

Fundamental Early Warning

Israel's National Security Concept is Irrelevant

1.15.2007

Essence of the Warning¹

In 2006, Israel suffered three political and military defeats: the freezing of the Convergence Plan in the West Bank and the lack of military success in both Gaza and Lebanon. These results exposed a **crisis in Israel's National Security Concept**.

Israel conducts itself as if it is progressing towards a secure future as a Jewish and democratic state by ending its control over the Palestinian population and establishing a Palestinian state based on the principle of 'two states for two nations'. This process is apparently implemented on the basis of Israeli strength.

In practice, **strong trends undermine some of the principles of Israel's National Security Concept and render it irrelevant**. First, a strategy is being consolidated that is designed to bring to the internal collapse of Israel as a state via, among other means, continuation of Israel's control over the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank; US failures in the region and the attack on the pro-Israel lobby in the US; the rising stature of Iran, the resistance to Israel and the efficiency of the tools that it uses in service of this logic.

These trends have brought Israel to a **strategic inferiority regarding its national security**, that enhance repetitive failures of political or military moves designed to guarantee the existence of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. At the same time, **a reality is liable to emerge which promotes the establishment of a single Arab / Palestinian / Islamist state in place of the State of Israel and under Iranian hegemony**.

The goal of this document is to highlight the irrelevancy of Israel's National Security Concept and the pressing need to update it and to translate it to a policy based on political, economic and military resources. **This irrelevancy is not being adequately addressed by the investigation committees which were established following the war in Lebanon**.

The necessary change in the National Security Concept can include such steps as the establishment of a Palestinian State with Provisional Borders, a political initiative vis-à-vis Syria or successful military action against Iran.

Finally, **the weakness of the Israel government is a fundamental structural problem which makes it difficult for Israel to deal with the challenges it faces**. The short, unstable tenures and the division between legislative and executive branches complicate long-term policy design and implementation. This is in contrast to the stability of the leadership of Iran and the Resistance Network and the systematic nature with which they advance their goals.

Introduction

1. **Three setbacks** – In 2006, Israel suffered three political and military setbacks:

¹ Parts of this warning are taken from the 'Fundamental Early Warning' which was published under the title "Terror is an Existential Threat". Some of the trends that were identified in the earlier warning are also relevant to this warning.

- a. **The Convergence Plan has been frozen / cancelled** – The Convergence Plan was considered the current government's central policy for securing Israel's future. The war in Lebanon and the firing of Qassam rockets led to the plan's removal from the government's agenda.
 - b. **Lack of success in Gaza and Lebanon** – In both arenas, Israel has proven unable to achieve its political and military objectives, despite its military superiority over its enemies.
2. These results exposed gaps between Israel's Defense Policy (which refers to the defense establishment) and its National Security Concept (which refers to all the national resources) on the one hand, and concurrent regional trends, on the other hand.²
 3. The objective of this paper is to highlight the gap between Israel's National Security Concept and the changing reality in order to examine its significance and suggest potential policy options.

This paper addresses Israel's National Security Concept and highlights the basic problems within it. It does address either Israel's Defense Policy or the IDF's operational policy.

Existing Perception: A Jewish and democratic state from a position of strength

Israel's conduct is based upon a worldview characterized by the following assumptions:

4. **Ending control over the Palestinians is vital for the future of Israel as a Jewish and democratic State** – This assumption is shared by the majority of the Israeli public and has been adopted by most Zionist political parties. The political debate focuses on the structure of the political process, its objective and its management.
5. **The Palestinians want 'End of Occupation' and establishment of a Palestinian state** – The objective of the Palestinian national struggle is the realization of the Palestinian Right to Self Determination and the establishment of a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank. For part of the population, this is a final objective (See "[Principle of Historic Compromise](#)"), whereas for others, this is only a stage within the [Phased Plan](#) which aims for the destruction of the State of Israel (See "[Ethos of Struggle](#)").
6. **'Two states for two nations' based on the 'Clinton Ideas'** – The principle of 'two states for two nations' is the basis for a political arrangement with the Palestinians, which is agreed upon by the international community, the Arab states and Israel. The outline for a permanent agreement will be based, officially or unofficially, on the 'Clinton Ideas'.
7. **The IDF guarantees Israel's existence** – Israel, by means of the IDF, is the strongest military power in the Middle East. The IDF has successfully established decisive military superiority over all its enemies. Thus, the strength of the IDF guarantees the existence of the State of Israel.

² See Israel Tal's distinction between the concepts "National Security", "Defense Policy" and "Security Doctrine". National Security deals with securing the existence of the nation and defending its vital interests and national objectives. The Defense Policy is a national program for defending the state, which consists of remaining prepared and alert for a possible war; the Security Doctrine derives from the Defense Policy and deals with IDF operations (See Israel Tal, **National Security**, Tel Aviv, Zamura-Beitan, 1996, pp. 15, 52-53).

8. **Terror is *not* an existential threat** – Despite ongoing terrorist attacks, its significance is *not* existential. Through the IDF and the General Security Services, the number of casualties is not high and the country's economy is not drastically affected by terror.
9. **Supremacy of military logic** – Based on the strength of the IDF, Israel sees the military component as the primary component of its National Security Concept and the basis for every strategic move. Consequently, at times, Israel has no true political agenda which is backed by political, economic or military resources.³

Moreover, there is significant disparity between Israel's investments in its military tools as opposed to its political or economic tools.⁴ In addition, the defense establishment's influence in designing the National Security Concept is greater than the influence of any other establishment.⁵

10. **The US is the world's only superpower. Israel and the US have a "special relationship"** – The alliance between the US and Israel is stable and based upon common interests and values. Likewise, Israel depends on the activity of the pro-Israel lobby and the American Jewish community.
11. **Israel relies on its strength** – The combination between Israel's military and economic strength and its alliance with the US places Israel in a position of power when dealing with other regional countries.⁶
12. **Preventing Iran's nuclear program** – The existential military threat posed to Israel stems from Iran's drive for regional hegemony and the destruction of Israel. Iran's nuclear program is a central element in the process of building Iran's hegemony and thus must be prevented.
13. **Problems with policy, not structure** – Israel does not examine the consequences of its governmental structure on its capacity to deal with national security challenges.

³ See Prime Minister Olmert's speech: "A Prime Minister has to run a country, he does not need an agenda" (Ben and Werter, [Haaretz](#), 09/22/06, in Hebrew).

⁴ Currently, the Defense budget amounts to 50.6bn. NIS. The total national annual budget is 282bn. NIS. Hence, the defense budget equals a sixth of the entire national budget. (Zarachia, [Haaretz](#), 12/31/06, in Hebrew) In comparison, the budget of the education ministry amounts to 25bn. NIS (figures from the annual budget proposal on the [Ministry of Finance's website](#)). In addition, Dan Meridor, head of the Commission which examined Israel's Defense Policy, warned about the increase of the defense budget (Besock, [The Marker](#), 12/18/06).

⁵ See, for example, conclusion of the State comptroller's report on the National Security Agency (2006), which states that the Agency is based on the excesses of the security establishment (Besock, [Haaretz](#), 10/12/06, in Hebrew). See also the speech of Giora Eiland, former National Security Agency head, at the second Reut Institute conference (7/11/06) on how the security establishment influences the division of the national budget. See also the government's decision to increase the defense budget for 2007 (following the war in Lebanon) at the expense of other ministries (Plotzker, [Ynet](#), 12/20/06).

⁶ See PM Olmert's speech in Sde-Boker: "Israel is a strong state. Do not be fooled by disagreements amongst us, the political disputes and the sadness we reveal at times. Even in battle we are strong, despite many victims in a violent battle. Even if this battle entails compromising on our comfort and quality of life, the State of Israel has proven its strength in the past and still does so today" ([Prime Minister Speech](#) at a ceremony commemorating David and Paula Ben-Gurion, Sde-Boker, 11/27/06, in Hebrew).

14. **Israel's defeat in Lebanon and Gaza is of a 'technical' nature**⁷ – The investigation following the war in Lebanon primarily focuses on the IDF's operational policy, intelligence failures, logistics, as well as command and control. Thus, strategic national security problems are not adequately examined.⁸

Changing Reality: towards a single Arab / Palestinian / Islamic State under Iranian Hegemony

In practice, emerging trends undermine the aforementioned basic assumptions and render them irrelevant.

15. **"The Resistance Network"**⁹ is a new type of enemy – The concept "Resistance Network" refers to a plurality of actors, of different types, with various aims and targets. Links among the actors are created through alliances, cooperation and network formation to carry out the struggle against Israel. For some of the actors, the objective of the struggle is the military destruction of Israel or politically abolishing Israel by denying its right to exist (See "Basic De-legitimization of Israel" and the concept "Permanent Resistance to Israel").
16. **The Resistance Network's logic is political: to bring about Israel's implosion** – The Resistance Network's organizing logic is political. Its objective is to bring to Israel's internal implosion similar to the collapse of South Africa and the former USSR, which

⁷ Technical problems are recurrent and repeated. The solution to these issues can be found within the framework of existing knowledge. In crisis situations, organizations as well as people tend to err in detection of the problem; hence, they will also be mistaken in their detection of the solution. The tendency is to seek a solution within familiar and known realms. (See the concept of "Adaptive Work" in Heifetz Ronald, **Leadership Without Easy Answers**, Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1997, pp. 8, 35).

⁸ The mandate of the Winograd Commission was limited to examining the *conduct* of the political echelons and the security establishment from the year 2000 and during the war in Lebanon (Benn, [Haaretz](#), 09/15/06, in Hebrew). The mandate does *not* include an examination of the National Security Concept, which comprises the foundations of their actions.

⁹ The Reut Institute recognizes the following characteristics of the Resistance Network:

- a) **The Resistance Network is a systemic phenomenon** – The Resistance Network is composed of a complex variety of actors, comprising states and organizations, fulfilling different tasks including: 'initiator', 'facilitator', and 'executors'. Every actor can fulfill different tasks within the Network, in other words initiate actions, help with the execution or be the executor, according to the circumstances.
- b) **Destabilizing the perception of the state and undermining local government** – The Resistance Network acts against the West and Israel. Therefore, it undermines moderate governments in the region, by attacking the government's monopoly on the use of force, with the demand to broaden its influence. This action prevents success of Israel's military operations.
- c) **The Network and globalization** – The Resistance Network exploits the global environment, characterized by a de-centralized and interconnected structure, a variety of logics, small groups bearing important influence, the fast flow of information and rapid mobility.
- d) **The expressions of the Resistance Network are diverse** – Terror, basic de-legitimization of Israel, actions aimed at thwarting the agenda of cooperation with Israel and the West on the two-states solution, and promoting the establishment of one Arab/Palestinian/Islamic state in place of Israel.

Currently, Iran is the principal driving force and ideological source of inspiration of the Resistance Network.

collapsed as a result of internal socio-political pressure, de-legitimization and international political and economic pressure.¹⁰

The Resistance Network's military logic is secondary. The Resistance Network is conscious of Israel's military superiority. Thus it avoids, to the extent possible, direct military confrontation with Israel in which it might be defeated.¹¹ At the same time, the Resistance Network prevents Israel from decisive military victories or political achievements via terror and guerilla warfare.

To summarize, **the Resistance Network executes an integrated, multi-pronged strategy against Israel:**

- a) **Preventing sustainable achievements** – Use of terror and other tools to prevent Israel from any sustainable military or political achievements, by agreement or through unilateral moves, that promote an end of Israeli control over the Palestinians and guaranteeing Israel's existence;¹²
- b) **Promoting the establishment of a single Palestinian / Arab / Islamic State instead of Israel;**
- c) **Denying Israel's right to exist** through Basic De-legitimization of Israel.

Hence, in the last decade, the Resistance Network has succeeded in preventing Israel from achieving either decisive victory on the battlefield or political achievements which would secure Israel's existence as a Jewish and democratic state, either via negotiations or unilateral moves.

17. **Continuation of 'occupation' accelerates Israel's implosion; the Resistance Network does not seek 'End of Occupation'** – The Resistance Network understands that the end of Israel's control over the Palestinians is an essential Israeli interest, and that continuation of Israel's control over the Palestinians will accelerate Israel's collapse from within.

Therefore, the end of Israeli control over the Palestinians, and the transformation of the present conflict into a 'border conflict' through the establishment of a Palestinian state with *provisional* borders, are a strategic threat for the Resistance Network, as this would erode the legitimacy for continuing their struggle against Israel.

This would be even more enhanced for scenarios including the establishment of *permanent* borders, ending the Israeli-Palestinian or the Israeli-Lebanese conflicts, and securing Finality of Claims between all sides.¹³

¹⁰ See the speech of Iranian President Ahmadinejad: "Israel is on a path of collapse. The former USSR disappeared, and this will also be the destiny of the Zionist Regime" (See Cohen, [Ynet](#), 12/12/06, in Hebrew). See also Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah's spider-web theory (05/26/00) regarding Israel's implosion via internal political issues (See Barel, [Haaretz](#), 07/17/06, in Hebrew).

¹¹ Nasrallah admitted that had he known Israel's reaction would be so severe, he would not have ordered the kidnapping of the Israeli soldiers (See Melman, [Haaretz](#), 08/29/06, in Hebrew).

¹² The Resistance Network has successfully thwarted the political-strategic Oslo process. In retrospect, it has been proven that relations between Iran and Palestinian terror organizations facilitated the major terror attacks of 1996 (See Shaul Shay, **The Axis of Evil**, Herzlyia: IDC, 2003). Furthermore, the subsequent al-Aqsa Intifada (09/2000) blocked the entire political process.

¹³ See the "Shebaa Farms" syndrome. Following the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon, Hizbullah chose the Shebaa Farms as a new catalyst to perpetuate the struggle against Israel. This is exemplary of the tendency to prevent the Finality of Claims and to expand the demands every time anew. (See "Nasrallah's next demand", Rubinstein, [Haaretz](#), 08/05/06, in Hebrew)

18. **IDF operational policy is irrelevant (but is supposed to be updated following the investigation committees established following the war in Lebanon)** – Following the war in Lebanon, Israel's Defense Policy and the IDF's operational policy have been rendered irrelevant. The Meridor Commission raised questions concerning the following concepts: "deterrence," "early warning," "victory," "transferring the war to the enemy's territory," and more. Furthermore, the erosion of the central governments' power in neighboring countries, particularly Lebanon and the PA, neutralizes central components of the IDF's operational policy.

The investigation committees, established following the war in Lebanon, deal with the IDF's operational policy and are meant to bring about change within this component.

19. **US power is declining; the pro-Israel lobby is under attack** – As a result of the failure of its democratization project and setbacks in fighting terror, the US faces strategic concerns throughout the Middle East: in Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and the PA.

Consequently, a new discourse is arising within the US and it is reassessing its interests in the region. This may lead to a divergence between US and Israeli interests.

Furthermore, US ability to act as a plausible mediator between Israel and Arab countries has been considerably eroded.

Erosion of the United States' stature in the region affects Israel's stature as well and the way Israel is perceived by its enemies.

In addition, the pro-Israel lobby and the American Jewish community are under attack, probably of an anti-Semitic nature, questioning their loyalty towards the US. They are accused of placing Israel's interests before US interests and pressuring American decision makers in the White House and Congress. For proponents of this view, both the war in Iraq and a potential military attack on Iran are portrayed as serving Israel's interests rather than those of the US.

20. **Emerging Iranian Hegemony** – Iran is currently seeking hegemonic power over the Middle East and becoming a global actor.¹⁴ To serve these objectives, Iran seeks to contain Israel's power, push the US out of the region, create divisions within the UN Security Council (in particular among the US, Russia and China), weaken the international community's tools, as well as to secure stability and calm around its borders.

Iran uses the following tools: a global terrorist network, the Resistance Network, long-term strategic alliances and economic agreements (in particular with Russia and China), development of the Shiite Crescent and the global Shiite community, and development of its nuclear program and developing its military and strategic capabilities.

Iran is leading its struggle against Israel on various fronts: developing its nuclear program and acquiring long-range missiles; military, political and economic support to Hizbullah

¹⁴ Iranian Hegemony is characterized by several components: a) acceptance of its Islamic regime and its recognition (similarly to Putin's immunity or that of the Communist regime in China), ceasing attempts to bring the government down and securing conditions for its stability; b) guarantees for realizing its economic potential, based on its oil and natural gas resources (free flow to its consumers across the sea or on the continent); c) military guarantees for territorial integrity, primarily via its nuclear program, based on the North Korean Precedent; d) veto power on regional processes, such as the Israeli-Palestinian peace process; e) recognizing Iran as a leading international actor and as possessing regional hegemony; f) spreading Islamic revolution in the Middle East and the world and advancing Iran's agenda, including the elimination of Israel.

and the Palestinian resistance; developing a global terrorist network which threatens Jewish communities and Israelis worldwide; financial and military support to Syria including signing of a strategic defense agreement; and a policy of Basic De-legitimization of Israel.

Significance

21. **Israel faces a strategic inferiority in its National Security** – The Resistance Network has developed political and military means that prevent Israel's attempts to create military or political breakthroughs in its national security towards guaranteeing its existence as a Jewish and democratic state.

Israel's vision stands in opposition to the Resistance Network's vision. Israel is trying to implement a reality of two states for two nations, on the basis of its military strength and deterrence power, leaning on its alliance with the US and moderate countries in the region. In contrast, the Resistance Network aspires to implement a reality of a single Palestinian / Arab / Islamic state under a nuclear Iranian hegemony.

The significance of this strategic inferiority is that Israel faces a growing danger of defeat in future battles against the Resistance Network.

22. **The challenge may still lie ahead** – The trends indicating the growing strength of the Resistance Network and of the Iranian hegemony and the erosion of US power and moderate countries' alliances, have not yet reached their peak.

Therefore the challenge might still be before us. Iran might become a nuclear power, increasing its regional power; the eventual American withdrawal from Iraq might affect its status and that of its allies; Syria might launch military or political initiatives to undermine the status quo; Siniora's government might collapse, in which case Hizbullah may take over Lebanon; the PA might collapse or Fatah could lose future elections in the PA; stability in Jordan and Egypt – to the extent that it exists – might deteriorate.

23. **The commissions of inquiry on the war in Lebanon will not provide solutions for Israel's National Security** – The investigation committees, established following the war in Lebanon, deal with 'technical' problems or with problems in Israel's Defense Policy or the IDF's operational policy. They *cannot* provide solutions for the strategic inferiority of Israel's National Security Concept.¹⁵

Furthermore, Israel's Defense Policy will become increasingly likely to fail as long as Israel's National Security Concept remains irrelevant.

24. **Updating Israel's Defense Policy is crucial in any case** – Israel can defeat its enemies on the battlefield and advance its objectives, even if Israel's National Security Concept is *not* relevant (conversely, Israel could be defeated on the battlefield, even if its National Security Concept *is* relevant). Thus, updating the Defense Policy as a result of the investigative process following the Lebanon war is critical.

25. **The most essential type of commission – one empowered to revise the National Security Concept – has not been established** – Military superiority does not mean strategic superiority. In other words, Israel may be militarily superior in every single arena, but may still be strategically inferior in the face of its enemies' strategy and capacity to unite forces (See The Resistance Network).

¹⁵ The Meridor Commission was established by former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon with the objective of examining Israel's Defense Policy. The Inquiry's findings were submitted in April 2006.

26. **There is a gap between the nature of the challenge and the capacity of the Israeli government** – Facing the challenges posed by the Resistance Network calls for continuous multi-pronged cooperation in long-term planning, decision-making and implementation. However, the Israeli political system is characterized by instability, short tenures and deep rifts between legislative and executive branches. Hence, there is a gap between the nature of the challenge Israel faces and the tools it has to confront the challenge.
27. **Ending control over the Palestinians is growing distant while its price is rising** – It is becoming increasingly difficult for Israel to end its control over the Palestinians, while Arab / Palestinian / Islamic forces grow stronger and work towards sustaining Israel's occupation in the West Bank. The time factor leads to a situation whereby Israel will have "to pay" more, while it "receives" less.
- Therefore, the chances for a direct and mutual permanent agreement are decreasing. As a consequence, the establishment of a Palestinian state will likely have to occur through unilateral processes, with the support of a third party.
28. **Israel's dependency on the international community is growing** – As a consequence of the aforementioned trends, Israel's dependency on regional and international players other than the US is growing. The more it appears that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be solved via direct negotiations, the greater the tendency to internationalize the conflict.¹⁶
- Hence, ending the war in Lebanon required establishing a security regime on Israel's northern border, cooperating with international forces, UN resolution 1701, reinforcement of UNIFIL and understandings with Russia.
- Similarly, the Iranian threat requires cooperation with international actors such as Russia, China, the European Union, moderate Arab states and Iran's neighboring countries.¹⁷
29. **Terror is an existential threat** – The danger of terror used by the Resistance Network lies not in the amount of damage or instability it causes, but rather in its ability to thwart Israel's main actions towards securing its existence. Therefore, terror is an existential challenge.
30. **The trend: A Single Arab / Palestinian / Islamic state under Iranian Hegemony** – The strategy of the Resistance Network led by Iran has become more relevant than Israel's strategy. As a consequence, the Resistance Network's agenda overpowers Israel's agenda and promotes the reality of a single Arab / Palestinian / Islamic state under Iranian Hegemony in place of the State of Israel.

Policy Options

31. **Updating the National Security Concept is an Adaptive Challenge** – According to Ron Heifetz's definition, an adaptive challenge is characterized by the fact that the essence of the problem and the designing of the solution requiring knowledge acquisition.¹⁸

¹⁶ For example, for Israel to implement the Disengagement plan, it needed an arrangement with Egypt and the European Union. See also the models of international intervention at the Rafah border crossing and the UNIFIL model in Lebanon 2006.

¹⁷ See Erlanger, [New York Times](#), 11/13/06.

¹⁸ See Heifetz, Ronald, **Leadership Without Easy Answers**, (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1997), p.35.

In light of this definition, the crisis in Israel's National Security Concept is an adaptive challenge. Defining the problem and designing the solution demand a continuous process of learning.

32. **Updating the National Security Concept represents a crucial challenge and should be Israel's highest priority** – This process should be based upon a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary understanding of Israel's objectives, its playing field, the tools which Israel has at its disposal, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of Israel, its allies and its enemies.¹⁹
33. **Stabilizing and consolidating the government** – A vital element in facing the challenges posed by the Resistance Network is consolidating Israel's ability to implement continuous cross-agency cooperation in planning, decision-making and implementation.

Such a change calls for electoral reform in order to stabilize and consolidate the government. The objective of such a central change is to ensure longer and more stable tenures, and to create a system in which the Prime Minister, the government and the Knesset can work together.

34. **"The Logic of Exposure" versus "the Logic of Containment"** – The current logic of Israel, the US and their allies is the "Logic of Containment" in Lebanon and the PA. Its objective is to prevent Hamas and Hizbullah from taking over the governments in their countries by strengthening the local moderate and democratic actors. To a certain extent, this logic is implemented in Iraq, where the US seeks to strengthen the weak central government and to develop its capacity.

The result is that the moderate actors, such as the Siniora government or Abu Mazen, hold key positions of power, or even rule the government, and thus represent an 'address' for what takes place on their territory. However, they are weak and do not possess the capacity to promote their moderate agenda within the democratic and legal framework.

As a result, the Resistance Network and its allies do not bear any direct responsibility for the consequences of their actions, which makes it difficult to fight against them in a direct and comprehensive way.

The Logic of Exposure is based upon the idea of allowing organizations of the Resistance Network to rule over their territories and perhaps even support them in doing so. The intention is to transform Hamas into an 'address' in Gaza and Hizbullah and its allies into an 'address' in Lebanon. Once the Resistance Network's forces hold the reins of power, they will be held accountable, and it will be possible to fight them and erode their power in a more direct manner.

The implication of the Logic of Exposure is to allow the PA to govern, even if Hamas is controlling it, directly or indirectly. This also implies accepting political change which erodes the Siniora government's power in Lebanon (this change might occur in the next elections). In Iraq, this logic might accelerate a US withdrawal and a redeployment in Kurdistan and on the Iraqi border with Saudi Arabia.

¹⁹ The Meridor Commission, which investigated Israel's Defense Policy, included a similar conclusion: "Every five years the basic assumptions of Israel's Defense Policy will need to be re-examined" (See, Schiff, **Haaretz**, 04/24/06, in Hebrew). In addition, the Winograd Commission, which investigates the conduct of the political echelon during the second Lebanon war and the period preceding the war, concluded that "a document should be drafted which will accompany Israel's military and political strategy for future generations" (Zino, **Ynet**, 01/01/07, in Hebrew).

35. **Agreements with Syria and Lebanon** – For Israel, Syria is potentially the weakest link of the Resistance Network and of the 'Axis of Evil'. Syria is led by a secular Alawite government, whose dedication to radical Islam and the battle against Israel is limited.

The objective of this process is to extract Syria from the Resistance Network and from Iran's sphere of influence such that Syria ceases to support Hizbullah, Palestinian rejection forces and Iraqi insurgent forces. This may also lead to an opportunity to reach an agreement with Lebanon and to settle the outstanding issues between the two.

Moreover, Syria is currently the only Arab actor (apart from Jordan and Egypt), likely to be willing and capable of negotiating with Israel over issues such as recognition of Israel, Finality of Claims, End of Conflict and permanent borders.

The price might include returning the Golan Heights, accepting Syria's influence in Lebanon, ending US isolation of the Alawite government and limitation of the investigative tribunal on Hariri's murder (which depends on US agreement),²⁰ as well as economic and diplomatic incentives.

36. **Establishment of a Palestinian state with Provisional Borders** –Establishment of a state is an irreversible process according to international law. Establishment of a Palestinian state, even in provisional borders, will transform the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians into a 'border' conflict between two states, as opposed to its current nature as a conflict between 'occupier' and 'occupied' (the consequences of which are well known). This process might ensure consolidation of the Palestinian state as an 'address' responsible for what takes place on its territories.

The expected price for this would be Israeli agreement, explicit or implicit, of the Clinton Ideas for a permanent agreement and the establishment of a Palestinian state in spite of persistent violence.

In this context, if a Palestinian civil war erupts, it will represent an opportunity for Israel – based on overt or covert cooperation with Jordan, Egypt and Fatah – to impose a decisive blow on the Hamas movement and its leadership, affecting its political, military and economic structure in Gaza and the West Bank.

A move like this may be based on a political arrangement among the international community, regional states, Israel and Fatah. The essence of the arrangement would involve supporting Fatah in its battle against Hamas, in exchange for the establishment of a Palestinian state with provisional borders, based on concrete understandings regarding permanent status.

37. **Preventing Iranian hegemony; the Iranian threat is not just about nuclear power** – Israel needs to consolidate a strategy to prevent Iranian hegemony, based on a sound understanding of Iran's strengths and those of the Resistance Network. Thwarting the Iranian nuclear program is but an element of this endeavor.

Israel has many tools at its disposal. First and foremost, it is Israel's responsibility to build an international coalition to act against Iran's economic, political, security and technological power. Examples of this may include forming strategic alliances or a network of alliances with Iran's enemies; developing economic or technological tools which could

²⁰ According to reports from the Arab press, Syrian PM Bashar Assad sent Israeli PM Olmert a letter in which he offered to renew the negotiations without prior conditions. The letter, meant to satisfy the international community, including Syrian agreement to establish an international tribunal for the trial of the Hariri murder suspects, under the condition that the tribunal will not have the authority to hear or to try leading officials from Damascus (See Nahmias, [Ynet](#), 12/19/06).

affect Iran's oil energy advantage; and building an infrastructure which could dismantle the Iranian global terror network.

The use of military power should be the last resort. However, should Israel choose to engage in an all-out military confrontation, the price is likely to include international criticism for the escalation; the use of force the economic implications that will result from the rise in oil prices; an Iranian military retaliation on Israeli territory from Lebanon and perhaps even from Syria, which is liable to lead to a regional escalation; and a series of attacks by Iran's terrorist network on Jewish and Israeli targets throughout the world.

Appendix

Summary Table: Gaps between Israel's National Security Concept and the Emerging Reality

	Israel's National Security Concept	Iran and the Resistance Network	Significance
Vision and Strategy	To Strengthen the existence of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state by ending its control over the Palestinians based on the principle of "two states for two nations".	Iran and the Resistance Network aspire to bring about Israel's internal collapse in the same way as the Soviet Union or South Africa. They hope to achieve this goal by disrupting every political initiative seeking to strengthen the existence of Israel, erosion of Israel's military option, Basic De-Legitimization of Israel, and advancement of the vision of a single Arab / Palestinian / Islamist state.	
Leading Logic	Israel's leading logic is based on its military supremacy in every arena in which it acts, alongside reliance on its alliance with the US. This supremacy is supposed to effectively deter or achieve a decisive defeat in case of armed conflict. The political logic fulfills a secondary position only.	The leading logic is political, founded on the vision of the implosion of Israel. The military logic of the Resistance Network is secondary due to its recognition of Israel's military advantage. The purpose of military capabilities is to prevent political achievements and to avoid a military defeat.	An asymmetry has been created between Israel's military logic and the political logic of the Resistance Network.
Palestinian Position Regarding 'Occupation'	The Israeli perspective is based on the assumption that the Palestinians fight against the Israeli 'occupation'. Thus, ending control over Palestinian territory and people and the establishment of a Palestinian state are perceived as Israeli 'cards' for negotiations. Conversely, renewal of control in Gaza is an Israeli threat on the Palestinians and a lever to compel them to fight against the firing of Qassam rockets.	The Resistance Network sees continuation of 'occupation' as a way to accelerate Israel's collapse. Thus, it has <i>no</i> interest in Israel ending its occupation. Transforming the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians from a conflict between 'occupied' and 'occupiers' to a 'border conflict' would hurt the Resistance Network's freedom of action and legitimacy. Therefore, Israeli unilateral withdrawal from the Palestinian territories hurts their struggle. Withdrawals should be prevented and caused to fail, even at the	The goal of ending the occupation over the Palestinians is growing distant from Israel. Thus, Israel will "pay more" and will "get less". The probability that ending control over the Palestinians will occur through an agreement is decreasing.

		price of renewed 'occupation'.	
Center of Regional Power	<p>Israel is the strongest country in the region. The US is the world's sole superpower, Israel's strategic partner and the source of support for a number of moderate Arab regimes in the region such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan or Egypt.</p> <p>The combination of Israeli strength and the alliance with the US guarantees Israel's security.</p>	<p>Iran is building its hegemony and is succeeding in undermining US power and perhaps even reducing the US presence in the region.</p> <p>As a result of this, moderate states in the region are seeking close ties with Iran.</p> <p>At the same time, the trend denouncing the political strength of the US pro-Israel lobby and the American Jewish community may somewhat restrict the US from easily adopting steps that apparently serve Israeli interests.</p>	<p>An increasing number of actors in the region are partially or completely shifting loyalty to Iran.</p> <p>This process is liable to be accelerated if the US indicates signs of reducing its presence in the region or it appears to be a 'paper tiger'.</p> <p>The ability of the US to take military action against Iran is eroding.</p>
Significance of Terror	<p>The effect of terror is measured in terms of the number wounded or the economic and psychological damage it causes. Therefore, terror is a nuisance but it is <i>not</i> an existential threat.</p>	<p>Terror is an efficient tool for causing the failure of Israel's political moves and preventing Israel from sustainable military achievements.</p>	<p>Terror is an existential threat.</p>
Balance of Powers	<p>Israeli military superiority in every arena.</p> <p>Advancement towards securing Israel's future based on the principle of two states for two nations derived from Israeli strength.</p>	<p>The Resistance Network and Iran are creating a systemic, multi-pronged phenomenon.</p> <p>This system has succeeded in preventing Israel from every meaningful and sustainable advancement towards its secure existence while simultaneously advancing the Basic De-legitimization of Israel and the establishment of a single Arab / Palestinian / Islamist state in place of Israel.</p> <p>Iranian hegemony is being established through containment of Israel's power and ousting the US from the region.</p>	<p>Israeli strategic inferiority in its national security is emerging in spite of its supremacy in each of the individual arenas.</p> <p>Advancement towards the vision of a single Arab / Palestinian / Islamist state under Iranian hegemony.</p>

End.