeli pullback to the 1967 lines or even minor modifications of the 1967 border near the Sea of Galilee. These details are not a matter for diplomatic historians alone, for the U.S. explicitly renewed its commitment to the Ford letter just before the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, when Secretary of State James Baker issued a letter of assurances to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. Moreover, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dispatched this author to obtain the recommitment of

President Reagan: I Can't Ask Israel to Return to the Pre-1967 Borders

It was the administration of President Ronald Reagan that most forcefully articulated Israel's right to defensible borders, just after President Carter appeared to give only lukewarm support for the U.S.-Israeli understandings of the Ford-Kissinger era. Reagan himself stated in his September 1, 1982, address that became known as the "Reagan Plan": "In the pre-1967 borders, Israel was barely ten miles wide at its narrowest point. The bulk of Israel's population lived within artillery range of hostile armies. I am not about to ask Israel to live that way again." Reagan came up with a flexible formula for Israeli withdrawal: "The extent to which Israel should be asked to give up territory will be heavily affected by the extent of the

It was the administration of President Ronald Reagan that most forcefully articulated Israel's right to defensible borders. Reagan himself stated: "In the pre-1967 borders, Israel was barely ten miles wide at its narrowest point. The bulk of Israel's population lived within artillery range of hostile armies. I am not about to ask Israel to live that way again."

the Clinton administration to the Ford letter, just prior to the opening of Israel-Palestinian negotiations over Hebron. Indeed, in 1996 the U.S. committed itself yet again.

peace and normalization."⁸ Secretary of State George Shultz was even more explicit about what this meant during a September 1988 address: "Israel will never negotiate from or return to the 1967 borders."⁹

What did Shultz mean by his

statement? Was he recognizing Israeli rights to retain large portions of the West Bank? A half year earlier, he demonstrated considerable diplomatic creativity in considering alternatives to a full Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines. He even proposed what was, in effect, a “functional compromise” in the West Bank, as opposed to a “territorial compromise.” Shultz was saying that the West Bank should be divided between Israel and the Jordanians according to different functions of government, and not in terms of drawing new internal borders. In an address to the Council on Foreign Relations in February 1988, he asserted: “the meaning of sovereignty, the meaning of territory, is changing, and what any national government can control, or what any unit that thinks it has sovereignty or jurisdiction over a certain area can control, is shifting gears.”¹⁰

In his memoirs, Shultz elaborated

to limited supplies of water, management of education, health, and other civic functions, and so forth.”¹¹ The net effect of this thinking was to protect Israel’s security interests and provide it with a defensible border that would be substantially different from the 1967 lines.

Secretary of State George Shultz was even more explicit: ***“Israel will never negotiate from or return to the 1967 borders.”***

on his 1988 address. He wrote that he had spoken to both Israeli and Jordanian leaders in the spirit of his speech and argued that “who controls what...would necessarily vary over such diverse functions as external security, maintenance of law and order, access

Clinton's Secretary of State Reaffirms: Israel Entitled to Defensible Borders

U.S. support for defensible borders had clearly become bipartisan and continued into the 1990s, even as the Palestinians replaced Jordan as the primary Arab claimant to the West Bank. At the time of the completion of the 1997 Hebron Protocol, Secretary of State Warren Christopher wrote a letter of assurances to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In the Christopher letter, the Clinton administration basically stated that it was not going to second-guess Israel about its security needs: “a hallmark of U.S. policy remains our commitment to work cooperatively to seek to meet the security needs that Israel identifies” (emphasis added). This meant that Israel would be the final arbiter of its defense needs. Christopher then added: “Finally, I would like to reiterate our position that Israel is entitled to secure and defensible borders (emphasis added), which should be directly negotiated and agreed with its neighbors.”¹²

In summary, there is no basis to the argument that the U.S. has traditionally demanded of Israel either a full withdrawal or a nearly full withdrawal from the territories it captured in the 1967 Six-Day War. This is particularly true of the West Bank and Gaza Strip where only armistice lines were drawn in 1949, reflecting where embattled armies had halted their advance and no permanent international borders existed. The only development that has altered this American stance in support of defensible borders in the

past involved changes in the Israeli position to which the U.S. responded.

The Unofficial Clinton/Barak Parameters Are Off the Table

For example, about two weeks before he completed his second term in office, President Bill Clinton presented his own plan for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on January 7, 2001. The Clinton parameters were partly based on the proposals made by Israel's prime minister, Ehud Barak, at the failed Camp David Summit of July 2000.

In the territorial sphere, Clinton spoke about Israel annexing “settlement blocs” in the West Bank. However, he made this annexation of territory by Israel conditional upon a “land swap” taking place, according to which Israel would concede territory under its sovereignty before 1967 in exchange for any new West Bank land. This “land swap” was not required by UN Resolution 242, but was a new Israeli concession made during the Barak government that Clinton adopted; it should be noted for the record, however, that Maj.-Gen. (res.) Danny Yatom, who served as the head of Barak's foreign and defense staff, has argued that Barak himself never offered these “land swaps” at Camp David.

Additionally, under the Clinton parameters, Israel was supposed to withdraw from the Jordan Valley (which Rabin sought to retain) and thereby give up on defensible borders. Instead, Clinton proposed an “international presence” to replace the Israel Defense Forces. This particular component of

the proposals severely compromised Israel's doctrine of self-reliance in matters of defense and seemed to ignore Israel's problematic history with the UN and other international forces in even more limited roles such as peace monitoring.

The Clinton parameters did not become official U.S. policy. After President George W. Bush came into office, U.S. officials informed the newly elected Sharon government that it would not be bound by proposals made by the Barak team at Camp David, which served as the basis for the Clinton parameters. In short, Clinton's retreat from defensible borders was off the table.

President Bush: It is Unrealistic to Expect a Return to the Armistice Lines of 1949

The best proof that the U.S. had readopted its traditional policy that Israel was entitled to defensible borders came from the letter of assurances written by President Bush to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on April 14, 2004, after the presentation in Washington of Israel's disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip. Bush wrote: "The United States reiterates its steadfast commitment to Israel's security, including secure and defensible borders, and to preserve and strengthen Israel's capability to deter and defend itself, by itself, against any threat or possible combination of threats."¹³ Here, then, was an implicit link suggested between the letter's reference to defensible borders and Israel's

President Bush wrote to Prime Minister Sharon on April 14, 2004: "In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949."

self-defense capabilities, by virtue of the fact that they were coupled together in the very same sentence.

Bush clearly did not envision Israel withdrawing to the 1967 lines. Later in his letter he stated: "In light of new realities on

the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949.” Bush did not use the term “settlement blocs,” as Clinton did, but appeared to be referring to the same idea. Less than a year later, on March 27, 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice explained on Israel Radio that “Israeli population centers” referred to “the large settlement blocs” in the West Bank.¹⁴

More significantly, Bush did not make the retention of “Israeli population centers” in the West Bank contingent upon Israel agreeing to land swaps, using territory under Israeli sovereignty from within the pre-1967 borders as Clinton had insisted. In that sense, Bush restored the original terms of reference in the peace process that had been contained in Resolution 242 by confining the territorial issue

for the Bush letter, as a whole, recognized clear-cut modifications of the pre-1967 lines. Moreover, by linking the idea of defensible borders to Israel’s defensive capabilities, as noted above, Bush was making clear that a “defensible border” had to improve Israel’s ability to provide for its own security. True, a “secure boundary,” as mentioned in Resolution 242, included that interpretation as well. But it could also imply a boundary that was secured by U.S. security guarantees, NATO troops, or even other international forces. Bush’s letter did not contain this ambiguity, but rather specifically tied defensible borders to Israel’s ability to defend itself.

On March 25, 2005, the U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Dan Kurtzer, was quoted in the Israeli daily *Yediot Ahronot* as saying that there was no U.S.-Israeli “understanding” over Israel’s retention of West Bank settlement blocs. Kurtzer denied the *Yediot* report. Yet

The Bush letter made clear that a “defensible border” had to improve Israel’s ability to provide for its own security.

to Israel’s east to the dispute over the ultimate status of the West Bank without involving any additional territorial exchanges.

Bush’s recognition of Israel’s right to defensible borders was the most explicit expression of the U.S. stand on the subject,

the story raised the question of what kind of commitment the Bush letter exactly constituted. In U.S. practice, a treaty is the strongest form of inter-state commitment, followed by an executive agreement (such as a Memorandum of Understanding

without congressional ratification). Still, an exchange of letters provides an international commitment as well. Kurtzer himself reiterated this point on Israel's Channel 10 television: "Those commitments are very, very firm with respect to these Israeli population centers; our expectation is that Israel is not going to be going back to the 1967 lines." When asked if these "population centers" were "settlement blocs," he replied: "That's correct."¹⁵

Bush has introduced the idea of a viable and contiguous Palestinian state, which has territorial implications. At a minimum, contiguity refers to creating an unobstructed connection between all the West Bank cities, so that a Palestinian could drive from Jenin to Hebron. Palestinians might construe American references to contiguity as including a Palestinian-controlled connection from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip, like the "safe passage" mentioned in the Oslo Accords.

State of Washington. Similarly, there is no such sovereign connection between the parts of other geographically separated states, like Oman. On February 21, 2005, President Bush clarified that his administration's call for territorial contiguity referred specifically to the West Bank.

While President Bush has called for a Palestinian state with territorial contiguity in the West Bank, there is no international legal right of states to have a sovereign connection between parts that are geographically separated: The U.S. does not have a sovereign territorial connection between Alaska and the State of Washington.

But this would entail bifurcating Israel in two. In any case, there is no international legal right of states to have a sovereign connection between parts that are geographically separated: The U.S. has no sovereign territorial connection between Alaska and the

Historically, the U.S. Has Not Insisted on Full Israeli Withdrawal

In conclusion, historically the U.S. has not insisted on a full Israeli withdrawal to the 1949 armistice lines from the territories that Israel captured in the 1967 War. Yet it is still possible to ask what value these American declarations have if they are made with the additional provision that the ultimate location of Arab-Israeli borders must be decided by the parties themselves. This is particularly true of the 2004 Bush letter which reiterates this point explicitly.

Clearly the U.S. cannot impose the Bush letter on Israel and the Palestinians, if they refuse to accept its terms. The Bush letter only updates and summarizes the U.S. view of the correct interpretation of UN Resolution 242 in any future negotiations. Its importance

the beginning of any future negotiations. It is tantamount to a diplomatic safety net for Israel.

- b. To the extent that other members of the Quartet (Russia, the EU, or the UN) propose that the borders of the Palestinian state in the future be the 1967 lines, the Bush letter essentially says that the U.S. will not be a party to such an initiative.

What is left now for Israel to do is to provide further details as to the territorial meaning of defensible borders and to reach a more specific understanding with the U.S. regarding its content.

emanates from two contexts:

- a. The fact that the April 2003 Quartet roadmap is silent on the subject of Israel's future borders and those of the Palestinian state that it proposed. At least the Bush letter protects Israel's vital interests prior to

Defensible Borders: An Integral Part of the American Diplomatic Lexicon

What is left now for Israel to do is to provide further details as to the territorial meaning of defensible borders and to reach a more specific understanding with the U.S. regarding its content, given the fact that it has become an integral part of the American diplomatic lexicon for the Arab-Israeli peace process.

In the future, would the United States remain sympathetic to Israel's security concerns so that such understandings can be reached? After all, much of the U.S. positioning on defensible borders began to be articulated during the Cold War. Additionally, in a post-Iraq War Middle East, in which the threat to Israel from its eastern front has been diminished in the immediate

the event that the intentions of Russia and China were to change in the future.

Second, Israel's need for defensible borders also has a context in the war on terrorism. If Israel concedes control over the Jordan Valley, for example, large-scale weapons smuggling to terrorist groups in the West Bank hills that dominate Israel's coastal plain would become more prevalent. The 9/11 Commission asserted that the struggle to transform the Middle East in order to undercut the threats from the new global terrorism will take decades.¹⁶ Thus, Israel has a sound basis for insisting that even after the 2003 Iraq War, its quest for defensible borders remains fully warranted.

Third, during the Clinton years, Washington was sympathetic to the idea of deploying UN and other international forces as a tool for peace-building. This was expressed in the 2001 Clinton proposals for placing international peacekeepers in the

The permanence of the changes in the Middle East in 2005 cannot be taken for granted by any defense planner. Even the U.S. retains residual capabilities in the event that the intentions of Russia and China were to change in the future.

term, would the U.S. still back defensible borders? There is a threefold answer to this question. First, the permanence of the changes in the Middle East in 2005 cannot be taken for granted by any defense planner. Even the U.S. retains residual capabilities in

Jordan Valley instead of the Israel Defense Forces. Clearly, enthusiasm for such UN deployments has drastically declined since then, with the disasters that have become associated with UN peacekeeping missions throughout the last decade.

An alternative that might be raised by those who nonetheless seek to remove Israeli forces from the Jordan Valley would be the deployment of U.S. forces, or a non-UN multilateral body like the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in Egyptian Sinai. Yet such a course of action could pose great risks for the troops involved. In the sparsely-populated Sinai Peninsula, U.S. troops are isolated; they only monitor on the ground the implementation of an inter-state agreement between Israel and Egypt. In contrast, in the Jordan Valley they would be closer to Palestinian population centers and involved in a counter-terrorist mission.

Under such conditions, one cannot rule out attacks against Western forces of this sort, like the bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983. While Hamas and Islamic Jihad have not launched attacks against Western targets overseas, nonetheless,

three Americans, although it has not been ascertained whether or not Islamist motives were involved.

In short, there are no workable substitutes for Israel protecting itself with defensible borders, given the array of threats it is likely to still face.

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they would view any Western presence in what became Palestinian territory through the same ideological prism as militant Islamist groups in the Arabian Peninsula.¹⁷ The Palestinians already attacked a U.S. diplomatic convoy in the Gaza Strip on October 15, 2003, killing

Appendix 2

Letter from U.S. President George W. Bush to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, April 14, 2004¹⁸

His Excellency Ariel Sharon
Prime Minister of Israel

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter setting out your disengagement plan.

The United States remains hopeful and determined to find a way forward toward a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. I remain committed to my June 24, 2002, vision of two states living side by side in peace and security as the key to peace, and to the roadmap as the route to get there.

We welcome the disengagement plan you have prepared, under which Israel would withdraw certain military installations and all settlements from Gaza, and withdraw certain military installations and settlements in the West Bank. These steps described in the plan will mark real progress toward realizing my June 24, 2002, vision, and make a real contribution towards peace. We also understand that, in this context, Israel believes it is important to bring new opportunities to the Negev and the Galilee. We are hopeful that steps pursuant to this plan, consistent with my vision, will remind all states and parties of their own obligations under the roadmap.

The United States appreciates the risks such an undertaking represents. I therefore want to reassure you on several points.

First, the United States remains committed to my vision and to its implementation as described in the roadmap. The United States will do its utmost to prevent any attempt by anyone to impose any other plan. Under the roadmap, Palestinians must undertake an immediate cessation of armed activity and all acts of violence against Israelis anywhere, and all official Palestinian institutions must end incitement against Israel. The Palestinian leadership must act decisively against terror, including sustained, targeted, and effective operations to stop terrorism and dismantle terrorist capabilities and infrastructure. Palestinians must undertake a comprehensive and fundamental political reform that includes a strong parliamentary democracy and an empowered prime minister.

Second, there will be no security for Israelis or Palestinians until they and all states, in the region and beyond, join together to fight terrorism and dismantle terrorist organizations. The United States reiterates its steadfast commitment to Israel's security, including secure, defensible

borders, and to preserve and strengthen Israel's capability to deter and defend itself, by itself, against any threat or possible combination of threats.

Third, Israel will retain its right to defend itself against terrorism, including to take actions against terrorist organizations. The United States will lead efforts, working together with Jordan, Egypt, and others in the international community, to build the capacity and will of Palestinian institutions to fight terrorism, dismantle terrorist organizations, and prevent the areas from which Israel has withdrawn from posing a threat that would have to be addressed by any other means. The United States understands that after Israel withdraws from Gaza and/or parts of the West Bank, and pending agreements on other arrangements, existing arrangements regarding control of airspace, territorial waters, and land passages of the West Bank and Gaza will continue.

The United States is strongly committed to Israel's security and well-being as a Jewish state. It seems clear that an agreed, just, fair and realistic framework for a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue as part of any final status agreement will need to be found through the establishment of a Palestinian state, and the settling of Palestinian refugees there, rather than in Israel.

As part of a final peace settlement, Israel must have secure and recognized borders, which should emerge from negotiations between the parties in accordance with UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338. In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949, and all previous efforts to negotiate a two-state solution have reached the same conclusion. It is realistic to expect that any final status agreement will only be achieved on the basis of mutually agreed changes that reflect these realities.

I know that, as you state in your letter, you are aware that certain responsibilities face the State of Israel. Among these, your government has stated that the barrier being erected by Israel should be a security rather than political barrier, should be temporary rather than permanent, and therefore not prejudice any final status issues including final borders, and its route should take into account, consistent with security needs, its impact on Palestinians not engaged in terrorist activities.

As you know, the United States supports the establishment of a Palestinian state that is viable, contiguous, sovereign, and independent, so that the Palestinian people can build their own future in accordance with my vision set forth in June 2002 and with the path set forth in the roadmap. The United States will join with others in the international community to foster the development of democratic political institutions and new leadership committed to those institutions, the reconstruction of civic institutions, the growth of a free and prosperous

economy, and the building of capable security institutions dedicated to maintaining law and order and dismantling terrorist organizations.

A peace settlement negotiated between Israelis and Palestinians would be a great boon not only to those peoples but to the peoples of the entire region. Accordingly, the United States believes that all states in the region have special responsibilities: to support the building of the institutions of a Palestinian state; to fight terrorism, and cut off all forms of assistance to individuals and groups engaged in terrorism; and to begin now to move toward more normal relations with the State of Israel. These actions would be true contributions to building peace in the region.

Mr. Prime Minister, you have described a bold and historic initiative that can make an important contribution to peace. I commend your efforts and your courageous decision which I support. As a close friend and ally, the United States intends to work closely with you to help make it a success.

Sincerely,
George W. Bush

Notes

1. Premier Kosygin wrote to President Johnson on November 21, 1967, requesting that the UK draft resolution, that was to become Resolution 242, include the word “the” before the word “territories.” Johnson wrote back the same day refusing the Soviet request. The Soviet deputy foreign minister, Kuznetsov, tried the same day in New York to insert the word “all,” but was rebuffed. See *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1967-1968, volume XIX, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War 1967*, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonlb/xix/28070.htm>
2. Adnan Abu Odeh, Nabil Elaraby, Meir Rosenne, Dennis Ross, Eugene Rostow, and Vernon Turner, *UN Security Council Resolution 242: The Building Block of Peacemaking* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993), p. 88.
3. See Meir Rosenne, in *ibid.*, p. 31.
4. Speech by President Lyndon Johnson, June 19, 1967; <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/US-Israel/lbjpeace.html>
5. Arthur J. Goldberg, Letter to the Editor of *The New York Times*, March 5, 1980.
6. Henry Kissinger, *Crisis: The Anatomy of Two Major Foreign Policy Crises* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003), p. 140.
7. Letter from President Ford to Prime Minister Rabin, September 1, 1975,; http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Peace/ford_rabin_letter.html
8. Speech by President Ronald Reagan, September 1, 1982; <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/resourc/speeches/1982/90182d.htm>
9. Secretary of State George P. Shultz’s address, September 16, 1988; http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1079/is_n2140_v88/ai_6876262
10. George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1993), p. 1022.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 1023.
12. Letter of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, January 17, 1997; <http://mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH00qo0>
13. Exchange of letters between President Bush and Prime Minister Sharon, April 14, 2004; <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Reference+Documents/Exchange+of+letters+Sharon-Bush+14-Apr-2004.htm>
14. Aluf Benn, “PM: Understanding With U.S. About West Bank Settlement Blocs Holds Firm,” *Ha’aretz*, March 27, 2005.
15. <http://www.usembassy-israel.org.il/publish/mission/amb/032505b.html>
16. *The 9/11 Commission Report* (Authorized Edition) (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), p. 363.
17. “Will a Gaza ‘ Hamas-stan’ Become a Future Al-Qaeda Sanctuary?” Yaakov Amidror and David Keyes, *Jerusalem Viewpoints*, November 1, 2004; <http://jcpa.org/jl/vp524.htm>
18. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases2004/04/20040414-3.html>









About the Authors

Dr. Yuval Steinitz is Chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee as well as its Subcommittee on Intelligence and the Secret Services. A Knesset member since 1999, Dr. Steinitz previously taught metaphysics and the philosophy of science at the University of Haifa, during which time he published four books on philosophy and numerous articles in professional journals.

Maj.-Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror, Director of the Institute for Contemporary Affairs (ICA) at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, commanded Israel's National Defense College and headed the research and assessment division of Israeli military intelligence. He also served as the military secretary to Israel's Minister of Defense and was involved in preparing for Israel's negotiations with its Arab neighbors. He was the Ira Weiner Fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Since his retirement from the IDF, Gen. Amidror has served as an advisor on military and security matters to various government agencies.

Dr. Meir Rosenne has served as Israel's Ambassador to the United States and to France. He was one of the principal framers of the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel, and served as legal advisor to the Israel Foreign Ministry and to various Israel-U.S. and Israel-Syrian negotiations. He served as CEO of State of Israel Bonds, and is a senior partner at Balter Guth Aloni & Co. Dr. Rosenne received his B.A. in international relations from the University of Paris (Sorbonne) in 1953, followed by his LL.M. and Ph.D. (with honors) in international law from the Sorbonne in 1957.

Dr. Dore Gold, President of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, served as Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations (1997-1999). Previously he served as foreign policy advisor to former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, at which time he served as an envoy to Jordan, Egypt, the Palestinian Authority, and the Gulf States. He was involved in the negotiations over the 1998 Wye Agreement, the 1997 Hebron Protocol, and in 1996 concluded the negotiations with the U.S., Lebanon, Syria, and France for the creation of the Monitoring Group for Southern Lebanon. In 1991, he served as an advisor to the Israeli delegation to the Madrid Peace Conference. Dr. Gold completed his B.A. (1975), M.A. (1976), and Ph.D. (1984) at Columbia University. In 1978 he earned the certificate of Columbia University's Middle East Institute.

Dr. Gold is the author of *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism* (Regnery, 2003); and *Tower of Babel: How the United Nations Has Fueled Global Chaos* (Crown Forum, 2004).

About the Defensible Borders Initiative

The Defensible Borders Initiative of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs is the culmination of efforts by some of Israel's leading military strategists, diplomats, international jurists, and parliamentarians to raise the international profile of Israel's longstanding and internationally sanctioned rights and requirements for secure and recognized boundaries. This monograph is the first step in a much broader public effort that was initially launched on October 19, 2004, with a joint conference held by the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

The participants in the Defensible Borders Initiative have long recognized that the far-reaching concessions Israel has been prepared to make for peace since 1993 with both its Syrian and Palestinian neighbors have resulted in an unfortunate irony. The majority of the international community has forgotten what had been axiomatic for most of the world after Israel miraculously vanquished six attacking Arab armies in the Six-Day War of 1967: UN Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967, granted Israel an international legal and moral mandate to retain some lands in the disputed West Bank and Gaza Strip in order to establish defensible borders that could protect the country's citizens and vital interests from further external attacks.

The goal of the Defensible Borders Initiative is to restore the broad understanding that existed in much of the international community between 1967 and 1993 on the need for defensible borders for Israel. This consensus was only undermined after the widespread Palestinian delegitimization of Israel's basic human and international legal rights during and after the collapse of the Oslo peace process. With the publication of this study, the Jerusalem Center hopes to contribute to an increased understanding of Israel's national security needs during the debate over the future of the Arab-Israeli peace process.

The broader Defensible Borders Initiative will include briefings, seminars, and further published reports that will expand on Israel's defense requirements and its legal rights. With Israel at a crossroads in a volatile Middle East, where it is still uncertain whether terrorism and tyranny will continue to prevail or freedom and democracy will spread, defensible borders remain a vital safeguard for Israel's future survival.

Dan Diker, Project Director

The Defensible Borders Partnership Group

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The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs is an independent, non-profit institute for policy research founded in 1976. Since then, the Center has produced hundreds of studies by leading experts on a wide range of international topics. Dr. Dore Gold, Israel's former ambassador to the UN, has headed the Jerusalem Center since 2000.

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- **Anti-Semitism After the Holocaust** - Initiated and directed by Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld, this program includes conferences, seminars, and publications discussing restitution, the academic boycott, Holocaust denial, and anti-Semitism in the Arab world, European countries, and the post-Soviet states.
- **Jerusalem in International Diplomacy** - Dr. Dore Gold analyzes the legal and historic rights of Israel in Jerusalem according to existing agreements and UN documents. A companion research study by Justus Reid Weiner looks at *Illegal Construction in Jerusalem: A Variation on an Alarming Global Phenomenon* (2003).
- **The Israeli Economy and Privatization** - This comprehensive, 10-year project has studied the application and impact of privatization policy in Israel. Sponsored by the Milken Institute, the project includes nine published volumes in Hebrew and English.
- **Israel's Political System** - The Jerusalem Center has published academic analyses of every

Israeli election campaign since 1981 in its *Israel at the Polls* series.

- Israel-Europe Project - Seeking to present Israel's case in Europe in cooperation with European research institutions
- *Jewish Political Studies Review* - A scholarly journal founded in 1989