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**AFTER THE FALLING ROCKETS FROM LEBANON  
INTERRELATED COMMENTARIES ON ISRAEL'S  
PERFORMANCE AND SURVIVAL**

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**Louis René Beres** was educated at Princeton (Ph.D., 1971) and is the author of many books and scholarly articles dealing with Israeli strategic matters. The Chair of Project Daniel, he has lectured at Israel's National Defense College, the Jaffee and BESA Centers for Strategic Studies, the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem and the Dayan Forum. In Israel, he has published in such newspapers and magazines as *Ha'aretz*, *The Jerusalem Post*, *Nativ* and *B'tzedek*. Professor Beres' work is well-known to senior members of Israel's political, academic, military and intelligence communities. In the United States, his columns have appeared in more than a dozen major newspapers, including *The Washington Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Indianapolis Star*, *Los Angeles Times* and *USA Today*. **Professor Beres**, the author of several ACPR Policy Papers, is a member of the Editorial Board at *Nativ*, a member of the Advisory Council for the Ariel Center for Policy Research and the Strategic and Military Affairs columnist for *The Jewish Press*. He is Professor of Political Science and International Law at Purdue University (Indiana).



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*Louis René Beres*

**Executive Summary**

Following the recent war in Lebanon, Israel will have to draw certain major lessons to ensure its long-term strategic survival. What is needed now, immediately and urgently, are thoughtful and coherent guidelines concerning national defense, deterrence, targeting and even preemption (anticipatory self-defense). It is no longer adequate for Israel (more or less capably) to merely stumble from one war to the next without an appropriate “master plan” for direction. Armed with such a framework of expanded conceptual understanding, the Jewish state could quickly begin to deduce pertinent tactics and policy options to match particular situations and crises. In the near-term, of course, the need for such a plan will be especially plain in matters of both nuclear war avoidance and counter-WMD terrorism.

Taking the “falling rockets from Lebanon” as its starting point, this learned policy paper by Professor Louis René Beres (USA) explores a wide range of topics and themes concerning Israel’s war performance and its resultant outlook for peace and security. To carry out this exploration, the author looks closely at various complex synergies between international law and geopolitics. He also examines emerging IDF doctrine against the essential background of Arab/Islamic visions of faith and war. Divided into six chapters, **After the Falling Rockets from Lebanon** begins with brief appraisals of “Law, Strategy, Reason and Death” (Chapter 1) and ends with a look at “Myth, Heroism and Unending Struggle” (Chapter 6). Intermediate chapters deal with “Jewish Pain, Suffering and Life” (Chapter 2); “Logic, Persuasion, American Guarantees and Preemption” (Chapter 3); “Language, Thinking, Dialectic and Contemplation” (Chapter 4); and “Assassination, Anarchy, Rules and Dogmas” (Chapter 5). There is, in short, nothing narrowly operational about these crisp and critical essays. Rather, of varying length, they offer a panoply of far-reaching perspectives from which – ultimately – relevant Israeli strategy and tactics can be extrapolated.

Professor Beres is known to readers of ACPR publications, *inter alia*, as Chair of “Project Daniel”, a small advisory group that had presented former Prime Minister Sharon with an important report titled **Israel’s Strategic Future**. In that now no-longer-confidential report, Beres and his distinguished colleagues – including a former member of the IDF General Staff – issued specific warnings to the Prime Minister about Iranian nuclearization and the need for a suitable Israeli response. More specifically, the Daniel Group recommended an end to nuclear ambiguity in certain specified circumstances and also a resort to preemption (anticipatory self-defense) as a last-resort measure to prevent nuclear-inflicted genocide from Tehran. Project Daniel also advised that Israel adopt an openly counter-value nuclear targeting doctrine, including the explicit identification of various high-value population centers and resources in selected parts of the Arab/Islamic world. The recommendations were very controversial, but the authors were guided by their informed view of the genuinely existential threats now facing Israel, and by their understanding that catastrophic war avoidance requires credible deterrence.

After the falling rockets from Lebanon, Israel has much to fear. But Israel also has both the will and the capacity to learn from this latest war, not merely the singular lessons of strategy and tactics, but also the much broader insights of religion, philosophy, law and politics. It is with this distinctly broader view in mind that Professor Beres now offers us his latest ACPR Policy Paper. We all share his belief that war can be a dreadful preceptor, but that it can be a deeply meaningful teacher nonetheless.

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## Foreword

The recent war in Lebanon was an event that has already left significant marks, and it is certainly bound to have a continued impact on developments in Israel, the Middle East region and beyond. For Israel, this was a fight against Iran by proxy. Hizbullah and its allies, both inside Lebanon and in the broader Middle East, have claimed a “divine victory” in its confrontation with Israel. Although the facts are somewhat different – in concrete terms neither side has really been victorious and the overall perception was very damaging to Israel in more than one respect. While Israel certainly created greater damage to Hizbullah than vice versa, the well-oiled propaganda apparatus run by Hizbullah, aided by the less-than-perfect PR effort on the Israeli side, produced distinctly negative consequences. Not only may Israel’s own deterrent capability have been damaged, at least temporarily, but so too, indirectly, has that of the United States *vis-à-vis* Hizbullah’s patron, Iran. Both of these matters will thus have to be decisively and urgently dealt with.

In the Arab world, perceptions are often stronger than facts. Even though the Israeli air force had great success in totally eliminating Hizbullah’s long-range missiles and missile launchers, and in spite of the fact that there wasn’t a single actual combat in which Israeli soldiers didn’t have the upper hand, the image created in the minds of many people was totally different. In addition to a more general problem, how modern armies should deal with militarized terrorist groups, the war has given rise to serious questions with regards to the present Israeli leadership and the command structure in the IDF. It is too early, of course, to predict what the ramifications of this will be. There is no doubt, however, that both Israel’s friends and enemies will be watching.

While the recent fighting in Lebanon is fresh in our memory, more important are the overall implications for Israel’s future in the confrontation with its enemies. These implications are enlarged by the fact that, like it or not, Israel also finds itself in the eye of the gathering storm between the Free World and Islamic “Jihadism”.

Professor Beres's policy paper addresses all these issues – and more! All of it is important. Consider, for example, this crucial observation:

In calculations of strategic deterrence, Israel's planner must always recall that what matters is whether a prospective attacker **perceives** secure Israeli retaliatory forces. Where a prospective attacker perceives vulnerable retaliatory forces, it might judge the first-strike option against Israel to be entirely cost-effective. This means, inter alia, that Israel's intelligence estimates must always keep close watch over enemy perceptions...

One can only hope that this analysis by Professor Beres will be diligently studied by Israel's strategic planners.

Ambassador Zalman Shoval

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## **AFTER THE FALLING ROCKETS FROM LEBANON INTERRELATED COMMENTARIES ON ISRAEL'S PERFORMANCE AND SURVIVAL**

*Louis René Beres*

### **Chapter I:**

#### **Law, Strategy, Reason and Death**

A major issue in the last Lebanon War was the alleged “excessiveness” of Israel’s use of armed force. What can we learn about these allegations from the standpoint of international law? Humanitarian international law continues to correctly require that every use of force by an army or insurgent group meet the test of “proportionality”. Going back to the basic legal principle (St. Petersburg Declaration, 1868) that “the means that can be used to injure an enemy are not unlimited,” proportionality stipulates (among other things) that every exercise of armed force be limited to the minimum application needed for operational success. Indeed, this ancient principle of customary international law applies to all judgments of military advantage and to all planned reprisals.

But properly legal determinations of proportionality can never be made or judged in a vacuum. Rather, these decisions must always take into account the extent to which an adversary has committed prior or ongoing violations of the law of war. In the case of both the *Hamas/Islamic Jihad/Fatah* terrorists in Gaza and the *Hizbullah* terrorists in Lebanon, there is today ample and essentially incontestable evidence that these belligerents are/were manifestly guilty of “perfidy”.

Deception can be legally acceptable in armed conflict, but the Hague Regulations clearly disallow the placement of military assets or military personnel in heavily populated civilian areas. Further prohibition of perfidy can be found in Protocol I of 1977, additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949. It is widely recognized that these rules are also binding on the basis of customary international law.

Perfidy represents an especially serious violation of the law of war, one even identified as a “grave breach” in Article 147 of Geneva Convention No. IV.

The critical legal effect of perfidy committed by Palestinian or *Hizbullah* terrorists – especially their widespread resort to “human shields” – is to immunize Israel from any responsibility for inadvertent counter-terrorist harms done to Arab civilians. Even if *Hamas* and Islamic *Jihad* and *Fatah* and *Hizbullah* did not deliberately engage in perfidy, any terrorist-created link between civilians and insurgent warfare would always give Israel full and unassailable legal justification for its defensive military actions. This is not to suggest that Israel would have carte blanche in its applications of armed force, but that the reasonableness of these applications would have to be appraised in the context of enemy perfidy.

To be sure, viewed against the background of extensive and unapologetic terrorist perfidy in both Gaza and Lebanon, Israel was certainly not guilty of “disproportionality”. Let critics of Israel recall that all combatants, including all insurgents in Gaza and Lebanon, are bound to comply with the law of war of international law. This requirement derives not only from what is known in jurisprudence as the “Martens Clause”, which makes its first appearance in the Preamble to the 1899 Hague Convention No. II on land warfare, but also from Article 3, common to the four Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949. It is found also in the two protocols to these Conventions.

It is easy for those who are altogether unfamiliar with international law to lash out unfairly at Israel with charges of “disproportionality”. Yet, legal scholars must always understand the vital significance of context. Authoritative judgments under international law are not made in isolation from other pertinent factors. In this connection, it is apparent that any seemingly disproportionate use of force by the Israel Defense Forces in the Lebanon War of 2006 was actually the outcome of antecedent perfidy by its criminal enemies in both Gaza and Lebanon (terrorism is a codified crime under international law). Were it not for these egregious violations of the law of war by terrorist adversaries, Israel would not have been obliged to wage war in a fashion that inevitably creates civilian casualties.

Equally untenable is the charge that Israel was committing “aggression” in Lebanon. At Lebanon’s insistence, not Israel’s, a formal state of war has continued to exist between the two countries since the beginning; that is, since the Jewish state originally came into existence in May 1948. Only an armistice agreement exists between Israel and Lebanon. Signed on March 23, 1949, this is not a war-terminating agreement, but merely a pledge (still not honored by Lebanon) to cease hostilities temporarily in an ongoing

conflict. Legally, it is simply not possible for Israel to commit aggression against Lebanon, as the latter already considers itself in a formal condition of belligerency.

International law is not a suicide pact. Faced with enemies on several fronts who still make no secret of their genocidal intentions, Israel always displays remarkable respect for the law of armed conflict. In distinctly marked contrast to the conscious indiscriminacy of its terrorist adversaries in both Gaza and Lebanon, Jerusalem always adheres scrupulously to the law of war of international law. It follows that all intimations and accusations of Israeli “disproportionality” in counter-terrorist warfare are unfounded.

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Those who place hope in outside protection for Israel, primarily from the United States, assume – more or less – a continuation of traditional international relations. Yet, it is altogether likely that we now live in an era of total fragmentation and disunity, a worldwide anarchy that will give new meaning to “Westphalian” international relations and reinforce, rather than reduce, the self-help imperative. Hence, if this presumption of further global disintegration is to be taken seriously by Israeli planners, they will have to accept, however reluctantly, the **obligation** to face overriding dangers **alone**. After Israel’s Lebanon War of summer 2006, one should be reminded of “The Second Coming”, the poem by the great Irish poet William Butler Yeats:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
 The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
 Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
 Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
 The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
 The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
 The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
 Are full of passionate intensity.

\*.\*.\*

Following the Israeli war against *Hizbullah* in 2006, steady Iranian nuclearization is now correctly at the forefront of Israeli public attention.

Exceptionally small, Israel fully understands that the Iranian president's incessant bluster about wiping the Jewish state "off the map" is far more than mere posturing. It is, rather, an unambiguous declaration of criminal intent to commit genocide.

Genocide, like terrorism, is a codified crime under international law. To survive into the future, Israel's leaders and allies now recognize that Iran's explicitly exterminatory intent is being augmented by a developing capacity. Left to his own devices, free of any preemptive interference with the Islamic Republic's planned atomic arsenal of bombs and missiles (an interference that would certainly be a proper expression of "anticipatory self defense"), Iran's president might not be deterred by any threats of Israeli and/or American retaliation. This possible failure of nuclear deterrence could be the result of a presumed lack of threat credibility or even of a willful Iranian indifference to existential harms. Iran, after all, could conceivably become the individual "suicide"<sup>1</sup> bomber in macrocosm, a nuclear-armed state willing to "die" as a collective "martyr". To be sure, such a prospect is not very likely, but – at the same time – it is by no means unimaginable.

How should Israel respond to such a dire set of circumstances? One important part of the answer has to do with core questions of Tel Aviv's targeting doctrine. More precisely, Israel's security from future Iranian mass-destruction attacks will depend considerably upon the Defense Ministry's determined targets and on the precise extent to which these targets have been openly identified. Contrary to conventional wisdom, it is not enough that Israel simply has "The Bomb". Instead, the adequacy of Israel's nuclear deterrence and preemption policies will inevitably depend largely upon the presumed destructiveness of these nuclear weapons and on where, exactly, these weapons are authoritatively thought to be directed.

A nuclear war in the Middle East is not out of the question. Indeed, there are a number of different scenarios that could result in an Israeli use of nuclear weapons. Israel will need to choose prudently between what are called "assured destruction" strategies and "nuclear war-fighting" strategies. Assured destruction strategies are also sometimes termed "counter-value" strategies or "mutual assured destruction" (MAD). These are strategies of deterrence/preemption in which a country primarily targets its strategic weapons on the other side's civilian populations and/or on its supporting civilian infrastructures. Nuclear war-fighting strategies, on the other hand, are called "counterforce" strategies. These are systems of

deterrence/preemption wherein a country primarily targets its strategic nuclear weapons on the other side's major weapon systems and on its supporting military infrastructures.

For nuclear weapons countries in general, and for Israel in particular, there are very serious survival implications for choosing one strategy over the other. It is also possible that a country would opt for some sort of "mixed" (counter-value/counter-force) strategy. In the case of Israel, however, any policy that might actually encourage nuclear war-fighting – any counterforce nuclear doctrines – should be rejected out-of-hand.

Human psychology has much to do with current world politics. Whichever deterrence/preemption strategy Israel might choose, what ultimately really matters is what an enemy country **perceives**. In strategic matters, the only pertinent reality is perceived reality. Nothing else matters.

In choosing between the two basic strategic alternatives, Israel should opt for nuclear deterrence/preemption based upon assured destruction. This seemingly insensitive recommendation will surely elicit opposition in certain publics, but, in fact, it is substantially more humane. Further, a counter-value targeting doctrine would appear to create an enlarged risk of "losing" any nuclear war that might still arise. This is because counter-value-targeted nuclear weapons would not destroy military targets. Yet, a counterforce targeting doctrine would be less persuasive as a nuclear deterrent, especially to societies where leaders would willingly sacrifice entire armies and military infrastructures as "martyrs". And if Israel were to opt for nuclear deterrence/preemption based upon identified and projected counterforce capabilities, its Arab/Islamic enemies could feel especially threatened. For many reasons, this condition could then actually heighten the prospect of WMD aggression against Israel and of a subsequent nuclear exchange.

Israel's decisions on counter-value versus counterforce doctrines should depend, in part, on prior investigations of: (1) enemy country inclinations to strike first; and (2) enemy country inclinations to strike all-at-once or in stages. Should Israeli strategic planners assume that certain enemy countries that are in process of "going nuclear" are apt to strike first and to strike in an unlimited fashion (that is, to fire all of their nuclear weapons right away), Israeli counterforce-targeted warheads – used in retaliation – would likely hit only empty silos/launchers. In such circumstances, Israel's only rational application of counterforce doctrine would be to strike first itself. If, for

whatever reason, Israel were to reject still available preemption options, there would be no reason to opt for a counterforce strategy. From the standpoint of persuasive intra-war deterrence, a counter-value strategy would prove vastly more appropriate.

Should Israeli planners assume that the enemy countries “going nuclear” are apt to strike first and to strike in a limited fashion – holding some significant measure of nuclear firepower in reserve for follow-on strikes – Israeli counterforce-targeted warheads could have some damage-limiting benefits? Here, counterforce operations could appear to serve both an Israeli non-nuclear preemption, or, should Israel decide not to preempt, an Israeli retaliatory strike. However, the underlying assumption here about enemy behavior is implausible.

Should an Israeli first-strike be intentionally limited, perhaps because it would be coupled with an assurance of no further destruction in exchange for an end to hostilities, counterforce operations could seemingly serve an Israeli counter-retaliatory strike. This is because Israel’s attempt at intra-war deterrence could fail, occasioning the need for follow-on strikes to produce badly needed damage-limitation. Nonetheless, the overall argument for Israeli counterforce options is founded upon a complex illusion. The prospective benefits to Israel of maintaining any counterforce targeting options are greatly outweighed by the prospective costs.

It is plain that regional nuclear war is a distinct possibility for Israel, and that adequate preparations now need to be made to prevent such a war. These preparations will require, immediately, a clear awareness of how a nuclear war might start in the Middle East, and an informed identification of the best strategic doctrine currently available to Israel. To protect itself against a nuclearizing Iran, Israel’s very best course may still be to seize the conventional preemption option as soon as possible. Simultaneously, Israel should reject even any hint of counterforce targeting doctrine, and focus instead upon massive counter-value reprisals.

International law is not a suicide pact. Every state has the established right to defend itself and its people against aggression, especially where these attacks would involve mass-destruction weapons. Israel, now facing a verifiably clear and undisguised risk of genocidal war from Iran, would assuredly never consider the first use of nuclear weapons. But should Iranian atomic genocide ever be unleashed against Israel’s cities, the Islamic Republic’s

leaders should understand fully and in advance that Israel would respond with considerably more than parallel destructiveness.

\* \* \*

All world politics, and all global strategy, move in the midst of death. To truly understand calculations of war, deterrence and defense, Israeli planners need to understand (1) enemy orientations to death, both individual and collective; and (2) Israeli orientations to death, both individual and collective. This is especially obvious in the course of recent Islamic aggressions toward Israel from *Hizbullah* in Lebanon and from *Hamas* and Islamic *Jihad* in Judea/Samaria/Gaza.

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Heinrich von Treitschke, in his published lectures on **politics**, cites approvingly to Fichte: “Individual man sees in his country the realization of his earthly immortality.” Such “seeing” among Israel’s current Islamic enemies is a source of **particular**, even existential, danger. The danger is exacerbated by lack of symmetry with “individual man” in Israel, who generally sees such “realization” much less in his own country.

\* \* \*

It is easy to feel sorry for the Palestinians in Gaza. Televised and print images of their apparently unrelieved misery would appear to suggest Israeli cruelty in the use of armed force. Exactly the opposite is true. By deliberately placing elderly women and young children in areas from which lethal rockets are launched into Israeli homes and schools, it is only the Palestinian leaders who openly violate the law of war. Their insidious practice of “human shields” – the same practice recently witnessed in *Hizbullah*-controlled areas of Lebanon – is far more than an expression of

cowardice. It also represents a specific crime under international law. This crime, as we already know, is called “perfidy”.

Several Palestinian terror groups including both *Hamas* and the “moderate” Palestinian Authority are now actively planning for mega-terror attacks upon Israel. These unprecedented attacks, probably in close cooperation with elements of *al-Qai`dah*, would use chemical and/or biological weapons of mass destruction. Over time, if Iran should begin to transfer portions of its growing inventory of nuclear materials to terror groups, Israel could also face Palestinian-directed nuclear terrorism. Thanks to former Prime Minister Sharon’s policy of “disengagement”, these insidious preparations are already underway in Gaza.

What government on earth could be expected to sit back passively and render its population vulnerable to unprecedented levels of instantaneous mass-slaughter? Would we, in the United States, sit quietly by as rockets rained down upon American cities from terrorist sanctuaries somewhere on our northern or southern borders? Would we allow such carnage to continue with impunity? Would capitulation and surrender be the proper or excusable reaction of a sovereign state sworn to protect its populations?

Quite remarkably, although always unrecognized and unacknowledged, Israel has been willing to keep its essential counterterrorism operations in Gaza consistent with the established standards of humanitarian international law. Palestinian violence, however, is persistently in violation of all civilized rules and principles of engagement. And all this after Israel very painfully “disengaged” from Gaza on the presumption that the Palestinians – finally – would put an end to their relentless barrage of terror.

Terrorism is more than just bad behavior. Terrorism, we have noted, is a distinct and codified crime under international law. When terrorists represent populations that enthusiastically support such attacks, which is certainly well-documented among the Palestinian community, and where these terrorists also find easy refuge among hospitable populations, full responsibility for ensuing counterterrorist harms lies exclusively with the criminals. Understood in terms of still-ongoing Palestinian terrorism and Israeli self-defense, this means that the Palestinian side alone must now bear legal responsibility for Arab civilian casualties in Gaza.

International law is not a suicide pact. Rather, it correctly offers an authoritative body of rules and procedures that always permits states to



express their “inherent right of self-defense”. When terrorist organizations openly celebrate the explosive “martyrdom” of Palestinian children, and when Palestinian leaders unashamedly seek religious redemption through the mass-murder of Jewish children, the terrorists have absolutely no legal right to demand sanctuary. Anywhere. Under international law they are *hostes humani generis*, “Common enemies of humankind”. Such murderers must be punished severely wherever they are found. For their arrest and prosecution, jurisdiction is incontestably “universal”.

Palestinian terrorism, even during its occasional “slow” periods, has become all-too familiar. Using bombs filled with nails, razor blades and screws dipped in rat poison, the killers proceed to maim and burn Israeli civilians with only cheers and blessings from the leading Islamic clergy. As for those “commanders” who control the suicide-bombers’ mayhem, they cower in their towns and cities, always taking care to find personal safety amidst densely-packed Arab populations. Special IDF counterterrorism and commando units then attempt to identify and target only the terrorist leaders and to minimize collateral harms. Sometimes, however, such harms simply can’t be avoided, even by the IDF, which follows its code of “Purity of Arms” far more stringently than any other nation’s army.

International law is not a suicide pact. All combatants, including Palestinian terrorists, are bound by the Law of War. This requirement is found in Article 3, common to the four Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, and at the two protocols to these Conventions. Protocol I applies humanitarian international law to all conflicts fought for “self-determination”, the stated objective of all Palestinian fighters. A product of the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts (1977), this Protocol brings all irregular forces within the full scope of international law. In this connection, the terms “fighter” and “irregular” are generous in describing Palestinian terrorists, fanatical criminals who normally target only civilians and whose characteristic mode of “battle” is not military engagement, but primal religious sacrifice.

Israel has both the right and the obligation under international law to protect its citizens from criminal acts of terrorism. Should it ever decide to yield to Palestinian perfidy in its indispensable war against escalating terror violence, Israel would surrender this important right and undermine this fundamental

obligation. The clear effect of such capitulation would be to make potential victims of us all.

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In 1936, on the occasion of a speech by the nationalist general Millan Astray at the University of Salamanca in Spain, the hall thundered with the general's favorite motto: *Viva La Muerte!* "Long live death." When the speech was over, Miguel de Unamuno, rector of the University, rose and said: "Just now I heard a necrophilous and senseless cry...this outlandish paradox is repellent to me." Yet, this very same repellent cry is, today, the lurid rallying cry of Islamic "suicide" terrorists. Again and again, we hear from *Hizbullah*, and *Hamas* and Islamic *Jihad* and *al-Qai`dah* and also *Fatah*, "We love death."

Why do we put the word "suicide" in quotation marks? Islamic "lovers of death" certainly do not commit suicide in any ordinary fashion. As they believe that acts of "martyrdom" always assure a blissful immortality, their "suicide" makes a mockery of any morbid affection. As they commit "suicide" only to assure eternal life, their pretended heroism is never more than a furiously voluptuous act of cowardice.

There are subtle complications. The self-proclaimed Islamic "lover of death" also fears continuation of his life on earth. This life is almost always devoid of any felt opportunity to do something rewarding and almost always prohibits, inhibits and disdains the most compelling needs of his inborn human sexuality. Thwarting both meaning and eros, elements of Islamic society continue to prod thousands of young males to "martyr" themselves in the killing of "infidels". The explosive link between suicide terror violence and repressed male sexuality is still widely unrecognized. On female suicide bombers, the jury is still out.

September 11<sup>th</sup> had nothing really to do with politics. These terror attacks were not produced by Islamic anger about certain allegedly objectionable features of American foreign policy. Such feeble explanations were merely the predictable ventings of certain misguided academics and journalists.. What animated September 11<sup>th</sup> was the tangibly ecstatic promise of personal salvation through distinctly "sacred" acts of killing.

The “suicide” killing of American men, women and children on that day stemmed from the very same sentiments that continue to produce “suicide” killings of Israeli noncombatants. Consider the ominously characteristic statement by one Jamal Abdel Hamid Youssef, explaining operations of the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades (military wing of *Hamas* in Gaza): “Our suicide operations are a message...that our people love death. Our goal is to die for the sake of God, and if we live we want to humiliate Jews and trample on their necks.” *Hamas*, which was loudly overjoyed at the murders of September 11<sup>th</sup>, promises all Islamic “suicides” nothing less than **Freedom from Death**.

By “dying” in the divinely-mandated act of killing “Jews” or “Americans” (it makes no difference that these are not mutually exclusive categories; Islamic terrorists are interested in blood sacrifice, not formal logic), the “suicide” terrorist believes that he conquers death. In his clerically-promised eternal life, there will be rivers of honey and seventy-two virgins. None of this is mere metaphor. These are the literal and very palpable rewards for “dying” in a mandated and glorious fight against the most despised enemies of The One True Faith.

With Allah on his or her side, the Islamic “suicide” terrorist sees absolutely nothing suicidal about his willful murder of Jews, or Americans. For him or for her, a plain coward immobilized by fear of both death and life, “suicide” is just a momentary inconvenience on the fiery trajectory into heaven. Now the insufferable death fear of ego is lessened by **sacrifice** of the infidel. It is expressly through the burning and maiming of defenseless men, women and children that the terrorist seeks to buy himself free from personal death.

We are left to deal with an apparent paradox. What shall we do about a “suicide” that does not intend to end the murderer’s own life, but to extend it forever? For Israel, for America, there is now little point to deterring the determined murderers with threats of death. Such threats, after all, would be received not only without apprehension, but also with a delirious cry of joy and a collective moan of fulfillment.

To deter the Islamic “suicide” terrorists, Israel and America must now offer the aspiring mass-murderers a tangible threat of **real** suicide. Violence and the sacred are presently inseparable for the Islamic “suicide” terrorist. But Israel and America should immediately think in terms of “desacrilizing” his/her grotesque inversion of holiness.

Now it must be our prompt task to convince the would-be mass-terrorist that divine reward will never follow his sacrificial logic, and that murders in the name of Allah will lead not to paradise, but to the grave.

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There is great danger for Israel in presuming too much Reason in enemy decision-making and world affairs. Today the use of violence within and between states is often self-propelled and self-rewarding, effectively supplanting Clausewitz with De Sade. The argument has been made most convincingly by Milan Kundera, in his book, *The Art of the Novel*. Describing a sheer force of violence that wills to assert itself as force, he talks about this force as “naked, as naked as in Kafka’s novels... The aggressivity of force is thoroughly disinterested; unmotivated; it wills only its own will; it is pure irrationality.” If Kundera is correct, what is Israel to do about its enemies? What shall it assume about enemy decision-making processes? Should not Israeli planners throw out the handbooks of political scientists and strategic theorists in favor of Kafka and Kundera? And what, exactly, can they learn from the “fiction” writers?

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The great Romanian (French) playwright, Eugene Ionesco, died in April 1994. In his only novel, *The Hermit*, Ionesco claims: “People kill and are killed in order to prove to themselves that life exists.” Although a broad philosophical reflection, rather than an immediately useful strategic maxim, it says much about the endlessly murderous intentions of Israel’s Islamic enemies and, by extension, about Israel’s prospective responses.

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## Chapter II:

### Jewish Pain, Suffering, and Life

We Jews have experienced so much pain in our long and arduous history that the pain of Arab/Islamic terrorism seems to be just another episode of indescribable suffering. To an extent, this is certainly true. For the moment, we must endure, and – in the end – we shall prevail. So it has been before; so it will be again.

It is also true that, whatever its particular source, our pain is incommunicable. This fact is deeply rooted in the confining space of each individual human body. Very simply, no human language can ever really describe pain, an observation that has distinctly special and important implications for control of violence in the world. But with specific respect to Arab/Islamic terror-violence, this observation has the decidedly regrettable effect of reducing current Israeli suffering to an altogether anesthetized inventory of “casualties”.

Israel’s excruciating pain at the bloodied hands of Arab/Islamic terrorists remains subject to the very stark limitations of grammar and syntax. Of course, everyone who is human has suffered physical pain, and everyone who has suffered knows that bodily anguish not only defies language, but that it is also language-destroying. In the case of relentless Arab/Islamic terror against Israelis, this inexpressibility of pain now stands in the way of acknowledging such terror as pure barbarism. Shielded by the inherent limitations of language, suicide-bombers are now able to present themselves before the tribunal of world public opinion as honorable armed combatants. In fact, however, these murderers are anything but soldiers or “freedom fighters”. Rather, they are fearful and gratuitously destructive criminals, killers who combine a rare species of cowardice with a perverse commitment to inflict great harm solely for harm’s sake.

Significantly, there is, from the Arab/Islamic terrorist point of view, no reasonable hope of transforming Israeli pain into purposeful Arab/Islamic power. On the contrary, the *Hamas/Islamic Jihad/Fatah/Hizbullah* (it makes no difference) resort to carnage and mayhem may inevitably stiffen even the most “liberation” minded hearts. So why do these terrorists continue to enthusiastically inflict pain upon innocents, tearing up unprotected Jewish bodies with exploding razor blades and ball bearings and without foreseeable

pragmatic benefit? Have these terrorists now abandoned the usual political playbook of policy advantage?

One partial answer to this question is that Arab/Islamic terrorists, in exactly the same fashion as their intended audiences, are imprisoned by the remorseless shortfalls of human language. The pain experienced by one human body can never genuinely be shared with another, even if these bodies are closely related by blood and even if the physical distance between them is short. Although widely unacknowledged, the split between one's own body and the body of another is always absolute. For reasons that likely have more to do with Darwinian logic than the vagaries of compassion, the "membranes" between bodies are always stubbornly impermeable. This split, therefore, allows even the most heinous harms to "others" to be viewed "objectively". Sometimes these harms can even be accepted as a distinctly pardonable form of "national liberation".

For Arab/Islamic terrorists and their supporters, the violent death meted out to Israelis is always only an abstraction. As "infidels", we hear again and again, their Jewish victims lack "sacredness". For the terrorists, murdering these Jewish victims is not just a minor matter. It is always "the will of Allah". It is, for them, always a matter for loud family celebration.

Physical pain within the human body not only destroys ordinary language, it can actually bring about a visceral reversion to pre-language human sounds – that is, to those primal moans and cries and whispers that are anterior to learned speech. While the many Jewish victims of enemy terror writhe agonizingly from the burns and the nails and the screws dipped ever so lovingly into rat poison, neither the world publics who bear silent witness, nor the screaming murderers themselves can ever begin to experience the meaning of what is being suffered. This incapacity is, to be sure, not an excuse for the bystanders or for the perpetrators, but it does help to explain why even callous killing and mutilation by terrorists can sometimes be construed as rebellion. Moreover, the incommunicability of physical pain further amplifies Israeli injuries from terrorism by insistently reminding the victims that their suffering is not only intense, but that it is also understated. For the Jewish victims there is never an anesthesia strong enough for the pain, but for the observers and for the perpetrators the victims' pain is always anesthetized.

For all who shall learn about the latest Palestinian or *Hizbullah* attack upon a nursery school, a kindergarten van, a city bus, an ice-cream parlor, a pizza shop or a falafel stand, the suffering intentionally ignited upon Jewish civilians will never be truly felt. And even then, this suffering will flicker for only a moment before it disappears. Although it will be years before the “merely wounded” are ever again able to move their own violated bodies beyond immeasurable boundaries of torment, newspaper readers and television viewers will pause only for a second before progressing to less disturbing forms of discourse.

By its very nature, physical pain has no decipherable voice, no touchable referent. When, at last, it finds some dimming sound at all, the listener no longer wants to be bothered. This human listener, mortal and fragile, wishes, pathetically but understandably, to deny his or her own flesh and blood vulnerabilities.

All things move in the midst of death, and the denial of death is surely humankind’s basic preoccupation. As a result, the pain of others is necessarily kept at a safe distance and the horror of that pain is purposefully blunted by language. Arab/Islamic terrorists, therefore, are always much, much worse than they might appear (they are certainly not “freedom fighters”), and their crimes are not always recognized as unforgivable and repellent. This problem of justice can never really be “solved”, but the sources of any possible improvement lie nonetheless in suffering, blood, and the inevitably common agony of extinction.

From the standpoint of Israel’s ongoing struggle for survival in an authentically genocidal region, the country’s leaders must soon come to admit that the time for pretend “peace processes” is over, that any political “road map” is an invented cartography of Jewish annihilation, that Israeli pain is infinitely more important than any diplomatic logic, that a deliberately targeted child’s cry of despair is always more important than even the most subtle strategic calculations, and that freely-flowing human tears have far, far deeper meaning than learned smiles.

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To understand and predict global responses to Israeli actions in world affairs, Israeli planners must never forget that their country is always the Jew in macrocosm. For the world, macrocosm and microcosm are indistinguishable and indissoluble. Hence, for Israeli planners to expect global responses to Israeli actions to be detached from millennia of prejudicial hatreds is foolish in the extreme. Israel is not just another state, one among many others. It is unique, *sui generis*, not in the sense that it is believed to warrant greater justice (a post-Holocaust conclusion one might expect in a world dominated by Reason) but in the sense that it allegedly deserves less, always less, than every other state. An exploded bus of Israeli women and children will elicit little compassion or even concern from the “international community”. A building of Lebanese civilians blown up mistakenly by the IDF in an act of essential self-defense will occasion worldwide grief. Even a mountain of Jewish corpses is always judged to be smaller and more bearable than any other group’s assemblage of dead persons. Israel and justice cannot be uttered in the same breath for the same reason that Jews and justice cannot be uttered in the same breath. Israel, the Jew in macrocosm, will long continue to be despised in the Arab/Islamic world. Israel will long be kept distanced from justice. Israeli decision-makers **must** therefore plan accordingly.

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We must confront the growing threat of mega-terror. To a large extent, this existential threat to Israel is made worse by the always-deliberate insertion of terrorist personnel and assets in the midst of civilian populations. Known to general publics as “human shields”, this practice is also explicitly identified and criminalized under international law as “perfidy”.

Terrorism is itself a codified crime under international law. It follows that perfidious deception by Arab/Islamic terrorists adds a distinctly second layer of illegality to the first. After all, the *Hamas*, *Islamic Jihad*, *Fatah* and *Hizbullah* insurgencies are illegal in themselves.

Certain forms of deception are permitted to states under the laws of war, but the use of human shields is always illegal to all combatants. During the recent Lebanon war, *Hizbullah* – assisted by Syria and Iran – intentionally



placed most of its arms and fighters squarely in the areas of Arab civilian populations. In the future, perfidious violations of the laws of war by any of the ongoing regional insurgencies could involve the placement of chemical, biological or even nuclear weapons and infrastructures in various Arab/Islamic towns and cities, giving rise to very dramatic escalations of violence. To be sure, such prohibited placement is already well underway in Iran with respect to all three categories of planned mega-terror.

Sooner or later, certain of Israel's Arab/Islamic enemies, under cover of perfidy (the United Nations, after all, recently chose to condemn Israeli self-defense, not *Hizbullah* war crimes) will begin to magnify their terror operations. Inevitably, these enemies will strive to exploit more fully the methods of WMD terror-violence. Presently, at least, there is little to suggest that they won't succeed.

There are, says Albert Camus, "crimes of passion and crimes of logic". But the precise boundary between these crimes is often unclear, vague, porous, not easily defined. Understood in terms of the ever-expanding mega-terrorist threat to Israel, the pertinent crimes display both passion and logic. While the level of passion has certainly increased, there has been no corresponding diminution of logic. On the contrary, the constantly growing terrorist passion – some would call it a heightened and murderous religious fervor – has been congruent with tactical logic. This passion has been enhancing Israeli fears and (until now) hastening Israeli territorial capitulations.

Over time, the terrorist slaughterers will decide that they must do "more" in order to achieve their goals. Here, logic will spawn new passions which, in turn, will reinforce logic. Combining careful cost-benefit calculations with virulent Arab/Islamic religious frenzy, the terrorists will reason that "ordinary" suicide bombings have become old-fashioned and that maintaining "adequate" Israeli fear (the sort of fear that would impel more territorial surrenders) calls for new and substantially higher forms of destructiveness. Unless Israeli authorities have anticipated such escalations of violence (clearly, they have) **and** are prepared to dominate the resultant escalatory process (this, however, is somewhat less clear), the number of new Israeli victims could become inconceivably large.

Significantly, the danger of unconventional terrorism could become great even in the absence of logic. Indeed, this danger might even be **greater** if terrorist enemies and their allies become more and more oriented to crimes

of passion. Animated only by the call of *Jihad* and operating far beyond the rules of rationality in weighing decisional alternatives, the terrorists might then opt for chemical, biological or even nuclear destruction – and apart from any considered calculations of geopolitical advantage. Here, violence would be celebrated for its own sake – for the sheer voluptuous joy of murdering and dismembering Jews – and a numbing Arab/Islamic irrationality would immobilize all Israeli hopes for terrorist restraint. As for compelling Israeli deterrence of terrorist attack, it would become fruitless by definition.

The “blood-dimmed tide is loosed”, says the poet Yeats, “and everywhere the ceremony of innocence is drowned.” From the start, all anti-Israel terrorists, **especially *Fatah***, have accepted the idea of violence as purposeful **because of its “healing” effect upon the perpetrator**. Galvanized by what they have long described as a “battle of vengeance”, these terrorists have seen in their attacks not merely the obvious **logic** of influencing the victims, but also the Fanonian **logic** of “purifying” the perpetrators.

“Violence,” says Franz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*, “is a purifying force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from despair and inaction. It makes him fearless and restores his self-respect.” This idea has long been at the heart of *Fatah* doctrine, and is now very much in fashion among all other Palestinian and *Hizbullah* insurgents. An early *Fatah* pamphlet, “The Revolution and Violence, the Road to Victory”, informed the reader that slaughter serves not only to eliminate the opposition but also to transform the “revolutionary”. It is, says the pamphlet, “a healing medicine for all our people’s diseases”. How much more healing, we must ask, and how much better for the terrorist’s self-respect, if rockets and bombs kill thousands or even tens of thousands of Israelis rather than “mere” dozens? Let us recall, if there are any doubts, the huge crowds of Palestinians cheering on rooftops during Saddam’s 1991 Scud attacks on Tel Aviv and Haifa. Their cheers openly urged the Iraqi mass killing of Israeli civilians.

Terror has an appreciable impact beyond incidence. It also has a distinct “quality”, a potentially decisive combination of venue and lethality that cannot be ignored and that must be countered. Linked to a particular species of fear, this **quality of terror** must represent an absolutely crucial variable in any society’s war against terrorism. Reciprocally, it must elicit an appropriate quality of counter-terrorism.

Let us imagine, in this connection, the qualitative difference, for Israel, between bus or market suicide-bombings and the murder of masses of Tel Avivians or Jerusalemites, either by “small” nuclear explosions or by radiological contamination. The difference would be considerable. Although it is certainly possible that a terrorist resort to such higher-order destruction would prove to be counter-productive, this does not necessarily suggest a corresponding terrorist reluctance to undertake such an escalation. After all, if they are “logical” the terrorists might not foresee such counter-productiveness and if they are “passionate” they might not care.

Writing about that species of fear that arises from tragedy, Aristotle emphasized that such fear “demands a person who suffers undeservedly” and that it must be felt by “one of ourselves”. This fear, or terror, has little or nothing to do with our private concern for an impending misfortune to others, but rather from our perceived resemblance to the victim. We feel terror on our own behalf; we fear that **we** may become the objects of commiseration. Terror, in short, is fear referred back to ourselves. Naturally, therefore, the **quality** of this terror is at its highest point when this fear is especially acute and where suffering acutely is especially likely. And what could possibly create more acute fear of probable victimization than the threat of chemical, biological or nuclear terrorism?

Israel, of course, must take special heed. Facing certain terrible crimes of logic, it can communicate to its terrorist foes that **Jerusalem** is prepared to dominate escalation, and that terrorist excursions into higher-order destructiveness would elicit **anything but** capitulation. Facing certain terrible crimes of passion, it can only confront the enemy in advance. Insofar as an increasingly impassioned enemy armed with unconventional weapons might not be susceptible to deterrent threats, the only reasonable course would lie in some greatly expanded forms of preemption. Although this seems obvious enough, it is, presently, implausible that Israeli officials would authorize such wider efforts at anticipatory self-defense.

With further regard to Israel and considerations of justice (again, a paradoxical conjunction of terms), it must be recalled that histories of victimization have never conferred survival upon a people or a state, least of all upon the Jewish people. Such recollection stands in marked contrast to the oft-stated wish that terrible suffering, as in the matter of the Holocaust, cannot possibly be in vain. Eugene Ionesco, for example, offers the following passage from Andre Gide’s **Journal**, dated January 29, 1932:

“The idea that so much suffering can be in vain is intolerable to me, it kept me awake all night...” As a “good Westerner”, continues Ionesco, “Andre Gide couldn’t help but think that suffering was the price of happiness, that suffering has to be rewarded.” Yet, Israeli planners must not forget that the world hardly ever pities those who suffer; all the more those who suffer greatly. Often, suffering creates **scorn**. So it is today with Jewish suffering, the Holocaust and the State of Israel.

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Israeli planners are not philosophers. But they should recall Horace’s recipe: “*Si vis me flere dolendum est primum ipsi tibi*” – if you want me to weep, you must first grieve yourself. Before Israel can expect concern from the world, for its past and for its future, its own population must “first grieve” itself; must care, deeply and profoundly and publicly, for its own history and its own essential continuity; for **surviving** at all costs. Paradoxically, earlier government policies of sequential concessions and territorial “compromise” displayed the very opposite of such needed “grief”, suggesting an unwarranted degree of “understanding” and inflated national self-confidence. Further, post-Zionist private sentiments, now still present throughout Israel, also reject essential forms of “grief”.

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The Memorial Wall (the Wall of Holocaust and Heroism) at Yad Vashem has four sections, ranging from the *Shoah* to Re-Birth. Magnificently designed by Naftali Bezem, it takes us movingly from an inferno in which the Holy is utterly profaned to the divine sanctuary of new Jewish generations. But these generations, symbolized by the countenance of a lion, must still shed endless tears.

For all of the lion’s greatness and strength, he can never be permitted to forget. Always, always...he must weep for the past. Implicit in this seemingly paradoxical imagery is the indelible imprint of Jewish uniqueness.

Indeed, without this incontestable uniqueness there can be no redemption, not for the Jews and – therefore – not for the wider world. In going up to The Land, Bezem's new Jew acknowledges that Israel can never be regarded as merely one among the nations, but rather as a singularly special nation for all time.

Jewish uniqueness is both an individual and collective obligation. The latter is not possible without the former. Facing the world without a deeply felt sense of uniqueness, the Jewish state – the individual Jew in macrocosm – can never muster the spiritual and reverential strength it will need to survive.

We must never forget that Israel has a very special place in the world, and that denying this special place does unpardonable violence to the sacred. Here, the wisdom of Martin Buber is instructive: "There is no re-establishing of Israel, there is no security for it save one: it must assume the burden of its uniqueness..." Yet, today, Israel is obsessed with a very contrary and dangerous ethos. Today, virtually all of Israel wants only to be like everyone else; above all, it wants to "fit in" the world. If Israel is "successful" in this wrongful ambition, the resultant triumph of secular uniformity, of utterly inappropriate goals and values, will only hasten Israel's demise.

Israel, of course, faces many threats, some of them authentically existential. These threats, primarily the growing risks of unconventional terrorism and unconventional war, understandably preoccupy the concerns of Israel's political leaders and military planners. But there are also less obvious and less palpable threats that, in certain respects, are every bit as ominous and are actually interrelated. None is more serious than the accelerating national retreat from Israeli Jewish uniqueness, a retreat animated by steadfast imitation of popular culture in the United States. For far too many Israelis, the currently optimal Jewish state is one looking like Los Angeles.

For many states on this imperiled planet, imitation is not a conscious choice. For a variety of reasons, most of them having to do with unyielding economic and systemic constraints, these states are simply consigned to mimicry by dire circumstances far beyond their control. Here there is little for us to comment upon or to criticize.

Israel, however, is another matter entirely. What distinguishes Israel from these other imitative states is that it has too often **chosen** mediocrity, all too often actually preferring an incremental pattern of social and political imitation to even a hint of leadership by Jewish example. To be sure, in

high-tech industries, in science, in medicine, in education, Israel is (hardly a surprise) always at the top. Yet, in most of its political and diplomatic arrangements, Israel has fallen very short. And of what use will be its vast array of intellectual accomplishments if it should simultaneously lose its Jewish soul as well as its Jewish land?

The consequences of an imitative Jewish state are already plain to see. For Israel, mimicry has led directly to the Oslo and Road Map process of national suicide, including the unforgivable “disengagement” from Gaza. And, reciprocally, the Oslo/Road Map Process has led directly to a loss of Jewish meaning and loss of Jewish national will. Now accepting a “post-Zionist” discourse that would have been incomprehensible to earlier generations of Israelis (e.g., on January 14, 1999, Shimon Peres congratulated the PLO on its “long struggle for national liberation”), today’s Israeli citizens are largely unwilling to acknowledge that **they** inhabit the most endangered state in the Middle East and that **they** represent the most endangered Jewish community on the face of the Earth.

To a significant extent, the prior Governments’ “New Middle East” is **the** apt metaphor for Israel’s self-inflicted liabilities. Celebrating an Israel that steadfastly refuses to distance itself from the alluring American sea of materialism and imitativeness, this fashionably *au courant* image displays sharp discontinuity with millennia of meaningful Jewish history, a history overstocked not only with martyrs, but also with those Jews who were able to recognize Jewish national conformance and assimilation as a slow form of Jewish death. For Israel, the “New Middle East” now offers not only intolerable risks of war and terrorism, but also the even more insidious risks of death by intentional **religious** underachievement and willful **cultural** mediocrity.

On a planet where evil often remains “banal”, the effective origins of terrorism, war and genocide lie not in particularly monstrous individuals, but rather in societies that positively despise the individual. In such societies, the mob is everything and a dreary secular sameness is the hallmark of national “progress”. Surrounded by exactly such societies, all of which “fit in” by keeping Israel “out”, the State of Israel – prodded by Washington – has often decided not to reject this terrible and terrifying mob, but to join it, to honor it, even to take an absolute delight in its conscious suppression of individual Jewish promise in favor of a presumed belonging and public acceptance. For

Israel, however, it is not only good to be “a light unto the nations”, it is an altogether timeless and sacred duty.

In Naftali Bezem’s art, a ladder is the apt representation of Aliya, of the Jew going up to The Land. Of course it also arouses associations with Jacob’s dream and with Cabbalist degrees of ascension. By these associations, the meaning of Aliya is extended meaningfully to illustrate Jewish fullness and perfection, conditions that can never be separated from an unhindered awareness of Jewish uniqueness.

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### Chapter III:

#### Logic, Persuasion, American Guarantees and Preemption

Regarding judgments of rationality and deterrence, Israeli planners must never fail to put themselves into the shoes of enemy decision-makers. What will impact these decision-makers, and therefore Israel's safety, will not be Israeli perceptions or even some "objectively correct" set of facts, but only what **they** perceive as real. Hence, what may well appear prudent and rational in Tel Aviv could be taken as cowardly and irrational in Teheran or Damascus. I have in mind, for example, differential views on Israel's decision not to retaliate for 39 Iraqi Scud missile attacks during the 1991 Gulf War. What will be the long-term effects of this decision on Israel's overall deterrence posture? This is an important question, one that needs to be asked again and again and again. Surely it didn't help in Lebanon, where in the summer of 2006 *Hizbullah* had been emboldened.

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Israeli planners focus, of course, on enemy capabilities and intentions. But do they focus on each variable as separate and discrete, or rather as interdependent and synergistic? As one can affect the other, only the latter orientation is correct and productive.

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Most Palestinian communities across the world were jubilant on September 11, 2001. More recently, these same communities expressed outrage at the successful American assassination of terrorist leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. For them, the murderous mastermind of *al-Qai`dah* in Iraq had been a great hero. Dead, he was now a "martyr".

But the Palestinian link to *al-Qai`dah* has become much more than mere sympathy and friendship. Extending beyond a common visceral hatred of the United States, it also concerns networks of tactical cooperation. Today there are several shadowy alignments that involve information sharing, weaponry,



safe houses, and scientific expertise. The purpose of these alignments is terror attacks against both Israel and the United States. These planned operations could certainly include chemical, biological or even nuclear technologies.

None of this should be a surprise. Immediately after September 11<sup>th</sup>, not only *Hamas* approached *al-Qai`dah*, but so did Arafat's own forces. In fact, *Fatah*, first formed as Arafat's movement within the PLO, had openly embraced "martyrdom operations" against Israeli women and children. Although Palestinian terrorists hardly needed *al-Qai`dah* to prod them to further acts of unspeakable cruelty, the example of September 11<sup>th</sup> seemed to offer them both great comfort and new resolve. For its part, *al-Qai`dah* has been more than pleased that its Palestinian collaborators cite frequently to the sacred *Hadith*: "Oh Allah, annihilate the Jews and their supporters..."

The idea of killing for the sake of Islam is glorified both by the principal Palestinian terror groups and by *al-Qai`dah*. In addition to the usual sanctifications of "suicide bombing", both also approve of religion-based killing within the Islamic community. Both term Muslims who allegedly collaborate with the United States as *murtaddun* (apostates) and both prescribe the sentence of *murtadd harbi*; (to wit, the "ally with Satan") a *Fatwa*, (a death-sentence). The pertinent *Qur`anic* verse is this: "The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Prophet and strive to make mischief in the land, is only this – that they should be murdered or crucified, or their hands and feet should be cut off on opposing sides..." There is no difference here between man and woman: "It is permissible to shed the blood of a woman who is a heretic (*Harbiyya*), even if her fighting is limited to singing."

*Al-Qai`dah*'s hatred of the United States has little to do with American support for Israel. If Israel ceased to exist, its contempt for this country would continue unabated. This is because of the unforgivable "sin" of American ties to "apostates and criminals" who rule in such Islamic countries as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, Jordan, the Emirates and Pakistan.

On December 2, 2002, *al-Qai`dah* first announced the establishment of the "Islamic *al-Qa`idah* Organization in Palestine". The announcement declared "a vow of allegiance to the Emir of the *Mujahideen*, the leader Osama bin Laden, by means of whom Allah strengthened the Nation of Islam." Calling

for an end to regimes that “serve only the murderous Jews and the Great Satan”, the announcement ends with a plea to

our brothers in Islam in Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia to attack the American interests and the heretical institutions of apostasy... Death to the Jews and Zionism; death to America; strength to Allah, Allah is great, and victory to Islam.

*Al-Qai`dah* now operates secretly in Judea and Samaria and openly in Gaza at the express invitation of both *Fatah* and *Hamas*. Years back, Yasir Arafat first imported *Hizbullah* fighters to assist with terror attacks against Israel. Today, Osama bin Laden’s Islamic fighters are part of the deadly terrorist mix. Arafat had first gathered together a diverse collection of Iranian Revolutionary Guards, *Hizbullah*, Popular Front-General Command, various Iraqi military intelligence units (Palestinian terrorists had always been extremely close to Saddam Hussein, even sending Palestine Liberation Army units to help torture Kuwaitis in 1991), the pro-Iraqi Arab liberation Front, and, since April 2002, *al-Qai`dah*. This same crosscut of Islamic terrorist groups presently exists in the United States – although here (let us take comfort) they function “only” as sleeper cells.

It is important in any war to distinguish friend from foe. Coordinated mega-terror strikes against Israel and America are currently being planned by joint Palestinian/*al-Qai`dah* teams. It follows that both Israel and the United States should immediately cease any and all assistance to the *Hamas*-controlled Palestinian Authority. Above all, it is time for Washington to stop sending American tax dollars to support arch-enemies of the United States.

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Israel is unable to ensure its security, even its survival, through reliance on ballistic missile defense and US guarantees. Rather, barring radical transformation of enemy regimes, Jerusalem could have no existential choice but to preemptively destroy certain enemy unconventional weapons and supporting infrastructures in a timely manner. Although the currently fashionable idea of a “multilayered defense” has its attractions (above all, it puts off the preemption imperative by highlighting far more palatable

tactical options), in the end it could mean too little. It follows that Israeli planners should look closely and immediately at the following threat dimensions: (1) expected probability of enemy first-strikes over time; (2) expected disutility of enemy first-strikes over time (itself dependent, *inter alia*, on nature of enemy weaponry, projected enemy targeting doctrines, and multiplication/dispersion/hardening of Israeli unconventional forces); (3) expected collaborative prospects between enemy states (and possibly between enemy state and **non-state** actors); (4) expected schedules of enemy unconventional weapons deployments; (5) expected efficiency of enemy active defenses over time; (6) expected efficiency of Israeli active defenses over time; (7) expected efficiency of Israeli hard-target counterforce operations over time; and (8) expected world community reactions to Israeli preemptions. It goes without saying that Israel's commitment to the so-called "Peace Process" has greatly impaired its essential preemption option, and that such commitment is even more injurious to Israeli survival than is commonly understood.

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The dangers to Israel of a Palestinian state must be understood within the general context of concern for Israeli nuclear strategy and regional nuclear war. Should the "Peace Process" or "Road Map" produce a state of Palestine, which is now rather plausible, Israel's substantial loss of strategic depth will be recognized by enemy states, especially by Iran, Lebanon, Egypt and Syria, as a significant liability for Jerusalem. Such recognition, in turn, will heat up enemy state intentions against Israel, occasioning an accelerated search for capabilities and, consequently, a heightened risk of war initiated from Teheran or Baghdad or Cairo or Damascus. Israeli planners, of course, might foresee such enemy calculations and seek to compensate for the loss of territories in a number of different ways. For example, Jerusalem could decide to take its bomb out of the "basement" (as a deterrence-enhancing measure) and/or it could accept a heightened willingness to launch preemptive strikes against enemy hard targets. Made aware of such Israeli intentions, intentions that would accrue from Israel's new vulnerabilities, enemy states could respond in a more or less parallel

fashion, preparing more openly for nuclearization and/or for first-strike attacks against the Jewish state.

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The phrase, “Death to Israel”, like the phrase “Death to the Jews”, is a phrase that is always uttered in chorus. A hater of Israel, like a hater of individual Jews, is always attached to a crowd or to a mob. In such hatreds, one cannot be alone. It is this communal tradition of hatred, more than anything else, which draws adherents – both among the nations and among peoples within nations. There is little point in seeking to transform this tradition, which is deeply embedded in a generically human desperation to **belong**. Instead, those who are responsible for Israeli safety and security from enemy attacks should now focus exclusively on what **can** be changed.

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Israeli planners must protect Israel’s nuclear forces by some combination of multiplication/dispersion/hardening. Enemy planners, observing such measures, might perceive preparations for an Israeli first-strike. Such erroneous perceptions are all the more likely, should Israel simultaneously seek further force protection via appropriate forms of active and passive defenses. Ironically, in seeking to stabilize deterrence by signaling enemy states that its own nuclear forces are secure from enemy first strikes – i.e., that these are exclusively second-strike forces with “assured destruction” capability – Jerusalem could create the impression that it is preparing to strike first. Here, Israel’s attempts to convince enemy states that it is not preparing for preemption could backfire, generating new incentives to these enemy states to “preempt” themselves. The alternative, for Israel, would be to deliberately disguise efforts at nuclear force protection from enemy states, but such subterfuge would also carry considerable risk. After all, should Israel’s enemies calculate that Jerusalem’s nuclear forces are insufficiently protected from first-strike attacks, they would want to exploit current but potentially transient Israeli weakness. Moreover, because insufficient force

protection by Jerusalem could encourage Israeli first-strikes, Israel's enemies would have compelling reasons to launch prompt "preemptive" attacks.

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Regarding the legal right to preemption, Israel's planners may wish to recall the authoritative jurisprudential argument of Hugo Grotius in his *Commentary on the Law of Prize and Booty*:

Now, as Cicero explains, this (justification for anticipatory self-defense) exists whenever he who chooses to wait (for formal declarations of war) will be obliged to pay an unjust penalty before he can exact a just penalty; and, in a general sense, it exists whenever matters do not admit of delay. Thus it is obvious that a just war can be waged in return, without recourse to judicial procedure, against an opponent who has begun an unjust war; nor will any declaration of that just war be required... For, as Aelian says, citing Plato as his authority, any war undertaken for the necessary repulsion of injury, is proclaimed not by a crier nor by a herald but by the voice of Nature herself.

\* \* \*

Israel's military planners must consider important complex relationships between C3I vulnerability and pre-delegations of launch authority. To reduce the risks of "decapitation", an objective as essential to Israeli nuclear deterrence as protection of the weapons themselves, Jerusalem might consider increasing the number of authoritative decision-makers who would have the right to launch under certain carefully-defined residual contingencies. But because the deterrence value of such an increase would require that prospective enemies learn (however indirectly and incompletely) that Israel had taken these decapitation-avoidance pre-delegations (after all, without such learning, enemies would be more apt to calculate that first-strike attacks are cost-effective), those enemies might feel increasingly compelled to "preempt". These preemption incentives would derive from new enemy state fears of a fully intentional Israeli first-strike and/or new fears of accidental, unauthorized or unintentional nuclear strikes from Israel.

Aware of these probable enemy reactions to its pre-delegations of launch authority, pre-delegations which might or might not be complemented by launch-on-warning measures, Israel, reciprocally, could feel compelled to actually strike first, a preemption of preemptive attack that may or may not prove to be net gainful and that may or may not have been avoided by antecedent resistance to pre-delegations of launch authority. Significantly, this entire scenario could be “played” in the other direction. Here, Iran or an Arab state enemy seeking to reduce its decapitation risks would implement pre-delegations of launch authority, thereby encouraging Israeli preemptions and, as a consequence, Iranian and/or Arab state “preemptions of Israeli preemption”. If all of this sounds dreadfully complicated, it is because this is a dreadfully complicated business. Those who do not feel comfortable with dreadful complications should not be in the strategic planning business. Israel does not need simplifiers. It does not need more “experts”. It needs **broadly educated** planners who are willing to fashion an indispensable strategic dialectic, a nuanced genre that goes well beyond the purely journalistic/reportorial “expertise” of certain academic strategists.

\* \* \*

The destructiveness of nuclear weapons continues to pose conceptual problems for Israeli planners (military and civilian) and academic strategists. Fearful of association with such terrible weapons, these planners and strategists too often dance around the most urgent questions. As a result, nuclear war involving Israel may become more likely and security benefits that might have been identified in advance may be lost forever.

\* \* \*

Israel’s planners should be reminded of Miguel de Unamuno’s instructive remark about Hegel:

Hegel made famous his aphorism that all the rational is real and all the real rational; but there are many of us who, unconvinced by Hegel, continue to

believe that the real, the really real, is **irrational**, that reason builds upon irrationalities.

For Israel, faced with the prospect of unconventional aggression from enemy states, it would be prudent to “build upon irrationalities”, i.e., upon the expected irrationalities of an increasingly formidable enemy.

\* \* \*

In considering the operation of nuclear deterrence and associated matters of nuclear strategy, including preemption, Israeli planners may recall that such operation impacts and determines the adequacy of pertinent international law. For example, the adequacy of international law in preventing nuclear war in the Middle East will depend not only upon certain treaties (e.g., the Nonproliferation Treaty), customs and general principles of jurisprudence, but also upon the success or failure of particular country strategies in the region. Hence, if Israel’s strategy should reduce the threat of nuclear war, either because of successful forms of deterrence or because of essential non-nuclear preemptive strikes, such strategy would have to be considered an essential component of international law.

\* \* \*

Even if it could be assumed, by Israeli planners, that enemy state leaders will always be rational, a problematic assumption, to be sure, this would say nothing about the **accuracy of information** used in making rational calculations. Rationality, we must recall, refers only to the **intention** of maximizing specified values or preferences. It says nothing at all about whether the information used is correct or incorrect. Hence, rational enemy state leaders may make errors in calculation that lead to war against Israel.

\* \* \*

Where Israel should face enemy states bent upon a war of extermination (and where have they faced a different enemy), the following jurisprudential understanding should not be lost: War and genocide need not be mutually exclusive. War might well be the means whereby genocide is undertaken. This should be as obvious today as it was during and after the Holocaust. According to Articles II and III of the Genocide Convention, which entered into force on January 12, 1951, genocide includes any of several listed acts “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such...” It follows that where Israel is identified as the institutionalized expression of the Jewish people (an expression that includes national, ethnical, racial and religious components) acts of war intended to destroy the Jewish state could assuredly be genocidal. Here it should be remembered that international law is not a suicide pact; nowhere is it written that Israel must wait patiently for a second genocidal assault.

\* \* \*

Like it or not, Israeli planners must consider the prospect of Israeli **nuclear** preemption against enemy hard targets. Ironically, this prospect could be heightened to the extent that Israel puts off non-nuclear preemptions against developing enemy nuclear assets. If it waits too long to exercise conventional preemption options, Israel could face a choice between (1) undertaking nuclear preemption and ensuring survival of the Third Temple Commonwealth; or (2) resisting nuclear preemption and risking destruction of the Third Temple Commonwealth. Israeli planners could accept the rationality of Option 1 where: (a) Israel’s state enemy had acquired and deployed nuclear and/or other unconventional weapons judged capable of destroying the Third Temple Commonwealth; (b) Israel’s state enemies had made clear that their intentions paralleled their capabilities; (c) Israel’s state enemies were believed ready by Israeli decision-makers to begin a “countdown to launch;” and (d) Jerusalem believed that Israeli non-nuclear preemptions could not achieve the needed minimum level of damage-limitation, i.e., levels consistent with preservation of the State.

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## Chapter IV:

### Language, Thinking, Dialectic and Contemplation

I am aware that the juxtaposition of Israel and Jewish extermination inherent in references to “destruction of the Third Temple Commonwealth” is so dreadful that it borders on sacrilege. Yet, it is a juxtaposition that should not be ignored or disregarded. Should Israeli planners fail to take it seriously, the concentration of millions of post-Holocaust Jews in an area smaller than a large **county** in California could prove a blessing to those among Israel’s enemies who would refashion genocide as war. But if we do take seriously the connections between Zionist objectives and Jewish vulnerability in the Third Commonwealth, we will have taken the first critical steps toward ensuring Israeli security, toward making certain that Jewish liberation does not become Jewish misfortune.

\* \* \*

Applied to Israel and the Middle East, the fashionable concepts of “security regime” and “confidence building measures” are sheer nonsense, the deleterious fabrications of academics dedicated to looking away from an uncomfortable reality. Exploiting Israeli frustration and fatigue, such concepts appear enormously tempting. They are, however, unforgivably dangerous, generating faith in a “Peace Process” that has always pointed only to Israel’s dismemberment and disappearance.

\* \* \*

There is a marked tendency in Israel to imitate American strategic thinking. This is a serious mistake, as virtually all American academic strategists are paid **not to think** and, above all, not to depart from prudent (and therefore intellectually sterile) forms of prescription. To use the language of Jose Ortega y Gasset, whose *Revolt Of The Masses* (1932) is one of the most important books of our century, today’s Ph.D. “expert” in Washington or Tel Aviv is too-often a “learned ignoramus, which is a very serious matter, as it implies that he is a person who is ignorant, not in the fashion of the ignorant

man, but with all the petulance of one who is learned in his own special line.”

\* \* \*

For Israel, the future cannot be separated from the past. They are indissolubly interconnected. To prepare for the future, Israel’s leaders must look **closely** at the past, not only from 1948 onward, but for 5000 years. The point is more than the clichéd imperative to learn the “lessons of history”. It is to understand that Jewish history is altogether *sui generis*, that Israel’s history is an integral part of this Jewish history, and that an erroneous “cosmopolitanism” (i.e., “Jews are just another people in the worldwide community of humankind”) could be a particularly serious mistake.

\* \* \*

Regarding the **methods** of Israeli strategic analysis, it is essential that they be based upon an appropriate dialectic. Hence, analysts must approach their problem as an interrelated series of thoughts, where each thought or idea about, for example, enemy capabilities/intentions presents a complication that moves inquiry onward to the next thought or idea. Contained in this strategic dialectic is an obligation to continue thinking, an obligation that can never be fulfilled entirely (because of what the philosophers call the “infinite regress problem”), but that must still be attempted as fully and as competently as possible. Without such a dialectic, those who work on Israeli security matters will continue to focus only upon discrete moments in time, on static phenomena (e.g., numbers of weapons; types of weapons; leadership personalities, etc), rather than upon appropriately dynamic and generic interactions (synergies).

\* \* \*

The term “dialectic” originates from the Greek expression for the art of conversation. Today, a common meaning is that dialectic is a method of seeking truth via correct reasoning. From the standpoint of our concerns, the following operations may be identified as essential but non-exclusive components of a strategic dialectic: (1) A method of refutation by examining logical consequences; (2) A method of division or repeated logical analysis of genera into species; (3) Logical reasoning using premises that are probable or generally accepted; (4) Formal logic; and (5) The logical development of thought through thesis and antithesis to a synthesis of these opposites.

\* \* \*

Dialectic likely originated in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, as Zeno, author of the famous *Paradoxes*, was recognized by Aristotle as its inventor. In the middle dialogues of Plato, dialectic emerges as the supreme form of philosophical/analytic method. In one of these dialogues, Plato describes the dialectician as someone who knows how to ask and to answer questions. This is what should now be transposed to the study of Israeli security matters. We need, in these all-important matters, to know how to ask and to answer questions. **This** knowledge must precede compilations of facts, figures, and power “balances”.

\* \* \*

The advantages of a new Israeli strategic dialectic will depend, in part, upon the coherence of the overall academic enterprise. Israel does not face a random set of discrete and wholly separate military threats. Rather, there is a general threat environment within which discrete threat components fit. The task for Israeli academic strategists is not to figure out in advance each and every specific threat component (this **is** a task of certain government intelligence analysts), but to identify a strategy which will accommodate the understanding of a broad variety of possible threats. This means, *inter alia*, an obligation to fashion a strategic “master plan”, a body of generalized and interrelated propositions from which specific policy options can be derived.

Such a plan would not contain all or even most of the “answers”, but it would offer a comprehensive and informed framework within which all of the important questions might be addressed. Significantly, such a plan would never be “completed”. It would serve those who oversee Israel’s security needs continually, incrementally and directly, as an ongoing and expanding set of purposeful guidelines.

\* \* \*

“In the areas with which we are concerned,” wrote Walter Benjamin, “insight only occurs as a lightning bolt. The text is the thunder-peal rolling long behind.”<sup>2</sup> For us, such an “area” is Israeli strategic studies. It is an area that will be ill-served by standard thinking and texts. It is an area that can only be served productively by flashes of understanding that defy (and quite probably contradict) mainstream assessments and analyses.

\* \* \*

The current and ongoing disintegration of the world is creation in reverse. For Israel, the Jewish state, there are therefore special lessons to be learned from this disintegration. The geometry of chaos, in a strange and paradoxical symmetry, reveals both sense and form. How shall they be discovered? This is an **important** question, one that goes far beyond the usual sorts of *On War* and *Transformation of War* queries. It must not be ignored.

\* \* \*

Israel, it seems, can contemplate the end of the Third Temple Commonwealth every day, and yet persevere quite calmly in its most routine and mundane affairs. This should not be the case if Israel could begin to contemplate the **moment** of its collective disappearance. It follows that Israel must begin immediately to replace reassuringly abstract conceptualizations of End Times with unbearably concrete imaginings of

catastrophe. Only then could the leaders of Israel take the steps needed to survive well into the Third Millennium.

\* \* \*

There exists, among Israel's enemies, a voluptuousness all their own; the voluptuousness of conflict against the Jewish state **as such**. It is in Israel's strategic interest not to lose sight of this voluptuousness. Israel's enemies, in good part, do not read Clausewitz. They are, in good measure, animated by more primal needs and expectations.

\* \* \*

E.M. Cioran, the most dazzling and devastating French philosophical voice since Paul Valery (and an original thinker in the tradition of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein) writes of the Jews as a "People of Solitaries", a People, for all of its recognized lucidity, that

readily sacrifices to illusion: it hopes, it always hopes too much... With so many enemies, any other people, in its place, would have laid down its arms; but this nation, unsuited to the complacencies of despair, bypassing its age-old fatigue and the conclusions imposed by its fate, lives in the delirium of expectation, determined not to learn a lesson from its humiliations...

How true, how **especially** true is this observation of a "nation" for the State of the Jews, the State of Israel.

\* \* \*

When Pericles delivered his Funeral Oration and other speeches, with their praise of Athenian civilization, his perspective was largely military. Recorded by Thucydides, an historian whose main interest was to study the growth and use of power for military objectives, the speeches of Pericles express confidence in ultimate victory for Athens, but they also express

grave concern for self-imposed setbacks along the way: “What I fear more than the strategies of our enemies is our own mistakes.” Although Pericles exaggerated the separateness of enemy strategies and Athenian mistakes (they were, of course, interrelated and even synergistic), there is an important lesson here for Israel. **In observing enemy preparations for war, do not forget that the effectiveness of these preparations will always depend upon Israel’s particular responses.**

\* \* \*

Under contemporary international law, the right of self-defense is not confined to post-attack circumstances. Rather, it extends, under carefully defined conditions, to preemptive or “anticipatory” strikes. In this connection, Israel’s leaders and planners should recall Pufendorf’s authoritative argument in his *On the Duty of Man and Citizen According To Natural Law*:

...where it is quite clear that the other is already planning an attack upon me, even though he has not yet fully revealed his intentions, it will be permitted at once to begin forcible self-defense, and to anticipate him who is preparing mischief, provided there be no hope that, when admonished in a friendly spirit, he may put off his hostile temper, or if such admonition be likely to injure our cause. Hence, he is to be regarded as the aggressor, who first conceived the wish to injure, and prepared himself to carry it out. But the excuse of self-defense will be his, who by quickness shall overpower his slower assailant. And for defense, it is not required that one receive the first blow, or merely avoid and parry those aimed at him.

\* \* \*

A passage in *The Odyssey* speaks of two gates, one of horn and one of ivory. Through the ivory gate false dreams pass to humankind, and through the gate of horn go only the true and prophetic dreams. At this moment, in its always precarious history, Israel is sorely tempted by the ivory gate, choosing to base preservation of the Third Temple Commonwealth upon fanciful visions

of a “Peace Process”, “confidence building measures” and “security communities”. Israel would be far better off, however, to pass instead through the gate of horn, preparing to use military force selectively and preemptively in order to endure. This decision will likely occasion greater pain and uncertainty in the short run, but it would base preservation of the Third Temple Commonwealth upon altogether sober assessments of *realpolitik* and would affirm, rather than reject, the essential obligations of international law.

\* \* \*

According to *al-Da`wa (The Mission)*, an Islamic publication, the status of Israel is identical to the status of the individual Jew. What **is** this status? “The race (sic) is corrupt at the root, full of duplicity, and the Muslims have everything to lose in seeking to deal with them; they must be exterminated.” Historically, the Islamic world’s orientation to extermination of the Jews has not been limited to phrasemaking. Even before Israel came into existence in May 1948, on November 28, 1941, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin, met in Berlin with Adolph Hitler. The declared subject of their meeting was nothing less than “the final solution of the Jewish Question”. This meeting, which followed Haj Amin’s active organization of Muslim SS troops in Bosnia, included the Mufti’s promise to aid German victory in the war. Later, after Israel’s trial and punishment of Adolph Eichmann in 1961, Iranian and Arab newspapers described the mass murderer of Jews as a “martyr”, congratulating him posthumously for having “conferred a real blessing on humanity” by liquidating six million “sub-humans”.

\* \* \*

Regarding American orientations to genocide in the Middle East, Israel would do well to recall Reagan and Bush Sr. administrations’ indifference to extermination of the Kurds. Iraqi documents seized during the Kurdish uprising in March and April 1991 detail mass slayings of civilians, including videotapes of executions, beatings and torture. United States authorities, for years, encouraged Kurdish revolt, and then betrayed this unfortunate people

to genocidal destruction. During the late 1980s, the US stood by silently as Saddam Hussein's regime systematically demolished Kurdish villages and towns, and forcibly transferred a half million or more Kurds into specially-created concentration camps. In March of 1991, after encouraging the Iraqi Kurds to rise up against the Baghdad regime, the Bush administration did nothing to prevent new crushing genocidal blows against the Kurds by the Iraqi army.

\* \* \*

From the standpoint of international law, we must distinguish preemptive attacks from **preventive** ones. Preemption represents a strategy of striking an enemy first, in the expectation that the only alternative is to be struck first oneself. A preemptive attack is launched by a state that believes enemy forces are about to attack. A **preventive** attack, however, is launched not out of concern for imminent hostilities, but for fear of a longer-term deterioration in the pertinent military balance. Hence, in a preemptive attack, the length of time by which the enemy's action is anticipated is very short, while in a preventive strike the interval is considerably longer. A problem for Israel, in this regard, is not only the practical difficulty in determining imminence, but also the fact that delaying a defensive strike until imminence is plausible could be fatal.

\* \* \*

In the strict jurisprudential sense, because a state of war exists between Israel and Iran (at Iran's particular insistence), the Jewish state does not need to meet the requirements of anticipatory self-defense. Rather, as there can be no authentic preemption in an ongoing belligerency, an Israeli "first strike" against Iran would need only to fulfill the expectations of the laws of war, i.e., the rules of discrimination, proportionality and military necessity. A legal state of war can exist between two states irrespective of the presence or absence of ongoing hostilities between national armed forces. The principle affirming that the existence of a legal state of war depends upon the **intentions** of one or more of the states involved, and not on "objective"



phenomena, is known variously as the “state of war doctrine”; “*de jure* war”, “war in the legal sense” and “war in the sense of international law”.

\* \* \*

Confronting what he calls “our century of fear”, Albert Camus would have us all be “neither victims nor executioners”, living not in a world in which killing has disappeared (“we are not so crazy as that!”), but one wherein killing has become illegitimate. This is a fine expectation, to be sure, yet unless it is fashioned with a promising view toward effective non-lethal measures of preserving order and justice, the result will certainly be an enlargement of pain and terror. Deprived of the capacity to act as lawful executioners, states facing aggression would be forced by Camus’ reasoning to become victims. Why is Camus so sorely mistaken? Where, exactly, has he gone wrong? The answer, it would seem, lies in his presumption, however implicit, of a natural reciprocity among human beings and states in the matter of killing. More specifically, we are asked to believe that as greater numbers of people agree not to be executioners, still greater numbers will follow upon the same course. In time, the argument proceeds, the number of those who refuse to sanction killing will become so great that there will be fewer and fewer victims. The problem, of course, is that Camus’ presumed reciprocity does not exist. The will to kill, as we have learned from so many for so long, is unimpressed by particular commitments to “goodness”. It follows that executioners may have their rightful place in world politics, and that without them there would only be more victims.

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## Chapter V:

### Assassination,\* Anarchy, Rules and Dogmas

In the realm of world politics, executioners sometimes function as assassins. Although such functioning is almost always an instance of wrongful execution, there are certain carefully circumscribed and residual cases where it may be rightful, permissible, and even distinctly law enforcing. Understood in terms of Israel's security needs, this points to the option of assassination as a form of anticipatory self-defense. In determining whether or not a particular instance of assassination would qualify as such a form under international law, the act: (1) must not be designed to achieve a prohibited objective, but only to forestall destruction of Israel's land and people; and (2) must meet the legal test known to international lawyers as the **Caroline** – i.e., the danger that gives rise to the preemptive attack by Israel must be judged “instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means and no moment for deliberation”. Thus, if the assassination is undertaken only to destroy the **potential** threat of the enemy (as a **preventive** action), it would not qualify as permissible under international law. If, however, the assassination were undertaken in anticipation of immediate enemy aggression (as a **preemptive** action), it **could** qualify as an instance of anticipatory self-defense. There are several problems here. First, in the real world, judgments concerning the immediacy of anticipated aggression are exceedingly difficult to make. Second, even where such judgments are ventured, it can never be altogether clear whether the degree of immediacy is sufficient to invoke preemption rather than prevention. Third, in meeting the afore-stated legal requirements of defensive intent (#1 above), Israel may have to act preventively rather than preemptively (because waiting to allow a threat to become more immediate could have decisively negative strategic/tactical consequences. And fourth, the actual state-preserving benefits that might accrue to Israel from assassination of enemy leaders are apt to be contingent upon **not waiting** until the danger posed is “instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means and no moment for deliberation”. Assessments of the lawfulness of assassination as anticipatory self-defense must also include comparisons with alternative forms of preemption. If, for example, the perceived alternative to assassination is large-scale uses of

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\* Professor Beres has been arguing for the legality of certain forms of assassination in major law journals for many years.

force taking the form of defensive military strikes, a utilitarian or “balance of harms” criterion could surely favor assassination. Such a choice may well have to be made sometime soon in Jerusalem, especially as the territories are transformed into a Palestinian state. Here, deprived of strategic depth, Israel could calculate that it had only three real options: (1) do nothing, rely entirely on deterrence, and hope that enemy states remain dissuaded from striking first; (2) strike preemptively with military force against selected hard targets in enemy states, and hope that substantial reprisals are prevented by persuasive intra-war deterrence, i.e., by compelling Israeli threats of unacceptably damaging counter-retaliation; or (3) strike preemptively by assassination, and hope that this will reduce the overall threat to Israel without escalating into full-fledged military encounters. Although impossible to determine in the abstract, Option 3 might well prove to be the most cost-effective one available to Israel in certain circumstances.

\* \* \*

Jurisprudentially, of course, it would be reasonable to examine assassination as a possible form of **ordinary** self-defense, i.e., as a forceful measure of self-help short of war that is undertaken **after** an armed attack occurs. Tactically, however, there are at least two serious problems with such an examination. First, in view of the ongoing proliferation of extraordinarily destructive weapons technologies among Israel’s enemies in the Middle East, waiting to resort to ordinary self-defense could be very dangerous, if not altogether fatal. Second, assassination, while it may prove helpful in preventing an attack upon Israel in the first place, is far less likely to be useful in mitigating further harm once an attack has already been launched.

\* \* \*

Martin Van Creveld writes, in *The Transformation of War*, that as the lines between political violence and criminal violence become blurred, assassination of enemy leaders will become more fashionable:

Over the last three centuries or so, attempts to assassinate or otherwise incapacitate leaders were not regarded as part of the game of war. In the

future, there will be a tendency to regard such leaders as criminals who richly deserve the worst fate that can be inflicted upon them.

From the standpoint of international law, a case in point is Saddam Hussein. Based upon the peremptory principle of law known as *Nullum crimen sine poena*, “No crime without a punishment,” leaving Saddam in power, unpunished, was altogether unjust. At Nuremberg, the words used by the Court, “So far from it being unjust to punish him, it would be unjust if his wrong were allowed to go unpunished,” represented an authoritative reaffirmation of this principle. The earliest statement of *Nullum crimen sine poena* can be found in the *Code of Hammurabi* (c. 1728-1686 BCE); the *Laws of Eshnunna* (c. 2000 BCE); the even-earlier code of *Ur-Nammu* (c. 2100 BCE), and, most significantly for Israel, the *Lex Talionis* or law of exact retaliation, presented in three separate passages of the Torah. For ancient Hebrews, when a crime involved the shedding of blood, not only punishment – but punishment involving a reciprocal bloodletting – was required. Shedding of blood is an abomination that must be expiated, “for blood pollutes the land, and no expiation can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of him who shed it.” (Num. 35:33)

\* \* \*

Israel, the Jew in macrocosm, has become uncomfortable with the use of power, especially that form of power based upon armed force. In a world of growing international anarchy, this development represents a serious liability. Left unchecked, it could become fatal.

\* \* \*

The **obligation** to use armed force in a world of international anarchy forms the central argument of *Realpolitik* from the Melian Dialogues of Thucydides and Cicero to Machiavelli, Locke, Spykman and Kissinger. “For what can be done against force without force?”, asks Cicero in one of his **Letters**. Later, in our own century, Nicholas Spykman replies: “In a world of international anarchy, foreign policy must aim above all at the improvement

or at least the preservation of the relative power position of the state.” Such arguments are assuredly not incorrect, but it is likely that, today, they have become markedly trivial. The anarchy we confront in world politics today is vastly different from its predecessors; it is more far-reaching, extending not only between states but within them. It is almost primordial, the anarchy of William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*; it is *sui generis*. What does this suggest about Israel’s particular security options? How should Israel’s leadership plan in the face of this new kind of anarchy? How will Israel be affected by anarchy amidst its enemies? And how will it be affected by anarchy amongst its “friends”?

\* \* \*

Van Creveld’s *Transformation of War* is right on the mark in underscoring humankind’s seemingly irrational delight in the use of armed force, an authentic joy in the spirit of war. This observation is an indispensable corrective to the popular notion that everyone is always agreed upon the undesirability and unattractiveness of war, a notion with origins in the poetry of the Classical Age, the poetry of Pindar: “Sweet is war to him who knows it not, but to those who have made trial of it, it is a thing of fear.” Similar expressions are found in the less-than-exultant tone of the herald’s tale of victory in the *Agamemnon*; the harsh words of Euripides for that same victory in the *Troades*; the poignant words of Pericles regarding those who had perished in Samos: “It was as if the spring had been taken from the year.” Yet, even before Van Creveld, Michael Howard pointed out:

In Western Europe until the first part of the seventeenth century, warfare was a way of life for considerable sections of society, its termination was for them a catastrophe, and its prolongation, official or unofficial, was the legitimate objective of every man of spirit.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, war was accepted by many as an essential element of social life, one needed to combat what the philosopher Kant called “mere commercial spirit, and with it a debasing self-interest”.

\* \* \*

There is a dramatic affinity between war and the personal fear of death. Although it is unlikely that Israeli planners will read Lucretius' great poem, *On the Nature of Things*, the "message" of the Epicurean text has serious implications for Israeli security. What the young Virgil, citing Lucretius, called fear of "the doom against which no prayer avails" leads humankind to destroy life. Because the individual fails to understand the balance between destructive and creative forces, he/she is anxious about personal dissolution. This individual, to use the mythical terms set forth by Lucretius himself, will be on the side of Mars rather than Venus, reaching out to the rest of the world aggressively rather than compassionately. Persons, and therefore collectivities of persons known as States, have an incorrect attitude toward death that turns them to the terrible pleasures of violence. The very last scene of Lucretius' poem is a bloody battle that would not have occurred if individuals had understood death. Humankind surrenders to death and dismemberment precisely because it fears death and dismemberment. How characteristic and insightful, indeed prophetic, are these ancient observations regarding current Islamic thought about war, terrorism and "infidels". Israel should take note.

\* \* \*

"Men as a rule willingly believe what they want to believe!" So says Caesar in Chapter 18 of the *Gallic War*. For Israel, the impact of Caesar's insight became evident on October 6, 1973, with the start of the Yom Kippur War. Until then, the country had been committed to something known generally as "the concept", the *kontzeptziya*, the contrived idea that the Arabs were unwilling and incapable of renewing hostilities against the Jewish state. Aman's (military intelligence) overall assessment of enemy designs, lasting until October 5, 1973, was that war was "highly improbable" or "improbable". It was this fundamentally incorrect assumption that created a monumental intelligence blunder – the "*mehdal*" in post-war Hebrew parlance. This is a blunder that could be repeated at far greater cost in the future. Until quite recently, the principal source of such a prospective blunder has been the sentiment that sustains the "Middle East Peace Process".

The stillborn Oslo Agreements are null and void according to international law. All states are obligated by international law to seek out and prosecute the perpetrators of crimes of war, crimes against peace and crimes against humanity. The same obligation extends to crimes of terrorism. Derived from the peremptory norm of *Nullum crimen sine poena!* (“No Crime without a Punishment!”), this obligation was violated flagrantly by Israel’s “peace” agreements with a terrorist organization. Indeed, recognizing that, according to Article 53 of the **Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties**, any agreement “...is void, if at the time of its conclusion, it conflicts with a peremptory norm of general international law,” the Oslo agreements, witnessed officially by representatives of the United States, **should be disregarded**. Conflicting with a peremptory or *jus cogens* norm, a norm that, according to Article 53 of the *Vienna Convention* is “a norm accepted and recognized by the international community of states as a whole as a norm from which no derogation is permitted...,” the agreements confer no jurisprudential responsibilities of any kind.

\* \* \*

The Palestine Liberation Organization was treated as a terrorist group in the **Klinghoffer v. Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)** suit. Here, the court determined, *inter alia*, that the federal court had jurisdiction over the PLO. In this civil action, which alleged that “the owner and charterer of the **Achille Lauro**, travel agencies and various other entities” failed to thwart the attack, jurisdiction was proffered on the basis of the Death on the High Seas Act (46 USC. App. Secs. 761-767; 1982), diversity of citizenship and state law.

\* \* \*

It is generally (but erroneously) believed that the peace treaty in force between Israel and Egypt constrains the latter from joining with other Arab states against the former. But a Minute to Article VI, paragraph 5, of the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty provides that it is agreed by the parties that there is no assertion that the Peace Treaty prevails over other treaties or

agreements, or that other treaties or agreements prevail over the Peace Treaty. (See Treaty of Peace, March 26, 1979, Egypt-Israel, Minute to Art. VI (5), 18 I.L.M., 362, 392.)

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In all world politics, but especially in the Middle East, we are present at the gradual unveiling of a secret, but the nucleus of meaning, the essential truth of what is taking place, is **what is not said**. For the immediate future, the enemies of Israel will continue their preparations for chemical/biological/nuclear war. Altogether unaffected by parallel public commitments to “peace process”, “self-determination”, “regional coexistence”, “security regimes” and “confidence building measures”, these preparations will proceed on their own track, culminating, if unobstructed, in new and substantially more portentous aggressions against Israel. It follows that Israel must not close its eyes to such enemy preparations or to the associated and synergistic dangers of a Palestinian state, one-sided denuclearization and one-sided peace settlements.

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In the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War, Israel – intra-war threats notwithstanding – decided not to respond with any retaliatory strikes to Iraq’s 39 missile attacks. If Israel had decided to respond, presumably against Baghdad’s pertinent military assets, this response could have been characterized by Jerusalem as any one of the following: (1) reprisal; (2) self-defense; or (3) anticipatory self-defense. Alternatively, Israel could have argued persuasively that: (4) a condition of war had existed between the Jewish state and Iraq since 1948 at Iraq’s insistence, and that Israel’s latest military strikes were not measures of self-help short of war (i.e., not instances of reprisal, self-defense or anticipatory self-defense) but rather just one more legitimate use of force in an ongoing conflict. In the final analysis, the lawfulness of Israel’s counterstrike and the reasonableness of its characterization would have depended upon such facts as general moves toward peace underway in the region, amount of time elapsed between Iraq’s



aggression and Israel's response, and the level of continuing danger to Israel from the Baghdad regime. If Jerusalem had opted for number 4, *supra*, its military counterstrike would have been *prima facie* lawful so long as it had fulfilled the settled peremptory criteria of the laws of war – namely the expectations of discrimination, proportionality and military necessity.

Uncomfortable truths travel with great difficulty. Among these truths, one of the most distressing concerns the certain failure of the so-called nonproliferation regime. Highlighted by the Nonproliferation Treaty, which entered into force in 1970, this body of authoritative norms under international law is incapable of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons throughout the world. This means that reliance upon such a body of rules, however “prudent” and well-intentioned, will likely hasten rather than inhibit the onset of nuclear war. What shall Israel do? When, at Arab insistence, Jerusalem is asked yet again to join the NPT, as a non-nuclear member, how should it respond? If it should resist, the global community of “civilized” nations would surely be aroused, declaring that, once again, a recalcitrant Israel had refused to follow the codified rules of international law. Should it accede to the Treaty, it would trade-off critical safety in exchange for presumptively favorable world public opinion. Of course, it could also do what Iraq and other Islamic states have always done, i.e., sign the Treaty but act as if no obligations whatever had been incurred – but such hypocrisy has never been Israel's style, nor should it be. It should also be recalled here that Israel has never obstructed diplomatic remedies to regional security. In addition to the agreements on Palestinian “autonomy”, note the following: In January 1993, Israel became a charter signatory of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), while Egypt, Syria and most other states in the area rejected the Treaty. Israel ratified the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1964. It is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and has safeguards agreements for several minor facilities. It has consistently supported the concept of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone for the Middle East (MENWFZ).

\* \* \*

In calculations of strategic deterrence, Israel's planners must always recall that what matters is whether a prospective attacker **perceives** secure Israeli

retaliatory forces. Where a prospective attacker perceives vulnerable retaliatory forces, it might judge the first-strike option against Israel to be entirely cost-effective. This means, *inter alia*, that Israel's intelligence estimates must always keep close watch on enemy **perceptions**, and that when these estimates determine enemy perceptions of Israeli retaliatory force vulnerability, Israel's own preemption option may become more compelling. It also follows, of course, that Israel must always do whatever possible to encourage enemy perceptions of Israeli nuclear force invulnerability, an imperative that could include not only enhanced active defenses, but also, among other things, removing the bomb from the "basement".

\* \* \*

No discussion of Israeli nuclear deterrence can be complete without careful consideration of the disclosure issue. From the beginning, Israel's bomb has been secluded in the "basement". For the future, however, it is by no means certain that an undeclared nuclear deterrent will be capable of meeting Jerusalem's security goals or that it will even be equal in effectiveness to an openly-declared nuclear deterrent. But why? At first glance, the issue appears inconsequential. After all, everyone knows that Israel has the bomb. What, then, would be the purpose of belaboring the obvious? Indeed, might not such unnecessary saber-rattling even be unduly provocative, occasioning Arab and/or Iranian first-strikes that might not otherwise have been contemplated? To respond, we must recall that disclosure would not be intended to reveal the obvious, i.e., that Israel **has** a bomb, but rather to heighten enemy perceptions of Jerusalem's capable nuclear forces and/or Jerusalem's willingness to use these forces in reprisal for certain first-strike attacks. What, exactly, are the plausible connections between an openly-declared nuclear weapons capacity and enemy perceptions of Israeli nuclear deterrence? One such connection concerns the relation between disclosure and perceived vulnerability of Israel's nuclear forces to preemptive destruction. Another such connection concerns the relation between disclosure and perceived capacity of Jerusalem's nuclear forces to penetrate the attacking state's active defenses. To the extent that removing the bomb from the basement, or disclosure, would encourage enemy views of an

Israeli nuclear force that is sufficiently invulnerable to first-strike attacks and/or is capable of piercing enemy active defense systems, disclosure would represent a rational and prudent option for Israel. Here, the operational benefits of disclosure would accrue from deliberate flows of information about dispersion, multiplication, hardening, speed and evasiveness of nuclear weapon systems and about some other pertinent technical features of certain nuclear weapons. Most importantly, such flows would serve to remove enemy doubts about Israel's nuclear force capabilities, doubts which, left unchallenged, could undermine Israeli nuclear deterrence. Removing the bomb from Israel's basement might also heighten enemy perceptions of Jerusalem's willingness to make good on its nuclear retaliatory threats. For example, by releasing information about its nuclear forces that identifies distinctly usable forces, Israel could remove any doubts about Jerusalem's nuclear resolve. Here, a prospective attacker, newly aware that Israel could retaliate without generating intolerably high levels of civilian harms (possibly because of enhanced radiation and/or sub-kiloton weapons) would be more apt, because of Jerusalem's disclosure, to believe Israel's nuclear threats.

\* \* \*

An interesting question arises: To what extent, if any, would Israel's removal of the bomb from the basement affect its inclination to abandon nuclear deterrence in favor of prompt preemption? An antecedent question asks the following: To what extent, if any, might transformation of the territories into "Palestine" encourage such removal? For the moment, Israel, still buffered somewhat from a hot eastern border, can possibly better afford to keep its bomb in the basement. When, however, this territory becomes Palestine, Israel will almost surely feel compelled to move from "deliberate ambiguity" to disclosure, a shift that could substantially improve the Jewish state's nuclear deterrence posture, but could also enlarge the chances of a nuclear war should this posture fail.

\* \* \*

Israel's enemies might be judged irrational, but this does not necessarily mean that they are "crazy". Indeed, Israeli nuclear deterrence could be immobilized by enemy behavior that is entirely rational, but reflective of what would ordinarily be construed as a fanatical preference ordering. For example, Iran could conceivably act upon a preference ordering that values the destruction of the Jewish state and the fulfillment of presumed Islamic expectations more highly than any other value or combination of values. Here Iran would neither be irrational nor crazy.

\* \* \*

Truly, reading the accounts of genocide in Rwanda, one loses altogether the distinction between sane and crazy. For the most part, the perpetrators of this genocide, like virtually all genociders in history, were perfectly sane. Perhaps this suggests that Israeli planners would do best to draw their strategic theories and inferences from the genre of the absurd, from the "preposterous" theater of Beckett, Ionesco, Adamov, Genet and Albee. Can Israel endure in a **sane** world?

\* \* \*

Speaking of sanity, if President Bush and Secretary of State Rice have their way, a twenty-third Arab state will soon begin to take shape. Whether or not this state of Palestine would meet the settled expectations of international law codified at the 1934 Montevideo Convention, it would surely and substantially change the complex power relations of competition and conflict in the Middle East. Indeed, from the standpoint of both the American-led War on Terror and the existential requirements of Israeli security, the new Palestinian state would be severely destabilizing.

Following recent problems in the campaign against *Hizbullah*, prudent Israeli war planning must now look much more closely at the global and regional "correlation of forces". Drawn from the military lexicon of the former Soviet Union, this concept is usefully applied as a particular measure of armed forces, from the subunit level to major formations. It can also be

used to compare resources and capabilities on both the levels of operational military strategy and of “grand strategy”. This meaning is closely related to the concept of “force ratios” used more commonly in Western armies.

Today, with renewed American pressure to create a Palestinian state – pressure wholly contrary to world peace and security – Israel must undertake comprehensive assessments of enemy states with particular reference to the resultant “correlation of forces”. Here, however diminished by its misguided senior ally in Washington, it must quickly seek more than an “objective” yardstick for measuring opposing forces. Although the IDF is assuredly comparing all available data concerning both the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of unit strength, including enemy personnel, weaponry and equipment, its commanders will need to know far more in order to establish meaningful Israeli force superiority on the future battlefield. This is especially the case in matters of grand strategy, where opposing Arab/Islamic forces (following American and Israeli unwillingness to undertake pertinent preemptive attacks against Iran and North Korea) could soon be endowed with weapons of mass destruction.

What, exactly, should be the IDF concept of “correlation of forces”?

**First**, it must take very careful account of enemy leaders’ intentions as well as capabilities. Such an accounting is inherently more subjective than assessments of personnel, weapons and basic logistic data. Such an accounting must be subtle and nuanced, relying less on fancy scientific modeling than upon carefully informed human profiles. In this connection, it will not do to merely gather masses of relevant data from all of the usual intelligence sources. It will also be important to put Israeli strategists “into the shoes” of each enemy leader, determining precisely what Israel looks like **to them**.

**Second**, the IDF correlation of forces concept must take painstaking account of enemy leaders’ rationality. An adversary that does not conform to the rules of rational behavior in world politics might not be deterred by ANY Israeli threats, military or otherwise. Here the logic of Israeli deterrence would be immobilized and all bets would be off concerning expected enemy reactions to Israeli policy. This point now pertains especially to growing existential threats from Iran. There, if (as expected) the Islamic regime is permitted to complete its still-planned nuclearization, Israel could find itself face-to-face with a suicide bomber in macrocosm.

**Third**, IDF assessments must also consider the changing organization of enemy state units; their training standards; their morale; their reconnaissance capabilities; their battle experience; and their suitability and adaptability to the next battlefield. These assessments are not exceedingly difficult to make on an individual or piecemeal basis, but the Ministry of Defense needs to conceptualize them together, in their entirety. To get this more coherent picture will require a special creativity and imagination, not merely the ordinary and tangible analytical skills valued by modern armies.

**Fourth**, IDF assessments must consider with great care the capabilities and intentions of Israel's non-state enemies; that is, the entire configuration of anti-Israel terrorist and guerrilla groups. Following the recent Lebanon conflict, such assessments must offer much more than a group by group consideration. Rather, the groups must be considered synergistically, in their holistic expression, and as they interrelate with one another *vis-à-vis* Israel. Also, these groups need to be considered in their interactive relationship with enemy states. This last point might best be characterized as an IDF search for dominant synergies between state and non-state adversaries.

**Fifth**, IDF assessments must take special note of the ongoing metamorphosis of a non-state adversary (PLO) into a state adversary (Palestine). With this transformation, Israel's strategic depth will shrink to less manageable levels, and a far-reaching enemy momentum to transform Israel itself into part of the new Arab state will be energized. How shall Israel "live" with Palestine? In one respect, the US-blessed institutionalization of disparate enemies into a sovereign "Palestine" may even provide some small geo-strategic benefit to Israel (now reprisal and retaliation will likely be easier and more purposeful), yet there will also be a corresponding and truly consequential loss of vital territories.

In the matter of synergies, the IDF must also consider and look for "force multipliers". A force multiplier is a collection of related characteristics, other than weapons and force size, that make a military organization more effective in combat. A force multiplier may be generalship; tactical surprise; tactical mobility; or command and control. The presence of a force multiplier *creates* synergy. The unit will be more effective than the mere sum of its weapons. IDF responsibility in this area concerns (1) recognizing enemy force multipliers; (2) challenging and undermining enemy force multipliers; and (3) developing and refining its own force multipliers. Regarding number (3), this means a heavy IDF emphasis on air superiority;

communications; intelligence; and *surprise*. It may also mean a heightened awareness of the benefits of sometimes appearing less than completely rational to one's enemies. This last point is uniquely important, as Israel's field tactics and associated order of battle have become devastatingly predictable.

Correlation of forces will largely determine the outcome of the next Middle Eastern war. It is time, therefore, for Israel to go far beyond the usual numerical assessments to much "softer" considerations, and to focus determinedly upon the cumulative importance of unconventional weapons and low-intensity warfare in the region. A key dilemma in this focus will be the understanding that, in certain crucial circumstances, preemption is both indispensable and infeasible, and that any suitable expression of "anticipatory self-defense" would now produce very large-scale civilian casualties in the target country.

\* \* \*

I am thinking about the apparent contradiction between Herman Kahn and Yehoshafat Harkabi. Kahn, in his *Thinking about the Unthinkable in the 1980s*, says

It is unacceptable, in terms of national security, to make nonuse of nuclear weapons the highest national priority to which all other considerations must be subordinated. It is immoral from almost any point of view to refuse to defend yourself and others from very grave and terrible threats...

Harkabi, in *The Bar Kokhba Syndrome*, draws this "operative guidance" from the Bar Kokhba Rebellion:

In choosing a style of fighting, be wary of warfare in which the reaction required of the enemy, from the enemy's point of view, may lead to an action detrimental for you. ...This is an important lesson in nuclear circumstances: refrain from a provocation for which the adversary may have only one response, nuclear war.

The contradiction arises because Kahn demands a willingness to maintain the nuclear option while Harkabi sees just such willingness, *inter alia*, as an invitation to disaster (as "unrealistic"). The contradiction would disappear if

it could be assumed that nuclear weapons use by Israel would not provoke nuclear war, but this would happen only if Israel's pertinent enemy were non-nuclear or lacked second-strike capability. Also, Kahn speaks of nuclear weapons in terms of "defense", a reference that could make sense within the context of certain ATBM systems, but that strays from the more usual context of deterrence. Depending upon the breadth of Kahn's meaning of defense, the contradiction with Harkabi will be more or less substantial.

\* \* \*

Elsewhere Harkabi is virtually incoherent. At one point he argues as follows:

The nuclear era thus generates **terminal situations for decision making** (emphasis in original). But the mutuality of threat and of destiny moderates the situation and perhaps will, over the course of years, prevent nuclear war.

Why "mutuality"? Whose "destiny"? What evidence for "moderation"? Such anti-thought dramatizes the requirement for a new strategic dialectic.

\* \* \*

Harkabi's marked descent into incorrect reasoning continues. Consider the following:

Nuclear war is absurd, for no national gain could offset the damage such a war would cause. What is the point in attempting to keep a certain asset by threatening to use nuclear weapons, if, as a result of their use, all assets will be lost? The threat to launch a nuclear war is not reasonable, and, thus, not credible. The threat is nevertheless effective because there inheres a residue of doubt that, despite its irrationality, it may be carried out. These contradictions become even more severe, for, even if nuclear war is absurd, it is not absurd for the nuclear powers to plan for such warfare. That is, the preparation of the means to realize the absurd is not absurd. These difficulties lead to a situation where the great powers today are unsuccessful in developing for themselves cohesive doctrines of nuclear strategy, for the



absurdity of nuclear war spills over into the extravagances of the strategy of such warfare.

It is difficult to imagine a more incoherent elucidation of nuclear strategy and nuclear war. Not only are the separate components of the “argument” intrinsically (and *prima facie*) wrong, they invalidate one another.

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I return, again and again, to Eugene Ionesco, the Rumanian-born playwright whose journal, *Present Past/Past Present: A Personal Memoir*, bears comparison with Pascal’s *Pensees*. In July 1967, he permitted himself this important observation:

...in the end, very few people accord the state of Israel the right to exist. This country bothers everybody: it bothers the Russians, it bothers the Americans, it bothers the French...it bothers the Jews who must take a stand...it bothers everybody because the existence of something strong, powerful, unarguable always creates insoluble problems.

Shall Israel become less of a “bother”? I hope not.

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“We are often asked,” said the late Italian Jew and survivor Primo Levi in *The Drowned and the Saved*, “as if our past conferred a prophetic ability upon us, whether Auschwitz will return...” However we choose to answer so terrible but unavoidable a question, our past seems to have conferred precious little in the way of prophetic abilities. On the contrary, by persistently deluding ourselves that not seeing is a way of not knowing, we have distanced ourselves from the most indispensable forms of warning. Israel take notice.

\* \* \*

Israel is a macrocosm. Like the individual Jew surrounded by mobs of would-be murderers, the Jewish state stands encircled among a crowd of other states that cries fervently for its extinction. Where it stands stubbornly and defiantly for survival, the Diaspora Jew will have a proud and unparalleled incentive to endure. And wherever the Diaspora Jew chooses to endure, Israel will be prodded to face its own precarious future with open eyes.

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Jews don't like to be bearers of harm; until now, we have been victims rather than executioners. But much as we should like to be "neither victims nor executioners" (to borrow a phrase again from Albert Camus' essay of the same name), this is simply not possible. The will to mass murder of Jews, as we have learned from so many for so long, is unimpressed by persistent expressions of Jewish goodness. It follows, regarding both Israel and the Diaspora, that Jewish "executioners" have their rightful place and that without this place there would be not diminished pain, but only whole legions of new Jewish **and non-Jewish** sufferers.

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## Chapter VI:

### Myth, Heroism and Unending Struggle

In ancient myth, the Greek gods condemn Sisyphus to roll a great rock to the top of a mountain, whence the stone will inevitably fall back of its own weight. By imposing this terrible judgment the gods had prescribed the dreadful punishment of interminable labor. But they also revealed something vastly more difficult to understand, namely, that even such useless labor need not be altogether futile. Such labor, they knew, could also be **heroic**.

This is where Israel stands today, after the falling *Hizbullah* rockets from Lebanon. For a combination of very complex reasons, Israel now faces the monumental and prospectively endless task of pushing a massive weight up the “mountain”. Always. For no ascertainable purpose. And, almost for certain, the great rock will always roll right back down to its point of origin. There is, it would appear, simply no real chance that it will remain perched, fixedly, securely, at the summit.

For Israel, there is no clear and expected solution to its essential and existential security problem. Rather, in the fashion of Sisyphus, the Jewish state must now accept the inconceivably heavy burden of a possible suffering without predictable end. There is, of course, always hope, but – for now at least – the only choice seems to be to continue pushing upward with no apparent relief or to sigh deeply, to lie prostrate, to surrender and to die.

What sort of sorrowful imagery is this? Can anyone be shocked that, for the always imperiled people of Israel, a Sisyphean fate must lie far beyond their ordinary powers of imagination? Not surprisingly, the Israelis still search for ordinary solutions. They look, commonly, into politics, into new leaders, into concrete policies. They seek remedies, answers, peace settlements, “road maps” – they examine the whole package of ordinary prospects that would allegedly make Israel more “normal” and therefore more “safe”. But Israel is **not** normal, nor can it (or should it) ever be **normal**. For reasons that will be debated and argued for centuries, Israel is altogether unique. To deny this uniqueness, and to try to figure out ways in which the great tormenting stone might finally stay on the top of the mountain **forever**, is to seek banal answers to extraordinary questions. Above all, it is to misunderstand Israel’s very special and very sacred place in the universe.

Appropriately, let us recall immediately that Sisyphus is an **heroic** and tragic figure in Greek mythology. This is because he labored valiantly in spite of the apparent futility of his efforts. Today, however, Israel's leadership is sometimes still acting in ways that are neither tragic nor heroic. Increasingly unwilling to accept the almost certain future of protracted war and terror, the prime minister of Israel may still embrace various intended codifications of national suicide. Whether it is named Oslo or the "Road Map" makes no difference. The diplomatic promise of peace with a persistently genocidal adversary is a sordid and persistent delusion. To be sure, protracted war and terror hardly seem a tolerable or enviable outcome, but this fate – at least for the moment – remains better than the undiminished Arab/Islamic plan for a relentlessly Final Solution. To be sure, protracted war and terror are bad options, but they are certainly better than death, and death is the only plausible promise of Oslo and the Road Map.

The futile search for ordinary solutions by the people of Israel must never be dismissed with anger, disdain or self-righteousness. After all, one can hardly blame them for denying such terrible and unjust portents. But Israel exists in a world where the terms justice and Jews can never be uttered in the same breath, and where navigating according to rules of logic and reasonableness will always be fatal. It is a world wherein unreason trumps rationality and where survival is sometimes dependent upon accepting and enduring what is manifestly absurd.

Sisyphus understood that his rock would **never** stay put at the summit of the mountain. He labored nonetheless. Like Sisyphus, Israel must soon learn to understand that its own "rock" – the agonizingly heavy stone of national security and international normalcy – may never stay put at the summit. Yet, it must still continue to push, upwards; it must continue to struggle against the ponderous weight – if for no other reason than to continue, to endure. For Israel, true heroism – and perhaps even the true fulfillment of its unique mission among the nations – now lies in recognizing something well beyond normal understanding: Endless pain and insecurity are not necessarily unbearable and must sometimes even be borne with complete faith and equanimity. Failing such a tragic awareness, the government of Israel will continue to grasp at illusory peace prospects and to welcome repeatedly false dawns.

Of course, Israel is **not** Sisyphus, and there is no reason to believe that Israel must necessarily endure without great personal and collective satisfactions.

Even fully aware that its titanic struggle toward the recurring summits may lack a definable moment of “success” – that these summits may never be truly “scaled” – the Jewish state could still learn that the struggle itself carries manifold benefits. The struggle has its essential accomplishments, its unheralded blessings, its more or less palpable rewards. Now newly tolerant of ambiguity, and consciously surviving without any “normal” hopes of completion and clarity, the people of Israel could achieve both spiritual and security benefits in their personal and collective lives. Most importantly, their now enlarged lucidity could immunize them from the lethal lures of ordinary nations.

Israel’s feverish search for a **solution** has led it down a continuing path of despair. Today, even after the falling *Hizbullah* rockets from Lebanon, Israel’s leaders may still prepare to relinquish the country’s last shreds of national dignity and national security. For Israel, basic truth often emerges from paradox. To survive into the future, Israel’s only real chance is to keep rolling the rock upwards. Unlike Sisyphus, Israel and its people can still enjoy many satisfactions along the way, but – like Sisyphus – all Israel must still recognize that its individual and collective Jewish life may require a tragic and possibly **unending** struggle.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The people who choose the term “homicide bomber” over “suicide bomber” make only a very obvious point at the expense of “sacrificing” a much larger and much more subtle point (that is, that the “suicide” is not only authentic murder, but that it is also driven by the desperate need of the terrorist to **avoid death**. Paradoxically, the so-called “martyr” kills himself to avoid dying himself/herself.
- <sup>2</sup> In den Gebieten, mit denen wir es zu tun haben, gibt es Erkenntnis nur blitzhaft. Der Text ist der langnachrollende Donner, Walter Benjamin, **Das Passagen-Werk**, N. I.I.