Re-Organization of Foreign Policy in Israel's National Security Strategy

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Executive Summary

The Winograd Committee's interim report included conclusions and recommendations regarding the design and management of Israel's foreign policy on the National Security level. This memorandum deals with the implications of these conclusions and recommendations.

The memorandum is based on conversations and interviews with over twenty people who have held important positions in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter MFA) in recent years. It has been submitted to the Prime Minister (hereinafter PM), Defense Minister, Foreign Minister, Speaker of the Knesset, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and to the Winograd Committee before the publication of its final report.

The Reut Institute identifies a trend of a developing political-diplomatic threat of existential significance concurrent to the existing existential military-security threat. The factors accelerating this trend crystallized before the Second Lebanon War and demonstrated their force during the fighting. As a result, the importance of Israel's foreign policy and the MFA as a central branch of the State has increased.

The Winograd Committee's interim report effectively established the requirement of the PM to consult with the MFA on issues pertaining to national security as a way to increase the weight of political and diplomatic considerations on a national level. The Report 'upgrades' the status of the MFA thus indicating the growing importance of the political – diplomatic dimension.

These recommendations were formulated despite the fact that the management of foreign policy and the role of the MFA during the Second Lebanon War remained outside the focus of the Committee's interim report. Nonetheless, the Winograd Committee is likely to deal with these issues in its final report.
This document by the Reut Institute deals with Israel's foreign policy at the national security level. Its conclusions include:

1. **There is no clear national security strategy that deals with the political – diplomatic challenges** and thus no basis for the distribution of resources between the defense establishment and other bodies dealing with foreign policy.

2. **Israel has no foreign policy on major issues and therefore no body that is managing them** – There are a large number of bodies dealing with major issues of foreign policy without being required to report to the PM, MFA or any other 'integrator.'

3. **The MFA has no operation strategy** that harnesses the unique added value of foreign-service and the MFA for the benefit of national security.

4. **The MFA does not train its personnel for national security positions nor determine an education, experience or qualification threshold as a condition for holding these positions.**

In light of the above, the Reut Institute concludes that the challenges facing Israel require the re-organization of Israel's foreign policy and the MFA. Without such re-organization, the ability of the MFA to represent foreign policy considerations in national security discussions will continue to be restricted, and the State of Israel will have difficulty dealing with the challenges it is currently facing.

Therefore, the Reut Institute suggests the following recommendations.

1. **Re-evaluating the allocation of resources for national security** – A committee should be established to re-define the purpose and aims of foreign policy and the MFA and evaluate the allocation of resources relative to the Defense Ministry's budget in light of regional and international trends strategically affecting Israel.

2. **Defining the 'Core Issues' of foreign policy** – The Government should be responsible for determining a list of foreign policy 'core issues.' This list should be updated annually.

3. **The Government will assign an 'integrative body' for each of the core issues. The MFA will have residual responsibility** – The integrative body will present Israel's policies for the issue under its responsibility for approval by the PM or a committee of relevant ministers. The MFA will be required to present its policies on each of the core issues and will have residual responsibility.

4. **The MFA will formulate an operating strategy** to utilize its added value in national security.

5. **The MFA will set certain preconditions for appointments to its strategic departments** – The MFA will set an education, experience, qualification and knowledge threshold for appointments to strategic departments within the organization.

6. **Expanding Knesset supervision** – The Reut Institute calls on the Knesset Speaker and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee to expand parliamentary supervision over foreign policy and the MFA and to ground it in the annual agendas of different Knesset committees.
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However, the Reut Institute is solely accountable for the content of this document.

Introduction

1. The Reut Institute [www.reut-institute.org](http://www.reut-institute.org) is a non-profit organization founded in January 2004 in order to provide strategic decision-support services to the Government of Israel. Reut provides its services pro bono to all agencies of the government.

   Reut’s unique added value is its expertise in identifying strategic surprises and opportunities by revealing the basic and working assumptions of decision-makers and evaluating their relevance in a changing reality.¹

2. The Winograd Committee focused on the interface between the military and political echelons – The Winograd Committee for Examining the Events of the Campaign of the Second Lebanon War’, focused on the interface between the military and political echelons, specifically the conduct of the PM, Defense Minister and Chief of Staff. Various considerations led the Committee to write an interim report submitted to the PM in April 2007 that focused on the first five days of the war.

3. In its interim report, the Winograd Committee did not investigate foreign policy design or the conduct of the MFA in the same way that it investigated the Prime Minister's Office (hereinafter PMO) or the army leadership. Despite this, even in the interim report, the Committee concluded that the integration of foreign policy considerations into national security design needs to be improved through the inclusion of the MFA in this process.²

4. This paper was written in light of the Winograd Committee's interim report. Its aim is to point out a number of structural challenges in the design and conduct of foreign policy and in all areas relating to the MFA. The Reut Institute believes that a re-organization of foreign policy is essential to the security of the State.

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¹ Reut's work is based on a unique package of theory, methodology and software supplied by the Praxis Institute headed by Dr. Zvi Lanir (www.praxis.co.il).

² The Winograd Report (interim) determined that in its final report the Committee would discuss the general activities of the MFA, and specifically diplomatic negotiations and national advocacy. See Chapter 1 in Winograd Report (interim); Introduction, Clause 42, pp 17; Chapter 5, "Findings", Footnote no. 172, pp. 91; Chapter 7, "Conclusion", Footnote no. 116 and Footnote 34, p. 136.
Background: The Development of a Political - Diplomatic threat of Existential Significance to Israel

5. Two memorandums to the Winograd Committee - Both during and after the Second Lebanon war, the Reut Institute examined the working assumptions of the State of Israel in relation to the war's aims and the regional and international 'playing field.' In this framework, Reut has published dozens of papers in recent months that were summarized and submitted to the Winograd Committee in two memorandums:

a. The first memorandum dealt with structural problems clouding the capacity of those around the PM to design national security and recommended expanding the PMO and establishing a Strategic Support Unit subordinate to the PM to help him deal with the professional bureaucracy that serves him (See: Memo to Winograd: Strategic Support Unit for the Prime Minister).

b. The second memorandum dealt with Israel's national security strategy and the relevancy gaps revealed during the Second Lebanon War. Its main conclusion was that Israel is faced with a crisis in its national security strategy.

The main recommendation of this document was to establish a special committee to update Israel's national security strategy, supervise the implementation of this new strategy, and use it to evaluate the conduct of the political and military echelons. (See: Memo to Winograd: Updating Israel's National Security Strategy).

3 The Reut Institute identified two main structural problems:

a. A gap between the weakness of the government and the magnitude and complexity of the challenges it faces;

b. A gap between the weakness of the PM and his Bureau and a strong professional bureaucracy. This is reflected in areas in which neither the PM nor his team have professional or personal experience to adequately weigh the policy recommendations of the professional bureaucracy.

The gap between the dominance of the army and the Defense Ministry on the one hand and the shift of the center of gravity of Israel's national security challenges from the military to the non-military realm on the other hand, exacerbates the above-mentioned structural problems. A substantial part of the problems exposed before and during the war derive from structural problems linked to the electoral system and to the structure of Israel’s government.

4 The concept 'Relevancy Gap' refers to a gap between 'mindset' and 'reality'. 'Mindset' refers to the organizing logic used for analysis and prioritizing information. It is related to the concept of 'Fundamental Surprise' coined by Dr. Zvi Lanir. For further explanation, see www.praxis.co.il; or Zvi Lanir, Fundamental Surprise – Intelligence in Crisis, (The United Kibbutz and the Jaffee Center for Strategic Research at Tel Aviv University, 1983).

5 See the distinction made by Israel Tal between the concepts 'National Security'; 'Security Strategy'; and 'Security Policy'. 'National Security' refers to securing the nation’s existence and defending its external interests and national goals; 'Security Strategy' is the national plan for the readiness and deployment for war and defense of the national existence of the State; 'Security Policy' is a derivative of Security Strategy and deals with its on-going implementation and modification. (See Israel Tal, National Security, Tel Aviv: Zamora-Bitan, 1996, pp. 15, 52-53).

6 Four political-security disappointments since January 2006 – The Second Lebanon War was only one of four significant national security setbacks Israel has experienced during the last eighteen months. The three others are:

a. Gaza – In this arena, Israel failed to achieve its political and military objectives despite its absolute military superiority;
6. **Fundamental change in national security: The development of a political-diplomatic threat of existential significance** – The urgency of the above-mentioned memorandums submitted to the Winograd Committee stemmed from the development of a diplomatic-political threat of existential significance concurrent to the military threats facing Israel.

This development stems from the combination of a number of trends including: The difficulty in ending control over the Palestinians and the erosion of the principle of the Two-State Solution; the promotion of the 'Strategy of Implosion' by Iran and the Resistance Network; Basic De-Legitimization of Israel in the international arena; the internationalization of the issue of Israeli-Arabs; and the change in the global balance of power.

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b. **Shelving of the Convergence Plan** – The Convergence Plan was the political flagship of the current government for securing the future of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. The war in Lebanon and the launching of Qassam rockets from Gaza led to its effective removal from the agenda;

c. **Hamas' electoral victory** despite Israel's policy aimed at preventing this scenario.

The continuous political deadlock in recent years could lead to continued Israeli control in the West Bank. This trend is undermining the principle of the 'Two-state solution' and encourages actors who advocate the 'One-state solution.'

Concurrently, the trend of 'inversion towards the occupation' has been strengthening. This trend reflects a perception among the Resistance Network, which propagates that Islamic/Arab/Palestinian interests are better served by the continuation of the Israeli 'occupation' and therefore all actions attempting to end it should be thwarted.

See for example an interview with Moussa Abu-Marzouk on Hamas' website (quoted by Jonathan Dahoah-Halevi, JCPA, 5/28/07). Abu-Marzouk stated, among other things, that the 'resistance is the way to bring about the dismantling of the Zionist project, and the failures of diplomatic initiatives between Israel and the Palestinians bring (the Resistance Network) closer to this goal. (In this context, see Inversion Towards the Occupation: A New Challenge to Israel's National Security Concept).

The erosion in the status of the principle of the 'Two-state solution' has been going on for several years. The latest example in this trend is the revival of the idea of the Jordanian-Palestinian confederation. For example, see Asad Ghanem, Ha'aretz (in Hebrew), 6/13/07; Shmuel Rosner, Ha'aretz, 7/04/07; Robert Satloff, Washington Institute, Policy Watch # 1252, 6/26/07.

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8 Iran represents a multifaceted challenge to Israel as a result of: (1) its attempt to develop nuclear capabilities, and (2) its strategy that aims to bring about the collapse of Israel through political, social, and economic means - similar to the ones that led to the collapse of the USSR and South Africa.

This is the first existential challenge Israel faces with enemies it does not share a border with, thus causing the entire conflict to take place in the international arena. (See: Logic of Implosion: the Resistance Network's Political Rationale). This strategy is based on: challenging Israel's legitimacy, guerilla warfare (See: Terror is an Existential Threat) and undermining the principle of the 'Two-state solution.'

9 In recent years, there has been an increase in calls by groups and organizations that seek to undermine Israel's right to exist. An important landmark in this battle was the recent call for an academic boycott in Britain. Even though the boycott manifests itself as a protest against Israel's policies; in practice, it reflects models of "new anti-Semitism" and "new anti-Zionism".

10 In recent years, there has been a shift in the center of gravity of this issue from Israel – where it is considered an internal problem – to the international arena where Israel is constantly exposed to in-depth scrutiny, criticism and interference by international organizations. For more details see Reut's documents: "Internationalization of the Issue of Israeli Arabs"; "The Arab Minority at the European Parliament"; "Mughrabi Gate Bridge: Between Israeli Arabs and Palestinian National Movement."
The Winograd Committee's Main Conclusions Regarding the Design and Management of Foreign Policy

7. The Winograd Committee defined a number of principles for proper conduct in the public sphere and in decision-making processes. Among other things, the Committee determined the need to define clear objectives and achievable aims, to outline the mode of action to attain these aims; to deal with constant uncertainty in ever changing circumstances; to examine the underlying facts, maintain intellectual pluralism and create a consistent action plan with one central logic.

8. Designing clear policies that serve as a point of reference for evaluating alternatives. The Winograd Committee emphasizes the need to consider alternative options for existing policies. Therefore, the establishment of clear policies is an essential condition for making appropriate decisions.

9. The root of the problem is the system of government – In its interim report, the Winograd Committee hints several times that the root of the problem is Israel's system of government that creates difficult structural restrictions for conducting national security policies. As an example, two out of three senior ministers from Finance, Foreign Affairs and Defense are often political rivals of the PM from within his/her party or from another party. This reality makes it much harder to design and implement a uniform policy.

10. Israel's national security strategy is not updated – Similar to the Reut Institute, the Winograd Committee also concluded that there is a need to update Israel's national security strategy. The interim report wrote that "one of the Israel's principle failures is the lack of willingness to update its political – security strategy (in the widest sense of the word)."

11. Conclusion and main recommendation: Upgrade the status of foreign policy and the MFA – Members of the Winograd Committee emphasized the increasing importance of the political dimension to national security, and criticized the current decision-making process in which this dimension has not been suitably manifest.

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11 The relative erosion of the status of the United States as the sole superpower coupled with the strengthening of the European Union, Russia, China and India requires Israel to establish multi-dimensional diplomatic relations with the new contenders for world power, while preserving its 'special relationship' with the United States. This is a complex challenge because: (1) these countries lack large and established Jewish communities; and (2) some of these countries maintain close relations with Arab states.

12 See Chapter 6 of Winograd interim report, Clause 4, pp.103.

13 The committee distinguishes between 'objectives' which it describes as "more operational, their achievements are measurable and the way to reach them is relatively clear" to 'aims' "which are more general and vague goals, and the way to pursue them is more complex and varied."

14 See Chapter 6 of Winograd report (interim), Clauses 12-18.

15 See Winograd Committee report (interim), Chapter 7, pp. 118, Clause 29. With regard to Israel's decision to deviate from its policy of Containment on the northern front, (7/12/07), the Winograd Committee report asserts that: "regarding the discussion on the issue of the aims of the war and their correspondence to the army's actions. [...] we did not find any evidence for a thorough discussion that tried to find congruence between the ways to achieve the objectives to the army's actions or the policies previously agreed upon."

16 See Winograd Committee report (interim), Chapter 1: Introduction, pp. 16.
A whole chapter in the interim report is devoted to organizational recommendations for improving the Government of Israel’s decision-making processes. The main recommendations deal with strengthening the National Security Council (hereinafter NSC) and requiring effective consultation with the MFA in discussions on national security issues that have political consequences.\(^\text{17}\)

As mentioned, the Winograd Committee’s interim report did not examine the role of the MFA because it was not an object of public criticism in the same way as the PM, Defense Minister and the army.\(^\text{18}\)

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12. However, the Reut Institute contends that the *State of Israel's foreign policy design and conduct suffer from a number of structural shortcomings*. This reality undermines Israel’s national security and the successful implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

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I. **No Clear National Security Strategy → No Sensible Allocation of Resources**

13. **As stated, there is a crisis in Israel's national security strategy** – Although the Winograd Committee pointed to a crisis in Israel's national security strategy, the Committee did not have the mandate to formulate a new one (see above). The Reut Institute contends that increasing trends are turning the political – diplomatic threat that challenges Israel’s right to exist into an existential threat.

14. **The Government of Israel has not identified the crystallization of an existential threat in the political-diplomatic sphere** – Based on statements, documents and actions since the Second Lebanon War, it seems that the Government of Israel's perspective only considers the military-security threat as existential, and does not bestow similar importance on diplomatic – political threats.

15. **Therefore, the political-diplomatic challenge is not receiving the relevant organizational attention** – For example, the Winograd Committee only focused on the interface between the political and military echelons and not on foreign policy and the MFA. Moreover, although there was a recognizable change in all army echelons after the war, there has been no such change in the MFA. While the extent of resources available to the army has increased, the MFA's budget has remained the same.

16. **No sensible allocation of resources** - Since Israel’s national security strategy has not been updated, the response to threats is inadequate on the theoretical and organizational levels as

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\(^{17}\) See Winograd Committee report (interim), Chapter 8: Institutional Recommendations, pp. 148, Clauses 8-9. It is important to note that the Winograd Committee did not adopt Reut's recommendation to establish a Strategic Support Unit in the Bureau of the PM in addition to strengthening the NSC; the Committee chose only to adopt the latter.

\(^{18}\) The mandate of the Winograd Committee determines: "the Committee will examine and submit findings and conclusions, and will provide suitable recommendations with regard to the political and military echelons, for the events that took place on the northern front commencing on July 12th 2006…” See Winograd Committee report (interim), Chapter 1: Introduction, Clause 15.

The Winograd Committee is preparing a detailed assessment of the performance of the MFA during the campaign in Lebanon last summer. See Winograd Committee report (interim), Footnote no. 172 pp.91; Footnote no. 7 pp.116; and Footnote no. 34 pp.136.
well as in terms of the allocation of resources. The foreign policy and MFA budget remains rubber-stamped each year despite the fact that the threats against Israel are constantly changing.

17. **What are the resources needed for foreign policy and the MFA? What needs to be the distribution of diplomatic embassies?** – The MFA's budget of 1bn NIS is approximately 2% of that of the army (not including the budgets of other bodies of the security services).\(^9\)

In total, MFA staff total about 1000 people, 400 of who are diplomats serving abroad in approximately 100 embassies. In North America, Israel has eleven consulates, two embassies and UN representatives\(^9\) while there are only three diplomats in Australia. There are fewer than ten international lawyers in the MFA.

18. **Do these figures reflect a surplus or a lack of resources?** Although it seems that the MFA is severely under-budgeted, the answer to whether it enjoys appropriate resources depends on the aims and objectives of foreign policy taking into account all the other bodies dealing with this issue – such as the Ministries of Defense, Trade and Industry, Finance, Transportation, the Ministry for Strategic Affairs, and the Mossad\(^1\) – as well as the size and strength of the Jewish community in these areas, and others factors.\(^2\)

19. **Conclusion: There is a need to re-evaluate the allocation of resources between the military and political-diplomatic spheres** – In light of the above, there is a need to re-evaluate the extent of resources allocated for foreign policy and the MFA relative to the

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\(^9\) The majority of the MFA's budget is spent on fixed costs (i.e. salaries and real-estate). The budget for operations is only a meager fraction of the total budget. For example, the budget for promoting sports abroad, which is a branch of the Culture department, stands at 10,000 NIS while Israel's budget for public diplomacy currently stands at 40m NIS (including salaries).

\(^9\) The eleven consulates include: Montreal, Toronto, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Miami, Washington (the Minister-Counselor of Public Affairs in Washington functions as the Consul General to Virginia, Maryland and DC), Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago; Washington and Ottawa function as bilateral embassies. The Israeli Mission to the United Nations (based in New York) should be added to this list.

\(^1\) These organizations operate abroad and finance their diplomatic attachés from their own budget.

\(^2\) Some of the consequences resulting from the level of income earned by MFA staff stationed in Israel lead to: young cadets who choose not to serve in the MFA for many years; MFA staff prefer to shorten their stay in Israel and ask to be sent for a mission abroad; in recent years, there has been a growing phenomenon of senior diplomats choosing to take unpaid leave while they are in Israel in order to increase their income, returning to service shortly before their next mission abroad.
budget for the defense establishment. This should be based on an updated national security strategy and the definition of clear aims and objectives for foreign policy.

II. No Clear National Foreign Policy, or Body that Manages it

20. **Assumption: Israel's foreign policy is designed by the MFA** – The MFA's website declares that "the MFA formulates, implements and presents the foreign policy of the Government of Israel. It represents the state vis-à-vis foreign governments and international organizations, explains its positions and problems throughout the world, endeavors to promote its economic, cultural, and scientific relations, and fosters cooperation with developing countries. The Ministry promotes relations with Diaspora communities and safeguards the rights of Israeli citizens abroad."

It seems that the Winograd Committee accepted as an implicit working assumption that this is in fact the reality and that the MFA leads or integrates the main issues of Israeli foreign policy. This is what seemingly led the Committee to unambiguously declare that the MFA is the representative of foreign policy considerations in national security discussions.

21. **In practice, Israel has no foreign policy and the MFA does not manage it** – In many areas of Israel's foreign policy there is no guiding hand. In reality, Israel's foreign policy is essentially the sum of different governmental bodies working in tandem with only partial coordination with one another. Sometimes, these bodies act without sharing important information or inconsistently with one another's interests.

This is true of most major foreign policy issues, including: Israel's relationship with the Jewish world; science, technology, culture and sport; Israel's relationship with the US, Russia, India, China, the EU, and other countries; and the issue of media and public diplomacy.

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23 See the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs – General Information](#) website.

24 See Winograd Committee report (interim), Chapter 7: Conclusions, pp. 135, Clauses 135 and Footnote no. 34: "we would like to briefly note the importance and necessity of integrating the MFA and its bank of knowledge, experience and branches, as this has not yet been adequately exploited."

25 For example, the intelligence units of the Defense establishment evaluate and analyze information that has valuable political implications. However, the mailing lists for this information do not include the relevant echelons in the MFA.
22. **The MFA is not considered to be in charge** – The different governmental agencies do not view the MFA as the body in charge of foreign policy, and their representatives abroad are not subordinate to the ambassador nor required to report back to him/her or the MFA.

23. **Conclusion: On many issues, there is no foreign policy and no one 'in charge' to represent foreign policy considerations for national security** – Therefore the assumption that the MFA will be able to represent the gamut of foreign policy considerations in every national security discussion is not grounded in the current reality. It is important to remember that there is no other body able to present the significance of government decisions on Israel's important relations with the international system or the main issues of its foreign policy.

**III. The MFA has no National Security Operational Strategy**

24. **What is an 'operational strategy' and what is its importance?** – An operational strategy is a set of guiding principles for the design and management of policy as well as supervision over its implementation, which obligates all relevant organizational groups. An operational strategy guides processes of defining aims and objectives, creating and evaluating alternatives, setting priorities for allocating budgetary, human and other resources as well as gathering and analyzing information.

25. **Operational strategy is essential for organizational learning** – It creates a basis for constant evaluation of achievements and alternatives available to decision makers. Without an operational strategy, it is difficult to create the required transparency for processes of learning and drawing conclusions.

26. **The MFA has huge potential added value for national security** which stems from the issues it deals with; from the capacity, experience, connections and unique talents of part of its staff; and from the distribution of its embassies around the world.

27. **There is no national security operational strategy** – However, the MFA does not have a clear operational strategy to utilize its unique added value to positively and significantly input national security.

**IV. Not all Diplomats can contribute to National Security**

28. **Assumption: Senior diplomats can contribute to designing national security** – The 'consultative role' of the MFA established by the Winograd Committee is based on the

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26 In this context, the Winograd Committee report (interim), Chapter 2: Introduction, pp.15-16, Clause 33, asserts: "the focus in drawing conclusions should not lie solely with an investigative committee, but ought to be an integral part of Israeli society, i.e. a society that aspires to evaluate its achievements and failures in order to improve its capacity to deal with future challenges. This approach should be adopted by the government as well; that is, the government has to be a 'learning' body, and hence constantly improve its shortcomings."

27 The people the Reut Institute consulted regarding this document, pointed out a number of shortcomings related to the lack of an operational strategy. Among other things, they noted that since the MFA lacks an operational strategy, the organization does not assess itself and lacks an evaluation and monitoring mechanism of its diplomatic activities. Therefore, the MFA will have difficulty absorbing and implementing the conclusions proposed in the Winograd report or making itself relevant in the political reality of a globalized world.
assumption that MFA staff have the training, intelligence, experience, talent and connections that allow them to deal with issues of national security.  

This is apprantly true with regards to staff in positions of the MFA's strategic departments, such as those dealing with non-conventional weapons, economic relations, strategic issues, the Middle East, or with media and public affairs.

29. **There are undoubtedly many MFA staff who can make a unique contribution to the design of national security.** The foreign service career path creates the opportunity to closely learn the political and business systems of different international states and organizations, to become familiar with Jewish communities and to build a network of relationships in different places around the world.

30. **However, the MFA does not provide the training or qualification, nor set minimum requirements for their staff to deal with national security issues – The MFA does not** have a training or qualification program for positions in strategic departments within the Ministry. Moreover it does not determine an education, experience or qualifications threshold as a condition for holding these positions. The appraisal and feedback system is inadequate, and does not allow for proper evaluation of staff performance. In addition, the current system of appointments does not guarantee that those best able to design national security policy will head the strategic departments.

**Summary and Conclusions**

31. The Winograd Committee's interim report is supposed to provide an answer to a number of structural and organizational problems in the management of national security policies. However, the Winograd Committee focused on the conduct of the army and the interface between the military and political echelons while devoting little time to the cluster of issues concerning foreign policy design and the MFA.

32. As stated, there are a number of structural problems in foreign policy design and the conduct of the MFA that are likely to undermine the implementation of the Committee's recommendations. These include:

   a. There is no national security strategy which can determine foreign policy aims and objectives and provide a sensible allocation of resources;

   b. There is no agreement nor guiding hand over the most important aspects of Israel's foreign policy;

   c. The MFA has no operational strategy that allows it to utilize the resources at its disposal to uniquely and methodologically contribute in a timely fashion to national security;

   d. The MFA has no training track nor an education, experience or qualifications threshold for appointments to lead positions dealing with national security or for heading strategic departments.

33. As stated in the introduction, the Reut Institute sees the root of the problem of managing foreign policy in the electoral and governmental system. A change in the electoral system may bring about a considerable improvement in Israel's capacity to design foreign policy.

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28 The Winograd Committee report (interim), Chapter 2: Principles of Responsibility pp.24, Clause14: "… the concentration of knowledge and expertise on these topics is usually held by diplomats, MFA staff members, officers from the military and intelligence units, as well as additional professionals…"
However, this document's recommendations (see below) apply to the current structure of the Israeli system and the current division of power between the different ministries.

**Recommendations**

The Reut Institute calls for the consideration of the following recommendations:

34. **A re-evaluation of the national security strategy and allocation of resources for foreign policy and foreign service** – Establishing a committee to update Israel's national security strategy in light of threats crystallizing around it. This committee would define Israel's foreign policy aims and objectives and recommend a suitable distribution of resources between the defense budget and that of the MFA.

35. **Formulating a list of foreign policy core issues** - The PM, consulting with the political – security cabinet and the Chairman of the Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee, will define a list of core issues pertaining to foreign policy (hereinafter 'core issues') that will include:
   
a. **Israel's most important relationships** with key organizations and states in the international community such as the US, UN, Russia, China, India, the EU and important states within it;
   
b. **The threat to Israel's identity as a Jewish state** as a result of basic de-legitimization;
   
c. **Israel's main political – security challenges** including, the political process with the Palestinians, Syrian and Lebanese challenges, and the battle against Iran and terrorism.
   
d. **Main aspects of foreign relations** including media and public diplomacy; the Jewish world; trade and economics; technology; science, sport and culture; or foreign and military aid and exports;
   
e. **Central components of the MFA's policies** such as the distribution of its embassies and placement of its diplomats.

   This list should be evaluated annually as part of the yearly assessment of the situation.

36. **The PM will assign an 'integrative' body for each topic on the core list. The MFA will have residual responsibility** – The PM will be expected to define the body which is to serve as the 'integrator' for each one of the core issues from between the PMO, the MFA, the NSC, the Defense Ministry, the army, the Shin Bet or Mossad or between the relevant government ministries. The MFA will have residual responsibility for the core issues; in other words, it will be the body that integrates all other areas not designated by the PM.

   The integrative body will have access to all relevant information pertaining to its core issue, and will be responsible for the design and implementation of policies. The other organizations will be required to report to it.

   This model is based on the model for dealing with Iran, according to which the political responsibility for thwarting Iran lies with the Mossad while the Minister for Strategic Affairs, Avigdor Lieberman has been designated as the Minister for coordinating this issue.29

37. **Designing clear policies for core issues** – It will be the responsibility of the integrative body to present Israel's guiding principles towards these core issues to the PM, the Committee of Ministers and to the Knesset.

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29 See Barak Ravid, Ha'aretz, 7/01/07.
38. **Formulating a national security operational strategy for the MFA** – The MFA will present an updated operational strategy to improve its interface with other agencies dealing with national security.  

39. **A perennial work plan for the MFA** – The MFA will formulate a perennial plan that will be designed based on Israel's national security strategy and the distribution of authorities on the core issues.  

40. **A national security training track and minimum requirements for appointments to positions of national security within the Ministry** – The MFA will establish a training track for positions relating to national security and determine minimum education, experience, and qualification requirements for each of these positions. Appointments to these positions will require a commitment for a long period of service in Israel. PM or government approval for these positions should be considered similar to the current approval process for generals in the army or department heads in the intelligence services.  

41. **Improving parliamentary oversight for foreign policy and the MFA** – Today, the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee dedicates most of its time to military and security issues. The extent of parliamentary oversight for foreign policy and the MFA does not reflect the increasing importance of the topic.  

The Reut Institute recommends that the Head of the Knesset establish joint teams between the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and other relevant Knesset Committees, to supervise the main foreign policy issues such as science, sport, technology, trade and economics and others.  

The Reut Institute also recommends that the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee devise a formula for supervising MFA activities based on the MFA's work-plan.  

End.

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30 In this context, the structural weakness of the Political-Research department of the MFA was noted due to its size and access to information. This weakness limits the capacity of the MFA to identify political surprises as well as political opportunities.

31 Only one out of the six sub-committees of the Foreign Affairs and Defense committee deals with issues related to foreign policy and the MFA.