

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

**TO FEAR OR NOT TO FEAR?
ANALYSIS OF ISRAELI REGIONAL SECURITY**

Bratislava, 2023

Michal Žiga

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Michal Žiga

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this bachelor's thesis is my own work and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature and other sources are attributed and cited in Bibliography.

Bratislava, February 26, 2023

Michal Žiga

Signature:

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They prove that the world is not necessarily a terrible a place.

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Abstract

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The thesis addresses the Israeli security perspective in the region of the Middle East, conditioning the state's security strategic and operational moves. Accordingly, Israeli military securitization is evaluated through the theoretical lenses of the Copenhagen Security School. The analytical framework enables this thesis to encompass the regional power layout from the Israeli perspective and accordingly assess the Israeli military aims and security relations in the regions. The continuity of Hezbollah's offensive activities has threatened the Israeli territorial integrity and population since the end of the Lebanon War in 2006. Consequently, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) were forced to create the Dahiya military doctrine, which currently shapes the regional security environment. The military doctrine has been codified into the IDF's 2015 Strategy, which continues in the trend of outward offensive operations producing the cumulative deterrence of Hezbollah and other conventional and unconventional regional players. Adequately, the strategic document in conduct with the analysis of IDF's external operations proves the Israeli capability to pragmatically shape the regional dynamics. The capability is dependent on the US-Israeli interdependence, within which the IDF is provided with the Qualitative Military Edge. The technological superiority in the region is an important element in securitizing the territorial integrity of Israel in relation to other regional players.

Keywords: Copenhagen Security School, Dahiya doctrine, territorial security, Qualitative Military Edge, Middle East, deterrence, Hezbollah

Abstrakt

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Autorova práca adresuje Izraelskú bezpečnostnú perspektívu v regióne Blízkeho východu, ktorý podmieňuje Izraelskú bezpečnostnú stratégiu a jej vojenské akcie. V tomto zmysle je Izraelská vojenská sekuritizácia vyhodnotená cez teoretický rámec Kodanskej bezpečnostnej školy. Daný analytický rámec umožňuje autorovej téze zarámcovať regionálny rozloženie sily z Izraelskej perspektívy a následne zhodnotiť Izraelské vojenské ciele vzťahy v regióne. Pokračovanie ofenzívnych aktivít Hizballáhu napriek skončeniu Libanonskej vojny v 2006 ohrozuje Izraelskú teritoriálnu integritu a populáciu. Dôsledkom bolo vytvorenie novej vojenskej doktríny s názvom Dahiya. Táto doktrína kodifikovaná v Strategickom dokumente Izraelských bezpečnostných síl 2015, na základe ktorej pokračuje trend Izraelských externých vojenských operácií, cieľom ktorých je vyprodukovať zastrašenie konvenčných a nekonvenčných hráčov. Adekvátne, v kombinácie s autorovou analýzou externých operácií, táto práca dokazuje Izraelskú schopnosť pragmaticky modifikovať regionálnu dynamiku. Táto schopnosť je závislá na vzájomnej závislosti USA a Izraela, ktorá poskytuje Izraelským bezpečnostným službám Kvalitatívnu vojenskú výhodu. Táto technologická superiorita je dôležitým elementom v sekuritizácií teritoriálnej integrity Izraela vo vzťahu k ostatným regionálnym hráčom.

Kľúčové slová: Kodanská bezpečnostná škola, Dahiya doktrína, teritoriálna bezpečnosť, Kvalitatívna vojenská výhoda, Hizballáh

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INTRODUCTION

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been the determinant factor in shaping the events not only in the Middle East, but all over the world since the Cold War. Disputes regarding the Israeli and Palestinian territories caused enmity relations between the State of Israel from the Arab states. However, since the end of the Cold War, the regional dynamics of the 1990s established a cooperative trend between the State of Israeli and the Palestinian sides of the conflict. However, the emergence of Hezbollah and the direct confrontation in the Lebanon War in 2006 conditioned the State of Israel to reshape its military approach in order to better off the state's regional security perspective due to several conventional and unconventional reasons. Currently, the Israeli security strategy in the Middle East needs to encompass the current perspective on regional circumstances. Those are the still prevailing Palestinian issue, the threatening uncertainty of the Syrian Civil War, Hezbollah's power dominance in Lebanon, and the Iranian technological development. Considering all these factors threatening the State of Israel, this thesis aims to analyze the regional environment from the Israeli perspective and its military manners.

The theoretical backbone of this is provided by the Copenhagen Security School, which under the umbrella of Critical Security Studies, uses the approach characterized as critical constructivism. Buzan et al. (1998) extend the traditional security studies approach with social sciences, thus, providing a comprehensive multi-sectoral analytical framework including a broad spectrum of referent objects differentiating security threats. Therefore, the metaphysical comprehension of a state presents it to be a functional unit. Simultaneously, the School is concerned with the effect of the post-Cold War international development causing deepening regionalization. The period of the Cold War was, in comparison to the current times, sympathetic to the global balance of power militarily intervening around the world. These elements enhance the world perception to be divided on the traditionalists' notion of a three-level power layout based on geographical factors. Considerably, the sectoral division allows the separation the strategic military affairs from the others. In terms of the military sector, the referent objects are the state and society.

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Therefore, the strategic military language securitizing the threats provides this thesis with an exploring tool for this thesis to map the regional power layout from the Israeli perspective influenced by its ontological fear calculated by the military through the security dilemma. The Israeli military strategy provides the ground for its operational build-up securitizing the state's security. Hence, military operations are considered to be military communication *per se* and accordingly shape the regional power layout conditioning the security circumstances.

Due to these theoretical elements, the perceptual character of threats is inherently subjective and, in relation to other regional players, intersubjective. (Buzan et al., 1998) Therefore, this thesis modifies the theoretical framework specifically for the research of the current Israeli military security circumstances conditioning the military security of the state and its population. Any securitization process is established through the prism of intersubjectivity and eventually modifies regional security development. Since the end of the Lebanon War in 2006, Hezbollah's existence did not cease to exist. (Marcus, 2018) This factorial element of Israeli security pushes Israel to direct its securitization outward in the form of military operations, which can be found in open news sources. Following the operations allows this thesis to detect the securitizing military language based on the state's military strategy.

The military is inherently dependent on technological development in order to eliminate geographical obstacles. (Buzan et al., 1998) Adequately, the current high level of military technology impacts international development as such. For example, the creation the nuclear weapons of mass destruction had a significant impact on the international order. Therefore, this thesis considers the technological capabilities to have an impact on the regional dynamics and the state of Israel to build its international pragmatic approach toward the current regional threats to territorial integrity and population.

Taking into account all mentioned circumstances influencing the military sector of Israel, this thesis addresses the questions:

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- a) What is the current security perspective for the State of Israel in the regional power layout?
- b) How does the Israeli military shape the regional dynamics concerning the threats in the post-Cold War period?

This thesis claims the State of Israel, in pragmatic manners conditioned by the end of the Cold War, shapes the regional dynamics and security power layout conditioned by the regional circumstances due to the continual threat with expansive character enhancing the security dilemma.

CONCEPTUAL APPARATUS

Security of a state in the international anarchical realm, based on the traditional military-political understanding of security, is about the survival of a state as an actor in the anarchical system. Survival is strongly connected to various types of threats that can affect the state's vulnerabilities that vary in their characteristics. Therefore, a state shall be defined as a complex unit acting on its behalf to survive possible ontological threats in the near future. Such possibilities are referred to as security dilemma, which legitimizes extraordinary measures to use force. Following the security analysis framework of the Copenhagen Security School, according to the division of existential threats, a state as a unit can be divided into sectors – military, political, social, environmental, and economical. Taking the division into account, the approach of the analysis framework has extended the field of traditional security studies with social sciences.

Hence, this approach enables us to comprehend different referent objects in all sectors, which shall be securitized. A referent object can be anything considered necessary to be securitized. In the military sector, it is the state as such and its territorial integrity; the political sector establishes the referent object to be the constituting principle such as sovereignty, ideology, the question of recognition, legitimacy, or governing authority; in the societal sector, it is a collective identity, a nation or religion. All of the mentioned referent objects are securitized in the securitization process. The process is done through institutional state processes conditioned by certain circumstances of a specific state. An issue is presented to be an existential threat in the sphere of international security through narration, in other words, a speech act. Therefore, according to Buzan et al. (1998), "Security is thus a self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that the issue becomes a security issue – not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat." (pp. 24)

Securitization is an intersubjective phenomenon between an existential threat and the significance of political effects in one or more sectors. (Buzan et al., 1998) The exact effects are being observed in concrete sectors and tackled by political envy. A successful

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securitization includes three components: a) existential threat, b) emergency action, and c) effects on interunit relations by breaking free of rules. According to Wæver et al. (1998) “the process of securitization is what in language theory is called a speech act; it is not interesting as a sign referring to something more real; it is the utterance itself that is the act; by saying the words, something is done (like betting, giving a promise, naming a ship). (pp. 26) Linking to the sectoral division in this process, it is used as a lens for “searching for characteristic patterns with an inner logic within the international system.” (pp. 27) Accordingly, the nature of survival and threat will differ across different sectors and types of units.

According to Buzan et al. (1998), a state is a composition of an idea, territorial integrity, and institutions; therefore, each securitization move in a recurrent conflict is institutionalized. In such a case, the securitization narrative has been legitimized and accepted by its audience. Eventually, there emerges an institutional backbone driven by politics, which in the international realm shall be dealt with by top leaders only to ensure the composition of the process concerning other actors. In well-developed states, political leaders are supported by army and intelligence services that are carefully separated from regular politics and used for elaboration on authorization procedures.

There is no defined objective threat with objective measurement; hence, the decision to securitize or not an issue is from the regional perspective influenced by the power-system layout. Based on this logic, the security intersubjectivity among two or more actors in the anarchical system and the political nature of securitization may impact other actors. A securitizing action of a state can be perceived as a threat to another, mainly the military-political one. Based on the traditionalist security theory used in the framework of critical constructivism, there are three levels of power-level complexes in the anarchical system: a) the global power complex (the system level complex), b) the regional security complex, and c) the domestic security environment (states & societies). All mentioned types of powers can overlay within the system of sectoral security division, hence, to have an impact on each other.

A problem in the region may emerge based on the principle of intersubjectivity due to differences in thresholds of threat definitions. According to Buzan et al. (1998),

“when states or nations securitize an issue --- “correctly” or not – it is a political fact that has consequences, because this securitization will cause the actor to operate in a different mode than he or she would have otherwise; this is the classical diplomatic (and classical realist) lesson, which holds that good statesmanship has to understand the threshold at which other actors will feel threatened and therefore more generally to understand how the world looks to those actors, even if one disagrees.” (pp. 30)

Mainly the military-political type of securitization has a reactionary impact on other actors in the regional and simultaneously global complex. Hence, according to Buzan et al. (1998), this kind of interplay of states’ securities and their intersubjective actions-reactions can be utilized to comprehend states’ behavioral patterns. (pp. 30-31)

One of the patterns is the creation of a “security conglomerate” formed by corresponding securitizing actors and referent objects unified based on overlapping security discourse. (Buzan et al., 1998) The general assumption promoted by the New Security Analysis Framework is a consequence of the Cold War’s end that began to “exhibits substantially higher levels of regionalization and lower levels of globalization.” (Buzan et al., 1998) The unitizing factor can be any referent object, for example, an international public law principle, economic interest, or environmental issues. Hence, a dense network of correlated referent objects and securitizing actors leads to a security complex’s emergence. A security complex is a constellation of security concerns geographically divided into regional levels. Additionally, thanks to the technological development in conduct with institutionalized global security complex after WWII in the body of the UN Security Council, more abstract principles have enabled the global power system to emerge. Hence, the prominent global and regional actors created a ‘knot’ of mutual security relations based on their interests. During the Cold War, the interests functioned on ideological principles. However, the post-Cold War world has shifted towards inward regionalized politics with individual states’ national interests. This factor caused that direct military intervention is not beneficiary for an intervener either from the economic or political point of view. (Buzan et al., 2003)

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Conversely, a regional power entity securitized with the self-help principle in anarchy, military, political, or economic support from a global power-system actor may be decisive in the regional security complex. Such contextual elements of security layout represent the military-peace deterrence in the region. In the current multipolar system, the power-system layout still functions on the principle of alliances or various provisions provided by a great power to regional actors.

The continual existential insecurity of a unit's social construction facilitates the security dilemma maneuvering within the intersubjective securitizing sphere. Any security dilemma gives hypothetical future and counterfactuals that leads state actors to 2 existential questions: a) what happens if a 'security action' will not be taken; b) what happens if a security action is taken? (Buzan et al., 1998) Threat as the facilitating condition of the security speech act and, eventually, the social construction of a threat to a state's security establishes the dynamics presented by the politicians in international politics. The survival mode activates the "we" context in domestic affairs, which is a step toward accepting a securitizing action.

MILITARY SECTOR

The military sector reflects the particular historical conditions of the contemporary international system. Due to the establishment of security communities right after WWII, which eventually led to the Cold War, substantial parts of states' military activities fall clearly into the political sphere rather than the military one. Therefore, the military sector has strongly been interlinked with politics in the current anarchical system. This sectoral connection within which the unit is the basis of traditional security studies provides the power-system complex in the international realm. Hence, the referent object of securitization is the state and its preservation of sovereignty over the territory. Following this logic, the characterization of a military threat is a genuine fear of being attacked by various types of military technological capabilities from outside the state. Under the current running idea of the national state, it is not only the fear of territorial integrity but also of the population that establishes the national civic components. At the same time, they carry the legitimizing part in the securitization process.

The state defending its sovereignty in the international climate possesses the exclusive right to self-defense by use of force based on the Westphalian conception of international society. (Buzan et al., 1998) The governing elites' legal use of military force can be claimed inside or outside the territory. In both cases of military deployment, the reasoning is to ensure the security of the internal and external processes of communities that establish and maintain governmental machinery. Hence, the governance process links these two sectors in two directions: a) inward – meaning to the domestic construction and life of the state, and b) outward – to the position in relation to other members of the international system. (Buzan et al., 1998) In the outward direction, which is the main focus of this thesis, it is due to the genuine fear of being attacked that leads the state toward the security dilemma – which leads to armament and simultaneously to greater instability. Therefore, according to Buzan et al. (1998), “the amity-enmity component of security complex theory reflects the outcomes of these securitization processes.” (pp. 50) The fear of external threat is based on an interplay of the armed offensive and defensive capabilities of states. For example, the State of Israel's defense capabilities is firmly based on the trained citizenry for

territorial defense. It is because of the perception of other states' capabilities and intentions that shape the inward direction of the securitization process.

Extending the Westphalian conception, a referent object is an even more abstract concept, such as religion, nation, or various principles of international society. (Buzan et al., 1998) Here can be found a thin border between international and domestic security, specifically in the case of Israel. Religion and nationalities are entangled in the state as in many other states or entities, particularly in the Middle East. Consequently, the vulnerability of the state spring from the existence of would-be states with unrequired nationalities. (Buzan et al., 1998) With the interference of other states in a state with a would-be state, which is de facto a unit-level actor, there is an overlaying of domestic and international matters, as in the case of Palestine and Israel. Therefore, according to Buzan et al. (1998), the would-be states are “frequently objects of military interest and action and therefore of securitization” (pp. 54). Eventually, according to the principle of international society, they are threats to the state sovereignty leading to legitimizing a violent action against such would-be states with secessionist ideas considering themselves self-seeking and self-referencing security entities.

Political relations condition the interplay of units based on military capabilities. The political character of such a securitization process does not mean the securitization must only be done by the proliferation of military technologies, deterrence, or arms racing. According to Buzan et al. (1998), the perception of foreign armed forces as threatening leads toward interstate relations that involve “policies aimed at muting the security dilemma, such as arms control, arms reduction, non-offensive defense and times at alliances.” (pp. 52) Therefore, there may emerge regional subsystems of referent objects such as NATO, or EU. (Buzan et al., 1998) Consequently, there is a shift of military securitization of larger referent objects advocated by state agents to ensure securitization of domestic vulnerabilities threatened by the would-be states based on standard international principles. Followingly, securitization is assured not only inward but outward to the international sphere as well. The principles are a) balance of power, b) international

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society, c) non-proliferation of some types of weapons (nuclear, biological, chemical), and c) international law. (Buzan et al., 1998)

The securitizing actors in the military sector play the management position of either abstract principles or cooperative principles in the securitization process. (Buzan et al., 1998) Such securitizing actors are those involved in the power relations of the state. Those are prime ministers, ministers, and military generals, whose positions are strictly hierarchically defined. On the international subsystem levels of security conglomerates, specific organizations have internal processes based on their collective agreement instituting their hierarchy. The reason for hierarchical structures in the military sector is that there cannot be any space for ambiguity that can be transmitted into systematic intersubjectivity.

The intersubjectivity in socially constructed threats, vulnerabilities, and security has roots in historical or material conditions. (Buzan et al., 1998) There are three key contemplating elements of military securitization: a) a perceived threat, b) the unit's vulnerabilities, and c) insecurity. All the mentioned elements need to be socially constructed to exist in socio-political perception. Military threats from neighboring states are considered the most serious because of their close physical distance and the nature of military action that is intentional and directed. The securitizing narrative legitimizing a military action can be built on past experience or historical continuity. On the other hand, past experience may have shown military vulnerabilities. Consequently, any military actions among states lead to a cut of normal political relations that cover all other unit security sectors. Therefore, the respective military capabilities of states have to be considered, which spring from the perceived interplay among the states. According to Buzan et al. (1998),

“Once the process of securitization has locked into enmity as the framework of relations, threats, and vulnerabilities will be perceived primarily in terms of the military capabilities of possible aggressors. In making these calculations, both the absolute capabilities of opponents and their capabilities relative to one's own must be taken into account. The absolute capabilities of potential attackers determine the nature and extent of military threats. An opponent equipped with large numbers of nuclear weapons and suitable delivery systems can pose a threat of the rapid obliteration of a society that is not available to an opponent that does not possess weapons of mass destruction.” (pp. 58)

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The material and technological capabilities of a unit determine the unit's capability in the matter of strength and strategy. The relativity of military capabilities distinguishes strength, technology, and strategy as the primary variables. (Buzan et al., 1998) There is a division of high-tech and low-tech armaments.

On the other hand, there is a nuclear and conventional division of weapons within the framework of the weapons of mass destruction limited or forbidden by international law. Despite the legal obstacle, for instance, the Non-Proliferation Treaty regarding the construction or provision of nuclear weapons, in the sphere of military "real politics," the rule of law is not considered an assurance within an anarchical perception. Any possibility of such possession may be perceived as a threat mainly if states' relations function in the enmity deadlock as during the Cold War between the USSR and the US. Furthermore, there are other variables with affective significance in the military securitization continuity, such as geographical distance or topology of the state's territory.

The historical impact of establishing the current perception of neighboring states can be shifted from enmity to amity relations as a result of a recognition process. The recognition process, in this sense, shall be understood as an intersubjective process of units realizing each other's interests in conduct with their positions as regional players and shared stances on the global level of the power-system politics. Such a pragmatic approach eliminates the historical enmity in military terms and replaces it with political relations based on significant events. Followingly, it affects conditions regarding the security interplay. There are several examples when this pattern can be observed. Buzan et al. (1998) proposed, "As Japan and Germany have learned, such memories can obstruct the process of desecuritization even when well-established present political and military realities seem to pose no objective grounds for threat perception." (pp. 60) In the case of Israel, it is the shift of perception with the Arabic states after the wars during the Cold War. Except for having common enmity relations with Iran, it also has the same or similar security stances at the global power level. Such results in amity relations result from the harmony between the State of Israel and certain Arabic states that can be observed in the form of international agreements and economic relations. On the contrary, the disharmony between the State of

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Israel and certain Arabic states on one side, and Iran with its own security conglomerate on the other, raise the “we” against “them” perceptual division not only in the region among states. Therefore, the survival mode of such communities enhances the ontological preservation more on pragmatic reasons.

METHODOLOGY

Copenhagen Security School providing the theoretical comprehension of security as a complex set of conditions across state's sectors establishes the backbone for this thesis. For the limited space for this thesis, the empirical research is narrowed to the military sector of the State of Israel and its military operation in the region. Based on the theoretical framework, this thesis work with the contextual inferences in regard to studied temporality elements that facilitates the current international affairs. The end of Cold War has shifted the strategic regional power composition along with the military strategic development and emergence of non-state entities that eventually led to the changed character of threat and vulnerabilities. Therefore, the comprehension of security dilemma in regard to the territorial integrity and society considered to be the main referent objects of military securitization shall be considered in outward direction due to inherent intersubjectivity with other regional players. Consequently, it results in the cumulation of the players' interplay within the region overlaid across the power-level layout that prolongs the enmity character of the region. Such cumulation creates the security complex within the region conditioning the security positions of its subjects, specifically for this thesis, the State of Israel. The security complex in perception of each player's security conditions is subjective due to differences in the threat and vulnerabilities, therefore, this thesis examines the subjective point of view of Israel.

Due to the historical continuity in the context of the Lebanon War 2006, the existential threat and speech process in regard to securitization process is not required to be analyzed through deep discourse analysis. The continuation of enmity character among the entities involved in the War still persist due to the lack of peace agreement and other elements examined in the core text. Eventually, the Israeli military doctrine has changed since the Israel's retreat from Lebanon in 2008 because of the emergence of unconventional warfare conducted by non-state entities. The Israeli doctrine titled 'Dahiya Doctrine' facilitates patterns for military operations in the region assuring the security of the territorial integrity and population.

Therefore, this thesis conducts an analysis of Israel's recent military operations in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and Palestinian territories in order to find the behavioral military patterns

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conditioning its regional security. Applying the Copenhagen Security School enables this thesis to categorize the entities directly or indirectly involved, or targeted by the Israel's use of force, or supplying the State of Israel, across the power-system layout conditioned by the outward military securitization process. For this purpose, there was conducted the analysis of Israel's military operations in the region published in open sources, mainly in Israeli news, along with the analysis of research studies concerning the Israel's targets, which consist of state and non-state entities, and of official strategic military documents. Except for the written sources, this thesis includes interviews from Israeli Academia. The interviews were conducted with Dr. Gallia Lindenstrauß, Senior Research fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies, and with Dr. Nimrod Goren, President and Founder of MITVIM – The Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies, Co-Founder of Diplomed – The Council for Mediterranean Diplomacy, and Senior Fellow for Israeli Affairs at the Middle East Institute, Co-Chair of a regional initiative at President Isaac Herzog's Israeli Climate Forum.

This thesis assumes that Israel has become its very own security complex within which the Palestinian territories functioning under the current circumstances shall be rather considered from the regional perspective a vulnerability to the State of Israel rather than a regional threat.

LIMITATIONS

The broad spectrum of Critical Security Studies and used literature of the Copenhagen Security School provides space for broader security analysis through other sectors. Especially, in the case of Israel, the societal and political analysis would extend the results of this thesis providing wider ground for comprehensive security analysis of Israel's security and securitization/desecuritization opportunities.

Furthermore, due to the dynamic regional character, this thesis analyzes Israeli military operations from December 2017 until January 2023.

CONTINUAL THREAT SINCE THE END OF THE LEBANON WAR 2006

The end of Israel's Security Zone¹, affected by international politics in the region, mainly the peace negotiations with Syria, was significant for the rise of the Hezbollah², Shi'a militia, and its consequent military securitization at the border. Since the emergence of Hezbollah in the 1980s, a continual military securitization of the group in Southern Lebanon can be observed. Before the end of the Cold War, according to Marcus (2018), the armed group identified itself as an Islamic resistance entity against IDF³ presence in Southern Lebanon, conducting armed attacks and kidnappings of IDF soldiers and Israeli citizens. (pp. 39) Followingly, in the 1990s, after the end of the Cold War, Nasrallah's becoming the group's secretary general made the organizational element deeper connected to IRGC. Such a change was the basis for the group's shift in strategic posture in the region in the early 1990s with the input of professional training provided by IRGC⁴. Since then, the IDF needed to reconceptualize the perception of Hezbollah; hence, Israel shifted its strategy from the 1980s based on the outward security routine in Southern Lebanon. The cumulative deterrence of the armed organization was based on the traditional Israeli military doctrine dividing the security routine in the Security Zone established in Southern Lebanon on a) micro level – hostile acts with a limited military response, and b) macro level – demonstration of military supremacy in the targeted territories. In the 1990s, Maj. Gen. Levin proposed that IDF “must stop treating Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, and start fighting it the way a modern army fights guerillas.” (pp. 58)

The uncertainty of Israel's Red Lines⁵ after its withdrawal from the Security Zone led the state into open war conflict with Lebanon in 2006. (Marcus, 2018) The traditional military doctrine, including highly intensified confrontation, put the primary responsibility on

¹ official term for Southern Lebanese territory established by Israel in 1985 following the Israeli 1982 invasion of Southern Lebanon during the Lebanese Civil War (Kane, 2018)

² Hezbollah is a Shi'a armed group created in Southern Lebanon in 1982. The group's original purpose was to fight against the Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon. (Kane, 2018)

³ Israeli Defense Forces

⁴ Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. It is an unconventional armed force established after the 1979 Iranian cleric revolution. The force possesses a character of “ideological army.” (Aarabi, 2023)

⁵ A used Israeli term for *cassus balli*.

Lebanon. Simultaneously, the responsibility could have been attributed to Syria for its provision of safe heaven as well. However, after the successful Cedar Revolution⁶ in Lebanon demanded military withdrawal from Lebanese territories, Lebanon remained the only conventionally securitized subject due to Hezbollah. Marcus's (2018) discourse analysis of Hezbollah and Israeli leaders proves the strategic failure of "low-intensity conflict" during the pre-2006 war period. (pp. 95) The IDF's assumption of a purely defensive strategy by keeping its military in the Israeli territory with readiness to reactive operations targeting Hezbollah would have kept deterrence was unsuccessful. It caused the high-level confidence of Hezbollah's leader, Nasrallah, based on the "cumulative deterrence deficit." (pp. 95) The confidence led him to order armed action across the Israeli border with the expectation of a low-intensity reaction from the IDF. The military group did not expect a high-intensity reaction after crossing the national border of Israel in order to kidnap Israeli soldiers. During the triggering Hezbollah's operation, 3 IDF soldiers were kidnapped and 2 killed. The high-intensity operation conducted by Israel ended with UN Security Council Resolution 1701⁷ enforcing the permanent cease-fire.

Eventually, the Winograd Commission 2006 assessed the need for Israel's deep strategic multi-dimensional planning necessary for threat comprehension right after the war. (Marcus, 2018) The IDF Chief of Staff, Gen. Halutz, stated after the war:

"The way to fight terror is not by employing armored divisions that will capture territory. It is by inflicting continuous, painful blows that will inflict on the other side a much higher price than he ever expects ... one that produces deterrence."
(pp. 99)

The old-fashion reactive doctrine emphasizing territorial gain and simultaneous enforcement of the civilians to leave Southern Lebanon to lower their affiliation toward the militant group has resulted as ineffective. Hence, the State of Israel was forced to reshape its perspective on regional geopolitical development.

⁶ Cedar Revolution consisted of several civilian protests that sprang after assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. The protests led to Syrian military withdrawal in April 2005. (Yacoubian, 2009)

⁷ UN SC Resolution 1701 called for Israel's withdrawal from the Southern Lebanon, extension of UN mission mandate (UNIFIL). UN SC also decided in § 14 and 15 to take all necessary measures to cease any material supplies through the Lebanese borders to any entity as well as to provision of technical training or assistance.

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The high-intensity offense was launched to reestablish deterrence vis-à-vis Hezbollah, even though it is not a conventional player, possesses the capabilities to influence the regional dynamics. Even though Lebanon's conventional responsibility stays in order for several reasons, such as Hezbollah's political establishment in the country and their military capabilities establishing an essential part in Lebanon's military security. (Marcus, 2018) Lebanon did not disarm the Shi'a militant group on the basis of UN SC Resolution 1701 on permanent cease-fire between Israel and Lebanon. Therefore, the continual violation of the resolution not only by Hezbollah and Lebanon but also by Iranian-backed Syria that provides logistic transfers of material supplies is evidence of enmity elements in the region with persistent unconventional players. (Kane, 2018) Nonetheless, if Hezbollah intercepts Israel's territorial integrity either from Lebanon or Syria, the consequence will be another high-intensity conflict with Israel. Additionally, the lack of a bilateral peace agreement between the State of Israel and Lebanon means that both neighbors are still in a state of war.

Consequently, Israel's realization of the impossibility of defeating unconventional threats with conventional military doctrine led to the formulation of the Dahiya Doctrine. This doctrine is still implicated and is based on offensive deterrence, which is perceptual in nature, as the central tenet. (Marcus, 2018) According to Marcus (2018), the Lebanon War has shown that air strikes targeting Hezbollah's weak points are enough for deterrence without the need to use naval and territorial forces. (pp. 104) The central premise of the doctrine is based on the "periodic execution of threats that are large and dramatic are essential to communicate resolve and credibility in the eyes of Israel's adversaries." (pp. 102) The Dahiya Doctrine, named after the suburb of Beirut, aims to attack Hezbollah directly within its surroundings with disproportional use of force while Lebanon cannot claim sovereignty. By claiming sovereignty, Lebanon would simultaneously claim responsibility for Hezbollah's presence. That would eventually lead to the eradication of permanent conventional cease-fire. The doctrine simultaneously eradicates the backfire in the opposite way due to Lebanon's incapability to disarm Hezbollah and Hezbollah's political and military unwillingness and incapability to bear consequences in the form of high-intensity conventional warfare. Such military strategic changes by the IDF prove the

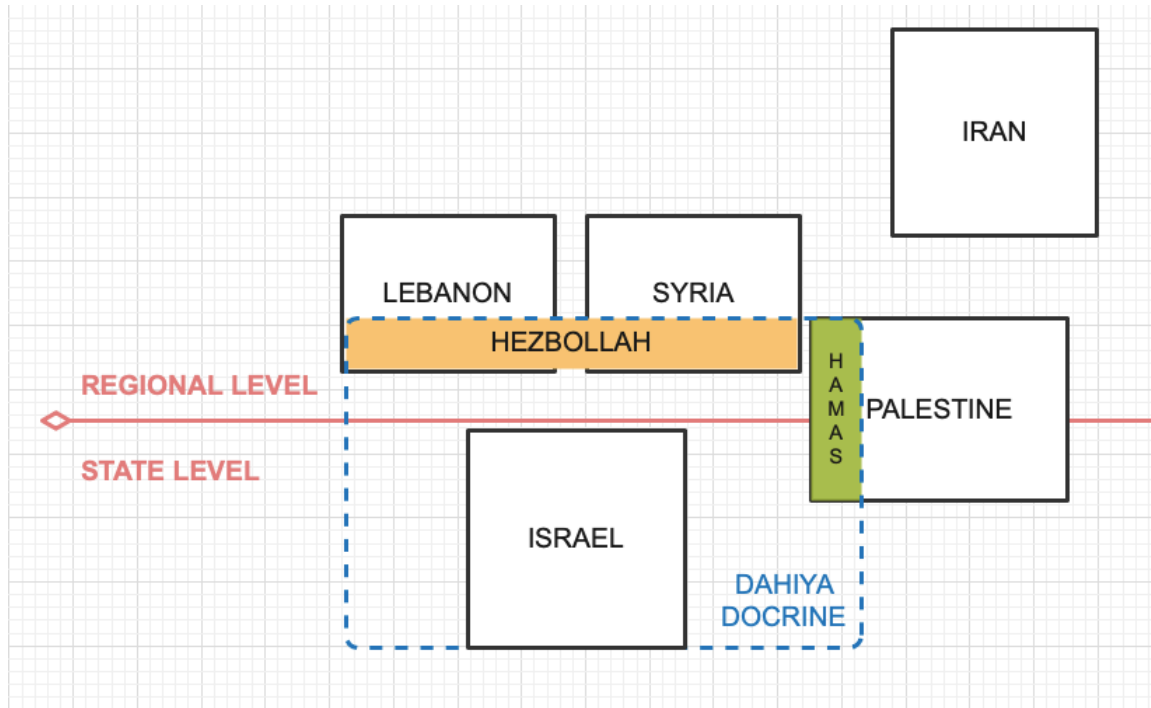
redefinition of neighboring entities. The examined strategic changes from the declared permanent cease-fire have a psychological character from fear of another miscalculation of regional enemy capabilities. Accordingly, the doctrine categorizes military operations among three levels:

1. Routine offensive and defensive campaigns prolonging the enemy attacks,
2. Emergency situations using limited military force with no strive for strategic change to restore deterrence,
3. Full-scale conventional war using full military power.

Accordingly, the Dahiya Doctrine declared in 2008 is exercised and defined in the Strategy Document of IDF published by IDF COS Eizenkot in 2015. Based on the document's character, Israel's regional perception is affected by the potential regional conditions throughout Israel's existence. With high probability, the publishment of the military strategy for the following five years represents a securitizing move to clarify the Israeli "Red Lines" and accordingly to define the "rules of the game." The strategic document characterizes the main conventional and asymmetric threats for the State of Israel to be a) Lebanon, b) Iran, c) Syria, d) Hezbollah, e) Hamas, and f) any terrorist organizations with no connection to a specific state or community such as Global Jihad, Palestinian Global Jihad, ISIS. (Chapter 1, §3) The document also defines the main aspects of the security concept learned from the Lebanon War 2006: a) detection, b) deterrence, c) defense, and d) defeating the enemy. (Chapter 1, §4) Accordingly, to the strategic goals, the IDF categorized its military operations. Those are defined in the continual military functional situations distinguishing between a) routine – "Operations Between Wars," b) emergency – "limited campaigns and operations not within the framework of war," and c) war. (Chapter 3, § 4) These three categories established after the 2006 War directly imply the temporal elements of Israel's geopolitical perception influenced by the enemy, the non-state and state entities. Such strategic lenses, including the geopolitical and temporal perception of Israeli society, demonstrate the continual threat to Israel within the region and Israel's approach to the security dilemma springing from fear of endangerment.

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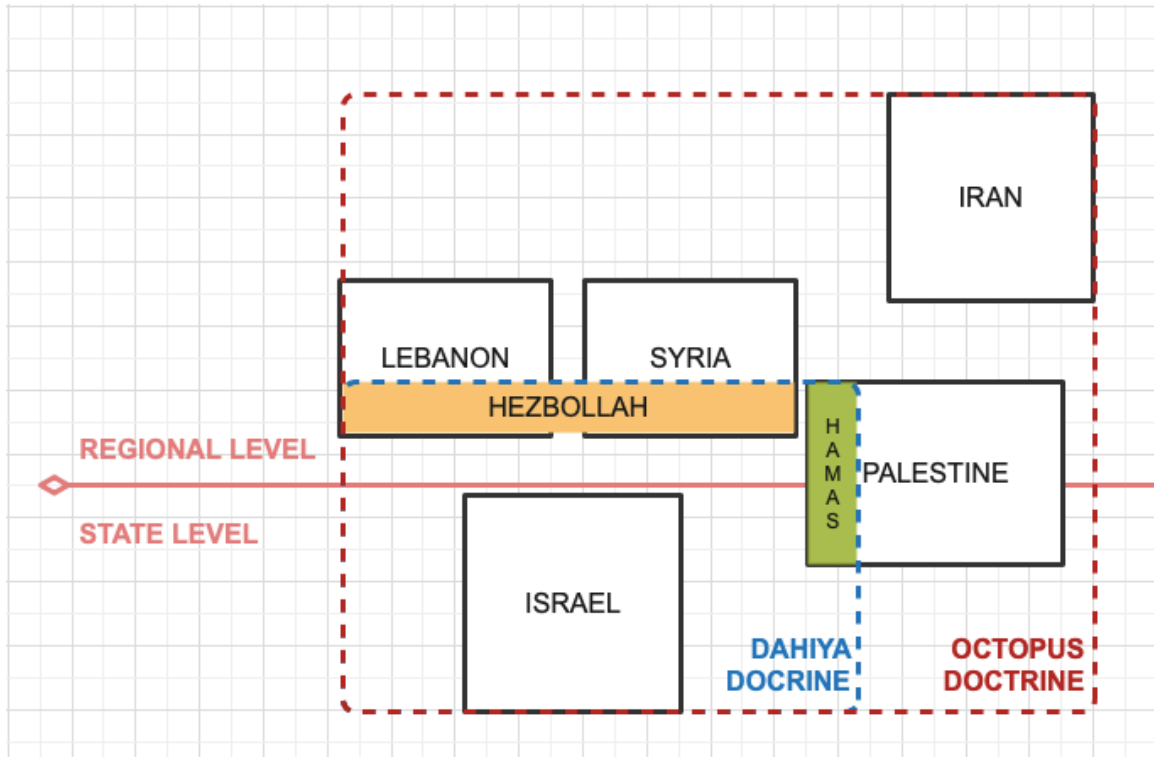
Far States	Near States	Failed/Disintegrated	Sub-State Organizations	Terrorist Organizations
Iran	Lebanon	Syria	Hezbollah, Hamas	Palestinian Islamic Jihad



In Lindenstrauss’s opinion (personal communication, February 2023), the Dahiya Doctrine in the long run provided the State of Israel 15 years of relative calm on the Northern front. Additionally, Lindenstrauss claims that the doctrine also “warns the international community that the price of another war in Lebanon would be very high, so that certain international players (US, France) pressure actors within Lebanese society to contain some of Hezbollah’s activities.”

Eventually, the extension of Israel’s strategy led the state to target the common denominator embodied in Iran through the declared Octopus Doctrine. (Bahgat & Divsallar, 2022) Iran has created its own threat network throughout the region. Iran has created the Iranian Threat Network (ITN) to create a “grey zone” in the region through either material or financial support to non-state actors conducting terrorist attacks.

(Tabatabai, A. M. & coll., 2021) Those non-state actors negatively affecting Israeli security are Hezbollah operating in Syria and Lebanon, and Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the Palestinian territories. According to the RAND Analysis, Hamas is supplied with financial support as a deterrent against the State of Israel. (Tabatabai, A. M. & coll., 2021) Iran, since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, does not recognize Israel's right to existence and attempts to involve in cooperation through the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps with non-state entities in the region. Hence the broadening of continual threats affecting Israel's security led the IDF to encompass the whole regional threat in order to prevent any threat directly targeting either the Israeli territorial integrity or Israeli citizens.



Semi-Conclusion 1

In conclusion, the continual threat forced Israel to shift its strategic military focus in the region against the continually extensive security threats since the war with Lebanon. Right after the end of the Cold War, the regional dynamics in the perspective of Israel were influenced by the unsuccessful peace process with Syria that limited the IDF from military operations. Thus, the cumulative deterrence deficit led to the change in Hezbollah's

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military character and its offensive strategy toward Israel. Consequently, Israel's traditional military doctrine needed to reshape the "deterrence by punishment" in the form of conventional high-intensity conflict against Lebanon. The conflict ended by UN SC Resolution 1701 about the permanent cease-fire has not been fulfilled; hence, there is the presence of continual threat with its geopolitical perceptual consequences. Eventually, due to the extensive character of Israel's regional threats, the increase of fear from another endangerment of the State of Israel can be observed. Therefore, the IDF's post-2006 military doctrines are suggestive evidence of the perceived continual security threat enlarging the security dilemma while establishing the game's rules. Those are based on outward offensive and defensive operations with their specific categorization considering the temporal element. The 2006 War, thus, can be considered to be the beginning of current Israel's perception of the region that affects its security navigation, which is symptomatic for the post-Cold War period within the regional level of power layout.

CURRENT REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT

This thesis aims to map relations within the chosen regional conventional and unconventional players for the Israeli regional security analysis in the contemporary era. Due to the regional complexity, this thesis chooses to map the relations of those players with the evident impact on the Israeli-Iranian tensions and simultaneously on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. The observed conventional regional players besides the State of Israel are a) the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and b) the Islamic republic of Iran. Adequately significant are the Arab states being members of the Abraham Accords mediated by the US. Those are not examined separately because of their considerably lesser direct impact during the studied period of Israeli military operations. Followingly, the observed unconventional players are a) Hamas, b) Fatah, c) Hezbollah, d) the Islamic State, and e) Muslim Brotherhood. Hamas and Fatah are political movements operating in the territories based on international agreements supposed to be controlled by the Palestinian Authority, which is supposed to become a state player within the Two-State Solution.

The Post-Cold War Era Being A Time of Post-Palestine

The improvement of Israeli-Arab relations has omitted the necessity to proceed in the bilateral peace process with Palestine. Such a regional approach had an impact on Israeli security in the form of implicitly changed security character of Israel's regional surroundings. Adequately, this regional shift had an impact on the Israeli-Palestinian negotiation. Based on Benziman's (2018) political discourse analysis, Netanyahu's⁸ government, elected and formed in 2015, has set up a policy decentralizing the Palestinian issue from the regional development with the Arab States. For those, the topic of Palestine used to be at the center of their common regional interests and the basis for the relations with enmity character toward Israel during the Cold War. Although, since the peace negotiations between Israel and Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), regional Israeli-Arab relations have been appropriated. Netanyahu's "delinking" political strategy bypasses the central position of Palestine based on positive mutual recognition in order to promote shared economic, political, and geopolitical goals within the region without an

⁸ Israeli Prime Minister

explicit “peace” agreement with the Arab states. Such amity elements can be considered positive for the Israeli regional security perspective symptomatic for the post-Cold War period.

The unilateral diplomatic endeavor conducted by Israel within the Israeli-Arab relations is adhered to by the Islamic division within the Middle East. (Kane, 2018; Tabatabai, A. M. & coll., 2021) Based on the shared security threat in the current regional context, there is a pragmatic paradigm for mutual cooperation within the regional dynamics between Israel and Arab countries. (Benziman, 2018) Significantly, political claims of shared enemies determined to be Iran and Daesh⁹ lead toward contextual alignment. Hence, the Israeli persistent ontological fear has shifted from its perspective on the Arab states to Iran. Furthermore, the bilateral agreements within the Abraham Accords¹⁰ framework enhanced by Trump’s administration in conduct with the still promoted Arab Peace Initiative¹¹ between Israel and Saudi Arabia in recent years can be considered as signs of Israeli-Arab normalization in general understanding. (Feierstein, G. M. & Guzansky, Y., 2022) Thus, the Israeli perception of the Arab regional players has moved toward positive connotations in regard to regional security stances.

According to Goren (personal communication, February 2023), Abraham Accords have gained the enough value to create a way to multilateral settings even with those Arab states, which are not a member of the Accords. That could be observed at the Egypt Summit,

⁹ Deash is an arabic acronym of "*al-Dawla al-Islamiya fil Iraq wa al-Sham*." This term is used to label the territorially expanding jihadist militant group Islamic State of Iraq and Levant in 2015. The purpose is springing from the unpleasant connotation expressing dishonesty to the group. The term is used by several western politicians and military officials to avoid usage of Islamic State that would have caused a legitimating recognition of the terrorist group in the Middle East. (BBC, 2015)

¹⁰ Abraham Accords has declaratory character providing the space for normalization of diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. Such normalization can lead to bilateral cooperation on the basis of shared interests including energy, food and water security, health, and other issues involving possible security cooperation due to the shared threatening prospective embodied in Iran. The first Arab states signing the declaration were UAE, Bahrain. (Feiersteing & Guzansky, 2022)

¹¹ The peace initiative was offered to Israel by the the Arab League in 2002 to normalise its ties and recognize the State of Israel the entire Arab world in exchange for withdrawal from the territory gained in 1967. Saudi Arabia proposed the initiative at the Arab League Summit in Beirut 2002. Israel recognized the peace initiative, although, asked for negotiation regarding the Initiative’s conditions. (Al-Jazeera, 2010)

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which is a sign of “creating something like a regional grouping that is looking into cooperation in different areas.”

Unitizing Elements

A joint military denominator for the Saudi kingdom and Israel is the Syrian Civil War, in which Iran militarily supports Assad’s regime through Hezbollah. (Kane, 2018) According to Kane (2018), there appeared to be a developing alliance involving the US, Saudi Arabia, and Israel against Hezbollah since the group’s involvement in the civil war. (pp. 68) Even though Saudis are not directly militarily present in Syria, they support the Free Syrian Army with heavy weaponry in the war against the regime. (BBC, 2015) Furthermore, intelligence information was detected instructing Hezbollah, by Iranian IRGC, to target Saudi Arabia¹². (Kane, 2018) Hence, the emergence Saudi-Israeli cooperation in sharing intelligence information on Hezbollah is a significant factor in the military securitization of the Shi’a sub-state organization threatening Israel’s society and territorial integrity besides Lebanon from Syria as well. (Rahman, O. H., 2021) Saudi Arabia has been monitoring Hezbollah’s activities since the 1980s. (Kane, 2018) Sharing the security threat is from the Israeli perspective a positive unitizing element regarding its territorial security, and eventually may establish precedence regarding the ITN’s presence in the Palestinian territories.

Despite of non-existence of an explicit legal peace agreement, the pragmatic reasons in-between of the Israel-Palestine-Saudi triangle can be detected in favor of Israel’s regional security. According to Svetlova (2022), Saudi Arabia and Israel share “common concerns regarding Iranian expansion and the withdrawal of the US from the region.” (pp. 2). Thus, Saudi Arabia, along with the UAE¹³, wants to preserve the US-backed security through Israel. (Rahman, O. H., 2021) Even though Saudi Arabia did not join the Abraham Accords, there are pragmatic steps toward cooperation with Israel conducted by Saudi crown prince Muhammad Bin-Salman. (Svetlova, 2022) According to Goren (personal communication, February 23), for Saudi Arabia it is currently important to have a linkage to the Palestinian

¹² Attempted bomb attack on Saudi airplane in 2016. (Kane, 2018)

¹³ United Arab Emirates

issue within the normalization of their ties with Israel; however, when Mohammed bin Salman takes power, it may become not so necessary. For contemporary times, it is a positive sign in the regional development in the practical form of not abiding by the historical prism emphasized and used during the Cold War. The Iranian threat is perceived to be existential as for Israel as for Saudi Arabia, however, due to the kingdom's preserved specific status quo of the Sunni religious dominant player, there cannot be established direct strategic military cooperation. According to Goren (personal communication, February 2023), within a complex matrix of the Middle East, the cooperation, mainly regarding the security issue, is usually done "behind the scenes" depending on the history of diplomatic relations, their character and continuity, and in certain times through regionally external actors like the US or Europe.

Omitting any declaration of common military security cooperation between Israel and Saudi Arabia has strategical reasoning because of the Iranian weaponization of social and religious cleavages. (Tabatabai, A. M. & coll., 2021) Iran would use any variant of military cooperation to undermine the Saudi Islamic legitimacy¹⁴ across the region. (Yaari, 2018) Such an event would have its consequences mainly in the Palestinian territories. Additionally, there are no diplomatic relations with the PLO in the direction from the Saudi Kingdom to the PLO due to PLO's support to Hussein during his invasion of Kuwait. (Svetlova, 2022) Saudi Arabia allowed the Palestinian Authority to open its embassy in Riyadh¹⁵ under its expected name, the State of Palestine. Although, there is no diplomatic mission in Ramallah¹⁶. Hence, from the Israeli perspective, Saudi Arabia can be, under the current circumstances, perceived to be, even though silent and temporary, but a critical security ally in the region through eradicating the Palestinian issue from the center of mutual relations. It is a historical shift from the Cold War, during which Saudi Arabia directly militarily intervened in the State of Israel with their Arab League¹⁷ allies.

¹⁴ Historical religious and political legitimacy springing from the *wahhabi* movement. (Weston, 1987)

¹⁵ Saudi capital city

¹⁶ Palestinian Capital

¹⁷ Arab political organization for regional cooperation

Hence, under the cooperative trend among the Arab states toward Israel and vice-versa in conduct with the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement 1995, the Palestinian territories, from Israel's viewpoint, shall be considered a semi-external vulnerability. Yitzhak Rabin, Israeli prime minister during the negotiations of the Oslo Agreements and Interim Agreement, viewed the signing of the peace agreement to be a securitizing move. (Wertman, 2021) The agreement on the "Two-State Solution," according to Wertman (2021), was supposed to inquire the State of Israel of the uni-national Jewish state status with the Israelis to be the main referent object of the state's security. Due to the Cold-War period sympathetic for Israeli-Arab conflicts, in which the central engine was the liberation of Palestinians and the global balance of power within the region under the umbrella of bipolar system, the basis of Rabin's securitizing move can be considered to be the perception of Palestinians as a societal threat. In this way, the State of Israel, by agreement on the emergence of the Palestinian Authority (PA), avoided high-level ethnic tensions or other societal threats with a higher intensity that could have sprung during the Arab Spring 2011. In this way, such securitizing move can be also considered as an attempt to move the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) from the domestic level of concern to the regional one based on the agreed transitional conditions. However, despite the Interim Agreement providing Israel the legal legitimacy for IDF to use force, the inefficient and vulnerable political autonomy has provided the space for the entrenchment of Iranian sub-state organizations threatening Israeli security.

Palestinian Division and Its Impact

Palestinian territories, under the current circumstances, are divided territorially and politically, negatively impacting regional security dynamics from the Israeli as from the Arab perception. Hamas's refusal of the Oslo Accords and eventually to enter the PA's political structure in official terms led the organization to pragmatic stances toward other regional players. (Zelkovitz, 2022) In conduct with the successful parliamentary elections for Hamas in 2006, followed by the 2007 geographical and political split within the Palestinian territories, there emerged the intra-Palestinian struggle for international political recognition between Hamas and Fatah. According to Zelkovitz (2022),

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“the tension between Fatah and Hamas not only impacts the Palestinian system but is also an element that destabilizes the regional border between Israel and its neighbors, as well as within Israel.” (pp. 54)

Hence, the Israeli perception of these two subjects in security terms possesses negative connotations with historical continuity.

Hamas pragmatically combines extremist rhetoric to highlight the armed struggle that aims to establish Palestine with its ancient territory, including Israel’s contemporary territory. (Zelkovitz, 2022) Within this aim, Hamas built its dependency on Muslim Brotherhood¹⁸, and eventually, after the organization left the Egyptian government, Hamas became militarily dependent on ITN¹⁹ support. (Zelkovitz, 2022; Tabatabai, A. M. & coll., 2021) The presence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine after its crackdown in the Middle East eventually represents another unitizing element between Israel and Saudi Arabia due to the hostile relations between the Brotherhood and Saudi Arabia. Adequately, the high hostility level between Saudi Arabia²⁰ and the Muslim Brother can be observed in the recent case of the Khashoggi murder at the Saudi embassy in Istanbul. (BBC, 2018)

Even though the PA truly operates only in the West Bank, the PA refused as the peace initiative of the Obama administration as followingly the Abraham Accords. (Zelkovitz,2022) Hence, the current condition of Palestinian autonomy in the Palestinian territories still represents the element of ontological insecurity for the State of Israel. Consequently, Israel is still dependent on the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement that provides the legality for their military operations against the threatening sub-state organizations.²¹ According to Goren (personal communication, 2023), the Agreement is important mainly for the distribution of Palestinian territories into A, B, C areas among which different responsibilities are divided between Israel and the PA. The main problem

^{18 18} Muslim Brotherhood or *al-Ikhwan* was founded in Egypt in 1928 with the vision to establish a universal Islamic political and religious system. It is focused on reformation through political establishment of political parties across the Arab states in the Middle East. (Al-Jazeera, 2017)

¹⁹ Iranian Threat Network

²⁰ Saudi Arabia, UAE consider the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization. (Mashino, 2021)

²¹ Article XV of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement serves to be the legal paradigm for the continuity of IDF’s use of force.

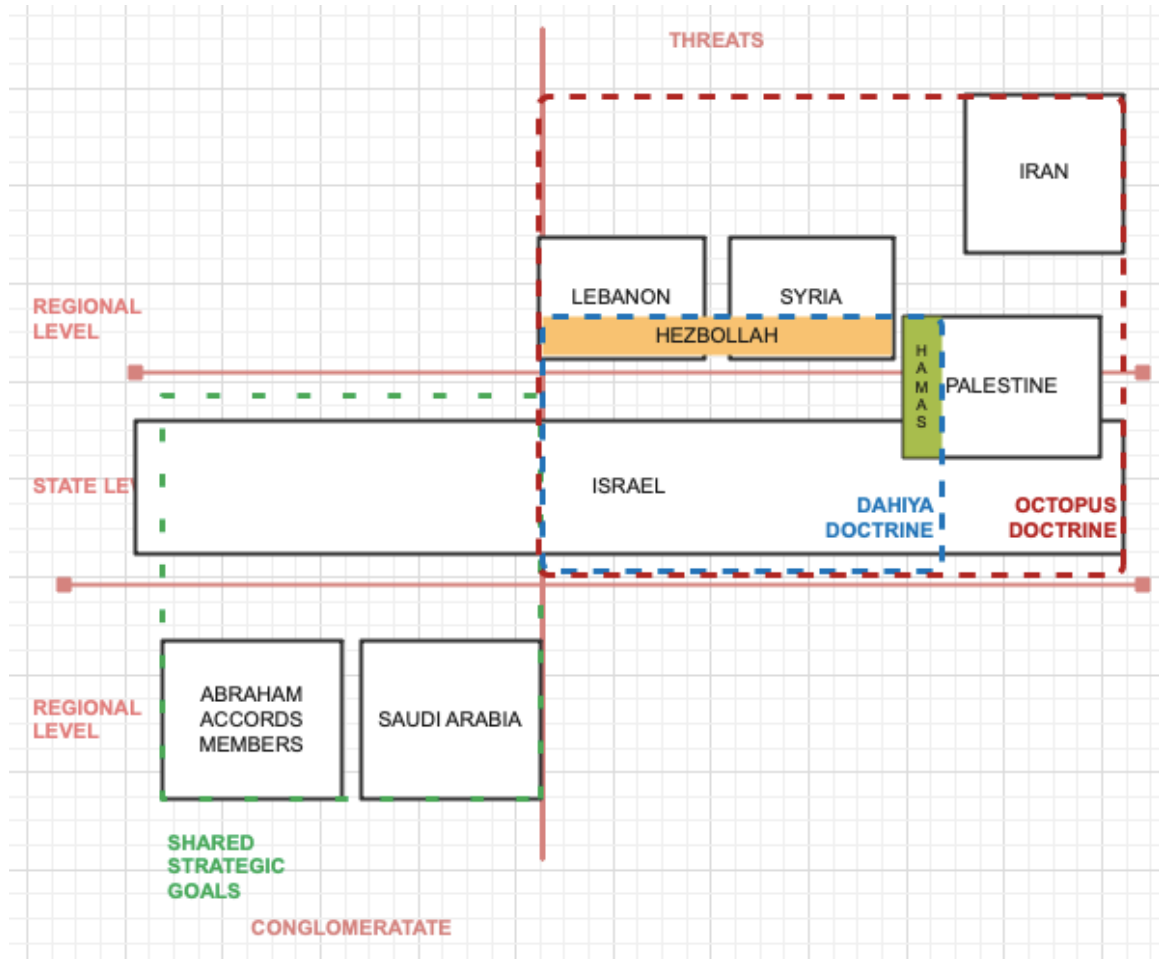
is, according to Goren, to merge the efforts of the Abraham Accords and the Oslo process²² to merge together after almost three decades from them. The threat is eminent in the forms of either offensive tunnels leading to the Israeli territories or providing a safe haven for jihadists. (Jerusalem Post Staff, 2021; Times of Israel, 2022) Therefore, with the unstable political development of PA can be, from the Israeli point of view, perceived as a vulnerability in the current unconventional post-Cold War environment.

Semi-Conclusion 2

Based on the mapped regional relations, the contemporary pragmatic shift is evidence of removing the enmity character from the Cold War between the State of Israel and Arab countries. Due to the improvement of Israeli-Arab relations on the pragmatic cooperative paradigm of bypassing the PA, an emergence of an implicit security conglomerate with Israel and Saudi Arabia being the crucial members because of the shared enemies, security threats, geopolitical stances, and economic interests. From the Israeli perspective, Saudi Arabia, as the most important geopolitical regional player moving the Palestinian issue from its center of historical regional interest, is a positive sign concerning Israeli security. Both regional players share the threat embodied in ITN that is present in the Palestinian territories. Therefore, the Palestinian territories can be considered in relation to Israel to be the semi-external vulnerability in the regional overlaying security interests, which create a security conglomerate in the comprehension of Copenhagen's theoretical approach. In the meaning of persisting ontological insecurity, the semi-external vulnerability has geographical and political character due to Palestinian geographic and political division that conceives PA's inefficiency regarding its stability. Hence, the Israeli-Interim Agreement 1995 provides Israel the legal legitimization for military securitization targeting the ITN in the West Bank and Gaza. Respectively, due to the unitizing element of the ITN, there is no opposition from the Arab states. Followingly, the PA's refusal of peace agreements has caused the continuity of Israel's dependency on the Agreement.

²² Peace process mediated by the US, which resulted into several deals between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

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ISRAELI-US ALIGNMENT

The United States had endured the role of regional power-balancer in favor of Israel during the early 2000s until Obama prioritized the pragmatic approach of favoring regional stability over ensuring the balance of power principle. (Petersson, 2022) The Obama administration strategy's strategic objective was to provide stable space for regional cooperation, thus avoiding the potential hegemony of Arab states. (pp. 35-36) Even though such a regional approach included the partial military withdrawal of the US, the Obama administration ensured the continuity of military support in the form of US commitment to continue in the provision of Qualitative Military Edge (QME). (Ramati, 2020)

The commitment was declared in the Memorandum of Understanding in 2016, a year before Obama left the White House. On the basis of a mutual security benefit, Israel is supposed to receive in total of 38 billion USD from the budget of Foreign Military Financing. (Office of the Spoke Person, 2023) The financial support is provided to Israel annually in the amount of 3.3 billion USD in security assistance. Additionally, the US provided 500 million USD for cooperative missile defense funding. In this way, the State of Israel has become a long-term strategic security partner in the region without direct US military involvement or limited one. Simultaneously the State of Israel provides the role of the "military bridge" to the US into the Middle East. Hence, there is the mutual benefit in the form of lowering the Israeli fear of the neighboring states due to the qualitative military superiority. At the same time, the US is capable of pursuing its national interests. Such financial aid provided to the State of Israel assures technological supremacy in the historically hostile region. This kind of approach in the form of a bilateral security premise did not change during the following Trump administration.

However, the Trump administration has set up adherence to the policy of external US protectionism in the Middle East; hence, Trump diffused the security of the US to the US allies in the region establishing it to be the priority for US strategic interests. (Petersson, 2022) The Trump administration, by this approach re-emphasized the US role in the region as the power balancer. From the Israeli perception, such an approach only positively

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enhanced its security position in the region and deepened the security interdependence. Adequately, from the US perception, the security assurance of Israel and, consequently, the Gulf states was meant to militarily communicate securitization of the US economic interest in the regional oil production and export threatened by regional terrorism. (Petržilková, 2021) The US Department of Defense acknowledged in 2018 the significant change in the international system's development since the end of the Cold War and the crucial end of the US global military hegemony. Therefore, from the Israeli perception, it is a positive element in its security related to the US due to the deeper military and geographical interdependency.

According to Goren in the conducted interview (personal communication, February 2023), US involvement, "stoically was not important factor that could contribute to these relationships." On the other hand, the US engagement, provides the prism for the Arab countries to be better in touch to Washington, even though, sometimes it goes the opposite way, mostly when the interest is reachable directly between Israel and the other state.

Furthermore, while Israel is a technological military developer itself, the possibility for healthier relationships between US, Israel, and the Arab states in the Gulf have increased. (Ramati, 2020) Observably, it can be considered to be a broadening of the regional military alignment with the common security threats. The extensive character of the regional alignment is a positive element for securitizing the Israeli territorial integrity against the Iranian-backed terrorist network and Iran itself. Adequately, the Trump administration conducted and published the 2018 National Defense Strategy that defined Iran as a "rogue regime" in the Middle East, which is considered crucial for US national security. Through this strategic document, the US recognized Iran's a) strive for regional hegemony, b) influence spreading regional instability, c) state-sponsored terrorist activities, network of proxies, and d) missile and nuclear program. (pp. 2)

Technological Development

Consequently, Trump successfully declared Iran a national existential threat based on Iran's negative influence on international peace and security due to their development of

ballistic missiles and nuclear capacities. (Petržilková, 2021) Their possible technological development, in combination with the inquiry into nuclear warhead capacities, threatens Israel and other US allies due to the possible Iran's deterrence capacities. Thus, the US regional economic interests are endangered. Although regional Iran's adversaries fear not only the strategic long-range missiles but mainly the advanced short-range precision-guided missiles and drones. (Nadimi, 2021) Hence, the US-backed alignment is ontologically driven not only for Israel but for the Arab states as well. Considerably, the US possesses a specific role in the Middle East with its positive effect on regional amity, enhancing the Israeli security position.

Provision and further development of such technological capabilities to the ITN organizations active in armed operations within the region would be a game-changing strategic element for Israel and other US-backed allies.²³ According to Lindenstrauss (personal communication, February 2023),

“The war in Ukraine is pushing Russia and Iran together and Moscow no longer feels itself restrained as it did in the past in some of the weapons technologies transfers Iran is asking from it. Ukraine is also a testing ground for Iranian UAVs and hence it is highly likely that some of these lessons will be applied by Iran and its proxies toward Israel. The growing cooperation between Russia and Iran is seen with deep concern in Israel.”

Based on intelligence analysis and information published by IDF, there are indications of Hezbollah's possession of precision-guided rockets and missiles of app. 150 000 of Iranian production. (Schanzer & Dubowitz, 2022) Currently, according to the IAEA²⁴ (2022), Iran possesses over 13 significant quantities (SQ)²⁵ of nuclear material consisting of enriched uranium at the level of the app. 20 + % of U-235 isotopes and 2 significant quantities of the app. 60 % enriched uranium. Such an amount of SQ of highly enriched uranium is enough for a small nuclear explosive device; thus, it does not require the 90 % level

²³ The efficiency of the Iranian suicidal drones can be currently observed in the war in Ukraine, where Russia provided with the drones successfully targets the Ukrainian energy infrastructure. (Koshiv, 2022)

²⁴ International Atomic Energy Agency

²⁵ Significant quantity (abb. SQ) is an “approximate amount of nuclear material for which the possibility of manufacturing a nuclear explosive device cannot be excluded,” according to The Present Status of IAEA's Safeguards on Nuclear Fuel Cycle Facilities. 1 SQ represents 25 kg of uranium enriched to min. 20 % of U-235 isotope. (IAEA, 1980)

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enrichment considered to be the threshold for manufacturing a nuclear weapon. (Albright & Burkhard, 2022) In 2012, Netanyahu drew the Israeli “Red Line” on 90 % of uranium enrichment in his speech to the UN GA²⁶. (Heller, 2012) Considering the technological nuclear possibilities combined with the precision-guided missiles, Iran tries to push the regional balance of power in its favor while being a threat to the US-backed allies.

According to Lindenstrauss (personal communication, February 2023), Iran passing the threshold of becoming Nuclear state, direct conflict increases on its endangerment. Additionally, the raising instability with the preserved proxy wars may escalate a direct regional conflict. That puts Israel in higher pressure.

ENEMY: Axis of Evil

The emergence of a multi-layer bubble within the region influenced by military technological development has resulted in the adjustment of conventional military strategies of the US and Israel. The IDF Strategy Document 2015 determines the strategic cooperation with other key countries, within which Saudi Arabia can be considered to be involved due to its relations with the US, geographical location, and role in the Arab world; while strengthening relations with the US. (Chapter 1, § 4 (c)) Considering the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the US, there can be observed a certain synchronicity between the strategies of these two allies. Both recognize Iran as their security threat and favor further regional strategic alignment.

That resulted in the moving of the Palestinian issue on the second track of regional dynamics, as was shown in the previous chapter of the thesis. According to the Defense Strategy (2018), the US considers the Middle East one of the “key regions,” where the US cumulates multiple elementary national power in the forms of diplomacy, information, economics, finance, intelligence, law enforcement, and military power. (pp. 4) Such efforts have the effect of the more lethal and decisive security conglomerate, which bolsters the US regional partners against coercion. (pp. 4) Furthermore, both Israel and the US

²⁶ United Nations General Assembly

strategically emphasize the level of their strategic military operations, assuring the deterrence and degradation of the terrorist organizations to stay below the level of armed conflict. Considering all these strategic factors, the US did not invade Iran due to their nuclear program probably reaching inquiry of weapons of mass destruction. Instead, the US successfully deterred Iran by the assassination of IRGC²⁷ Brigadier General Qassem Soleimani²⁸, responsible for commanding tactics for ITN, in January 2020. (Peržilková, 2021)

Syria, The Common Denominator

There is a shared security interest between Israel and the US in the Syrian Civil War due to the ITN presence. Following the Brigadier General's assassination, Hezbollah conducted a retaliation attack targeting the US personnel in Syria, according to Humud (2020). The US supports the non-state groups in the Civil War, mainly the Syrian Democratic Forces fighting against the regime of al-Assad, which is supported by Russia, Iran, and Iranian proxies. (Humud, 2020) Simultaneously, Saudi Arabia supports the Free Syrian Army fighting against the Russian- and Iran- backed Assad regime as well. (BBC, 2015) Besides Iran being recognized as a "rogue state," the US recognizes Russia as a regional destabilizer. (National Defense Strategy, 2018) Hence, Syria has become the regional epicenter for regional dynamics with a global level of interest and influence. With regional impact on the US, the Syrian conflict has become necessary to balance the global power layout opposing Russia and Iran.

Hence, the US Congressional Research recognizes Iran's objective in Syria to be the maintenance of Hezbollah's ability to target Israel from Syrian territory. (Humud, 2020) Therefore, Soleimani's assassination can be considered a necessity due to his tactical commanding of the Iranian proxies threatening Israel's territorial integrity. Additionally, there is the US aim in Syria to secure their economic interests in terms of oil infrastructures

²⁷ Recognized by the US Department of State to be a terrorist organization since April 2019 (Bureau of Counterterrorism)

²⁸ According to Alfoneh (2011) in the conducted biography of Soleimani, the Brigadier General controlled the policy for Iran with respect to Iraq, Lebanon, Gaza, and Afghanistan as he himself admitted in a message to General David Patreaus, the commanding general of the Multi-National Force-Iraq, in 2008.

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stimulated by its possible fall in control of ISIL²⁹, Iran, or other terrorist organizations threatening the security of Israel as well. (Humud, 2020)

According to Lindenstrauss (personal communication, February 2023), Russia saved the Assad regime in 2015, however, Assad do not want allow Hezbollah to target Israel from Syrian territories. And due to low presence of the US military personnel, approximately 800 people, US do not consider Syria to be a big for US-Russia competition. Although, saving the Assad regime assisted to certain degree to Iran maintaining the supply chain of armament to Hezbollah.

Currently, Biden's presidency is under global security pressure due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The 2018 US National Defense Strategy recognizes Russia as a "revisionist" state attempting to reshape the international system, thus, causing long-term global power competition. (pp. 2) Hence, Russian technological cooperation with Iran threatens US interests in the Middle East and Israel's security management. Therefore, the Biden administration initiated to deepen the US-Israeli-Arab military cooperation into an integrated alliance titled the Regional Security Construct that would deepen the regional ties with amity character. (Donegan & col., 2022) Such multilateral military integration is considerably initiated to balance the power competition within the region, where Russia is involved as a nuclear state possessing permanent membership in the UN Security Council and keeps its ties with Iran and Assad. Biden explicitly claimed at the Gulf Cooperation Council summit in 2022 that the US will not leave the Middle East and "leave a vacuum to be filled by China, Russia, or Iran" and will take leadership. (CNBC, 2022) Therefore, such a statement can be considered to strengthen Israel's security assurance in the Middle East due to the proposed military cooperation with the Arab integration. However, the approach of Saudi Arabia is in the near future questionable. Although, according to Lindenstrauss (personal communication, February 2023),

"A big motivation for the Abraham's accords and also Saudi Arabia's more positive stance toward Israel in recent years has been the joint threat from Iran. The US

²⁹ Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant recognized by the US to be a terrorist organization by the US Department of State (Bureau of Counterterrorism)

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decision to move Israel to CENTCOM³⁰ areas of command has also facilitated more cooperation in the region. In the covert level, there is unprecedented cooperation. With regard to a formal regional alliance – chances still seem slim. Growing cooperation between Israel and the Gulf States is also causing Iran to react more aggressively. Hence, it is not clear whether the Arab Gulf states will not be at some point deterred to lower their level of cooperation with Israel.”

Hence, the creation of the formal regional alignment are still questionable. Goren (personal communication, February 2023), also consider such cooperation to stay behind the scenes, but possible after reaching the Israeli-Palestinian peace with positive regional conditions. According to Goren, utilizing the NATO³¹ mechanism for states in the neighborhood is more possible.

Semi-Conclusion 3

In conclusion, the Memorandum of Understanding 2016 assured the State of Israel to possess regional technological supremacy that following the Trump administration resulted in deepening the pragmatic relations with Arab countries. The US emphasis on strengthening its allies in the Gulf due to their economic and geopolitical national interests was deeply conditioned by the Iranian strive for regional hegemony in Syria through Hezbollah, rocket, and missiles technological development, and nuclear capabilities development. The capability of Iran to provide ITN with tactical nuclear capabilities in combination with precise-guided rockets and missiles represents an ontological threat to the State of Israel along with the Arab states. Therefore, decentralizing the Palestinian issue has pragmatic security reasons for Israel and the Arab states allied with the US. However, the ITN presence equipped with Iranian technology in the Palestinian territories considerably enhances the Israeli vulnerability. Considerably, the assassination of Solleimani was a strategic deterrence of Iran by the US from the prism of Iran to be an existential threat to the US. Hence, there can be observed strategic synchronicity with Israel.

³⁰ United States Central Command directing and planning military cooperation

³¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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Accordingly, the Middle East being the critical region for the US national interests and global balance of power, the equilibrium of regional and global players observably is located in Syria. Hence, the territory of Syria has become a geographical location of power layouts across regional and global security complexes. Eradication of Hezbollah's possible entrenchment in the Syrian territories is therefore necessary to keep the power-system layout away from the Israeli territory. Adequately, the State of Israel, backed and supplied by the US technology, gains in its importance within the region as well as at the global level of the international arena.

OPERATIONAL SECURITIZATION

This chapter involves the analysis of Israeli military operations with a regional securitization character. By conceptualizing the Copenhagen theoretical framework, the military operations providing the outward direction of state security are considered by this thesis to be the communication of securitization per se within the military sector. The analysis was conducted via observation of the Israeli operations affecting the security of Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories. Consequently, the analysis results provide a deeper understanding of regional security dynamics. The analysis aims to prove the Israeli shift in their regional security perspective through military lenses, assuring better conditions for Israeli territorial security.

IRAN and IRGC

Most of the observed Israeli operations targeting Iran or Iranian Revolutionary Guards were conducted through their Israeli secret intelligence service, Mossad. Regarding the IDF operations, several Iranian accusations of Israel targeting their nuclear facilities have not been confirmed even though they are not denied by Israel, as can be seen in the most recent case of an attack on Iranian factory in the province of Isfahan.³² (Turak, 2023) It is due to the assessed media power by the 2015 IDF Strategy to manage PR and legal efforts during routine combat effectively. (Chapter 5, § 33) Thus, IDF's responsibility for such attacks can be only inferred considering Israeli most advanced UAV with its capability to carry the silent and smokeless gravity bomb³³ weighing almost a ton. (Williams, 2023) Besides the advanced technological capabilities to carry such airstrikes, there is a strategic operational build-up in the 2015 IDF Strategic Document, based on which IDF is supposed to maintain its Qualitative Military Advantage and the balance of deterrence against the countries with no common border. (Chapter 5, § 36) However, to avoid misinformation, this analysis uses only those open sources confirmed by Mossad, IDF, or political representatives.

³² Iran accuses Israel of a drone strike on the factory. Israel keeps the policy of not commenting the strikes.

³³ Capable to reach its target with speed of sound in free fall. (Saballa, 2023)

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The State of Israel conditions its international security through military operations, which can be considered a communication per se in regard to the securitization theory, producing deterrence below the level of open war conflict. All operations targeting the Iranian personnel or material facilities were conducted in-between global and regional altitudes to avoid escalating the tensions to an open war conflict. Iran repeatedly expressed threats of Israeli annihilation and erasing the State of Israel from the global political map, which only increased the Israeli ontological insecurity and forced Israel to overbalance the security dilemma. As observed in the previous chapters, Iran uses their ITN strategy to attack Israel rather than a direct military operation. That also indicates Iranian unwillingness to begin a conventional war. In relation to the deterrence of Iran, there can be observed the shared regional strategy with the US based on the case of the assassination of the IRGC commander in Baghdad.

Based on Mossad's ex-spy revealing interview for BBC while considering the strikes on the Iranian nuclear facilities, Israel's technological and intelligence capabilities can be detected to damage or destroy any targets in Iranian territory harshly. Such operations deter or lower the Iranian strategic capabilities within the Octopus Doctrine declared in 2022. Even though the doctrine was declared in 2022, the existence of such an operational strategy can be detected to be in active mode before its declaration. Based on the analysis, Israel's targets are either of a) material or b) personnel character. Concerning the nuclear threat, Mossad conducted the assassination of the top nuclear scientist by the installation of a machinegun with AI technology in a car by the route near the Iranian nuclear facilities. In 2018, the Israeli PM unveiled the secret nuclear archives inquired by Mossad's special operation.

Syria and Lebanon

Regarding IDF operations in Syria and Lebanon, those are pure of regional-level character. Israel deterred the state of Lebanon with its F-16 fighter jet's flight over Beirut³⁴ to prevent the Lebanese government from cooperating with Hezbollah in its activities. Syrian

³⁴ Lebanon capital

geographical location is used by Iran and Hezbollah for the shipment of armaments and material for rocket production to Lebanon. Therefore, the IDF operations target is a) to eliminate all material capabilities in possession of the Shi'a militant sub-state organization and b) Hezbollah's operational commanders in Syria due to the group's envy to entrench on the northern border of Israel with Syria. The analysis observed Israeli attacks killing Hezbollah's and Syrian Army's commanders on the occasion of their meeting. Such operations can be considered to be the "operations of opportunity" based on the 2015 IDF Strategy, executed by IAF. (Chapter 5, § 23) Hezbollah's entrenchment in Lebanon allowed the group to build offensive tunnels reaching Israeli territory. Those were destroyed under the umbrella of the Operation Northern Shield, which lasted for 66 hours. All of these Hezbollah's activities threaten as the Israeli society as territorial integrity, thus, are established to be the targets of military operations.

IDF conduct these operations through Israeli Air Forces and artillery shelling accordingly to the IDF Strategy Document to carry the "continuity of war and national efforts through multi-level defense." (Chapter 5, § 28) Such a military approach provides Israel with the position of the "game regulator." Israel conducts raids in Syria on a regular basis within their routine security activities; however, not all of them have been published to the civilian public due to the PR strategy. (Chapter 5, § 33) The role of the Israeli Air Force is to strike the "enemy centers of gravity." (Chapter 5, § 22)

The military deterrence is presumably observed toward the Syrian Army conditioned by Hezbollah's endeavor to contain into cooperation. Such cooperation would allow Hezbollah to be in a better position to target Israeli territories that are strategically unacceptable for Israel. Since the war with Lebanon in 2006, the continual threat in the form of Shi'a sub-organization forces Israel to conduct such military operations that are below the threshold of intercepting into Lebanon or Syrian sovereignty, thus, avoiding a conventional open war conflict providing Hezbollah the condition to target Israel on the side of a conventional player legitimately. According to the 2015 IDF Strategy, the entire border region is considered to be permanently threatened. (Chapter 5, § 15) Therefore, IDF deters the Syrian Army, yet, through warning measures in the form of shelling with tanks

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and artillery. From the Israeli perception, Hezbollah and Iran attempt to abuse the Syrian Civil War to enhance their offensive position toward Israel. Therefore, the deterrence of Hezbollah and the Syrian Army in Syria is inevitable. Furthermore, it is strategically codified to affect and shape the “enemy cognitive perception” according to Chapter 5, § 33 of the IDF Strategy Document. (IDF, 2015)

Paletinian Territories

The Palestinian territories, as shown in the previous chapters, represent the State of Israel a threat with a semi-regional character, with Hamas being the central threatening organization among the ITN. Based on the conducted analysis, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) has recently become another ITN sub-state organization threatening the IDF soldiers as well as the Israeli society with improvised explosive devices (IED) and rockets. Hamas is in possession of either rockets and missiles or materials necessary for their production, mainly in Gaza, provided by Iran and Hezbollah. Observably, the recent increased tensions show a tit-for-tat pattern between the IDF and the mentioned ITN organizations active in the Palestinian territories. Considerably, the targets of the IDF are mainly a) the material capabilities for rocket manufacturing. Followingly, the IDF operations target b) offensive infrastructure in the form of underground tunnels strategically located under refugee camps or other civilian facilities, c) training centers, and d) leadership of terrorist organizations. Consequently, most Israeli operations are of the preemptive strike character to assure Israel’s perceptual deterrence.

Observing the tit-for-tat pattern of military operations, the operational comprehension eliminating the Palestinian threat either in Gaza or the West Bank is considered to be “the home front” according to Chapter 5, § 28 of the IDF Strategic Document. (IDF, 2015) That includes the ability to “provide a rapid response.” Such an approach is explicitly defined as fulfilling the “continuity of war and national efforts” that can be considered an assurance of conflict management.

OBSERVED ISRAELI OPERATIONS

		AIM	THREAT	1 – routine 2 – emergency /other
R E G I O N A L / G L O B A L L E V E L	IRGC	June 2021 ³⁵		
		Ex-top Mossad spy reveals Mossad operations against Iran. “If the man constitutes a capability that endangers the citizens of Israel, he must stop existing,” claimed by Yossi Cohen.	Assurance for Israeli society of the state’s control over the security situation in the region and within its domestic reach.	-
		January 2020 ³⁶		
		US UAV strike in Baghdad killed IRGC general, Qasem Soleimani, responsible for IRGC’s regional strategy and coordination between IRGC army and supported militias.	Top commander of IRGC posing a threat in the form of effective regional cooperation of non-state military entities supported and supplied by Iran.	External operation committed by the Israeli global-level partner to strategically deter Iran.
		November 2020 ³⁷		
		Assassination of the top Iranian nuclear scientist, Dr. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, with use of AI gun installed by Mossad.	Knowledge embodied in the leader of the IRGC nuclear program. Development of the nuclear capabilities.	Deterrence
		January 2019 ³⁸		
Hossein Salami, current commander-in-chief of IRGC, claimed their	“We announce that if Israel does anything to start a new war, it will	Explicit threats to the State of		

³⁵ BBC. (2021). Israel ex-top spy reveals Mossad operations against Iran. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-57440430>

³⁶ BBC. (2020). Qasem Soleimani: US kills top Iranian general in Baghdad air strike. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50979463>

³⁷ BBC. (2020). Mohsen Fakhrizadeh: Iran scientist 'killed by remote-controlled weapon.' <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55128970>

TOI STAFF. (2021). Mossad killed Iran’s top nuke scientist with remote-operated machine gun — NYT. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/mossad-killed-irans-top-nuke-scientist-with-remote-operated-machine-gun-nyt/>

³⁸ TOI STAFF. (2019). Iran general says Tehran aims to wipe Israel off the ‘global political map.’ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-general-says-tehran-aims-to-wipe-israel-off-the-political-map-report/>

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		strategy is to “erase Israel from the global political map” after Netanyahu’s exposition of Iranian nuclear capacities.	obviously be the war that will end with its elimination, and the occupied territories will be returned. The Israelis will not have even a cemetery in Palestine to bury their own corpses.”	Israel and its existence.
		January 2018 ³⁹		
		Mossad stole documents regarding IRGC’s nuclear program. 32 out of 27 of safes were unlocked.	Material and technological capabilities for nuclear airstrike threatening the existence of Israel as such.	2
		December 2022 ^{40 41}		
R E G I O N A L L E V E L	SYRIA	Air defense systems in al-Qusayr and Damascus under Iranian control. IDF specifically targeted Hezbollah’s 127 th unit.	Research, development, maintenance of UAVs along with advanced precise missiles.	1
		IDF COS confirms air strike on Iranian 25-vehicle convoy carrying shipment of advanced armaments.	The armament supposed to be shipped to Lebanon for Hezbollah militias.	
		September 2022 ⁴²		
		Aleppo and Damascus airports used for material shipments from Iran to Hezbollah. Aleppo airport gets damaged repeatedly.	Defense Minister Gantz: Syrian scientific and research centers had been turned to factories for long-range precision missiles for Hezbollah.	1
		Syrian military weapons factory in Masyaf.	Russia demanded Iran to withdraw its militias	

³⁹ BBC. (2018). Israel's Mossad suspected of high-level Iran penetration. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-60250816>

⁴⁰ Fabian, E. (2022). Report: Israel targeted secret Hezbollah drone site in Syria strike this week. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/report-israel-targeted-hezbollah-drone-site-in-syria-strike-this-week/>

⁴¹ TOI STAFF & AGENCIES. (2022). IDF chief confirms Israel behind strike on Iran arms convoy near Syria-Iraq border. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-chief-confirms-israel-behind-strike-on-iran-arms-convoy-near-syria-iraq-border/>

⁴² Fabian, E. (2022). Senior officer: Iranian-backed forces withdrawing from Syria due to IDF strikes. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/senior-officer-iranian-backed-forces-withdrawing-from-syria-due-to-idf-strikes/>

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August 2022 ⁴³			
	IDF tanks fired 2 shells on the town of Hameidiyyeh across the Golan Heights. Afterwards, IAF dropped warning flyers. No specific target was claimed. The reason was the IDF's detection of intelligence transfer on regular basis from the Syrian Army to Hezbollah.	The flyers warned the Syrian Army not to cooperate with Hezbollah in terms of intelligence. Accordingly, continuation of such activities will require harsh measures by IDF to the Syrian Army.	1
February 2022 ⁴⁴			
	Syrian military infrastructure along with finance building hit by IDF airstrikes. Then, dropped flyers with warnings.	The flyers warned the Syrian Army not to cooperate with Hezbollah allowing the militia leaders infiltrating Syrian army.	1
October 2021 ⁴⁵			
	IDF helicopter strike on the outskirts of al-Baath and other locations in southern Syria.	The strike was conducted in order to block Hezbollah from entrenching on the southern border. Hezbollah would be capable to fire ballistic missile on Israel. Flyers warning the Syrian army not to cooperate with Hezbollah were dropped by IAF - Russia was informed about the strike	1

⁴³ Israeli tanks said to fire into Syria, wounding shepherds who approached border. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-tanks-said-to-fire-at-town-in-southern-syria-wounding-two/>

⁴⁴ Fabian, E. (2022). IDF said to drop threatening flyers in Syrian Golan after overnight strike nearby. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-drops-threatening-flyers-in-syrian-golan-following-overnight-strike-nearby/>

⁴⁵ Gross, J. A. & TOI STAFF. (2021). Israeli helicopters said to strike Hezbollah-linked targets in southern Syria. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-missiles-said-to-target-syrian-forces-near-golan-heights-border/>

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		April 2020 ⁴⁶		
		A car with suspected Hezbollah's fighter accompanied with Syrian military members loyal to Assad. IDF released a video footage as a warning and to provide evidence of IDF's surveillance that is supposed to be a warning for the Syrian Army.	Video footage of IDF documented Syrian military helping Hezbollah to set up on Golan Heights that represents a tacit threat of possible cooperation and operational synchronization. Increasing potentiality of war with Syria.	2
		IDF helicopter strikes a car with operational commanders of the Syrian Army with Hezbollah.		
R E G I O N A L L E V E L	LEBANON	February 2022 ⁴⁷		
		IAF F-16 flies over Beirut, Dahiya suborn, as a reaction on Hezbollah UAV penetration of Israeli airspace.	Reactionary operation of IDF committed as a warning to Lebanon. Development of advanced UAV by Hezbollah capable to penetrate Iron Dome.	1
		August 2021 ⁴⁸		
		IDF artillery strikes toward the source of Hezbollah rocket fire. IDF artillery shells targets in Lebanon after	Hezbollah deterrence in the form of military capabilities.	1
		September 2019 ^{49 50}		

⁴⁶ Gross, J. A. (2020). Releasing video footage, IDF accuses Syria of helping Hezbollah set up on Golan. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/releasing-video-footage-idf-accuses-syria-of-helping-hezbollah-set-up-on-golan/>

⁴⁷ TOI STAFF. (2022). IAF flies over Beirut after drone enters Israel; Hezbollah claims responsibility. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iaf-flies-over-lebanon-after-drone-enters-israel-hezbollah-takes-responsibility/>

⁴⁸ Fabian, E. (2021). Hezbollah fires 19 rockets at Israel, in heaviest barrage since 2006 war. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/rocket-alert-sirens-sound-in-golan-heights/>

⁴⁹ Magid, J. (2019). IDF publishes photos purporting to expose Hezbollah precision missile factory. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-publishes-photos-purporting-to-show-hezbollah-precision-missile-factory/>

⁵⁰ Gross, J. A. (2019). IDF releases photos of alleged Hezbollah missile sites near Beirut airport. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-releases-photos-of-alleged-hezbollah-missile-sites-near-beirut-airport/>

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		IDF exposes Hezbollah precision missile factory in southern Lebanon.	Material military capabilities of Hezbollah to attack Israel and its society with surface-to-surface missiles.	1
		UAV strike in Beirut damaging key components in precision missile-factories project supplied by Iran.		
		December 2018-January 2019 ⁵¹		2
		Operation Northern Shield – IDF targeted highly advanced tunnel military infrastructure crossing to Israeli territory.	Potential for territorial infiltration of operatives and for launching of rockets, missiles, and mortar shells. Construction of a defensive barrier threatens Israeli territorial integrity and Israeli society.	
	Hezbollah rocket strikes. IDF claims that Lebanon bears responsibility for any fire at the State of Israel’s territory			
	PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES	January 2023 ⁵²		
		IDF targeted chemical storage capacities in central Gaza for rocket production as retaliatory attack after rocket launch on Israel claimed by Democratic	Material capabilities for rocket production capable to reach Israeli territories.	1 - deterrence

⁵¹Gross, J. A. (2019). Finding ‘6th, biggest and last’ Hezbollah tunnel, IDF ends Northern Shield op. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/finding-final-hezbollah-attack-tunnel-idf-wraps-up-operation-northern-shield/>

⁴⁰ Gross, J. A. (2019). IDF destroys Hezbollah ‘flagship’ attack tunnel after studying it. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-destroys-hezbollah-flagship-attack-tunnel-after-studying-it/>

⁵² Fabian, E. (2023). IDF deploys three additional battalions to West Bank amid heightened tensions. https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-deploys-three-additional-battalions-to-west-bank-amid-heightened-tensions/

Fabian, E. & TOI STAFF. (2023). Tense calm in Jerusalem, Gaza border after a night of rocket fire, Air Force strikes. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/tense-calm-in-jerusalem-gaza-border-after-a-night-of-rocket-fire-air-force-strikes/>

Fabian, E. (2023). 9 Palestinians killed as gunmen clash with IDF soldiers in Jenin. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinian-killed-in-clashes-between-gunmen-and-idf-soldiers-in-jenin/>

Fabian, E. (2023). Israel bombs Hamas sites in retaliatory Gaza strikes; rocket sirens sound in Sderot. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-launches-retaliatory-airstrikes-in-gaza-rocket-sirens-sound-in-sderot/>

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S E M I - R E G I O N A L L E V E L		Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Hamas’s attack was a response to Israeli “systematic aggression” on Palestinian prisoners celebrating terror attacks in Jerusalem.			
		IDF deployment of additional battalions to West Bank.	Increase of tensions between Hamas, PIJ and IDF. Reaction on terrorist attacks in Jerusalem earlier in January. Threat for Israeli society.	2	
		Retaliatory strike of IAF targeting underground facility in central Gaza, by refugee center, after 7 rockets shot on Israel. Material military capacities and production. Responsibility was claimed by PIJ.		1	
		Jenin raid by IDF was conducted in order to target PIJ cell installing IEDs and shooting at IDF soldiers in West Bank.	Israeli society that was threatened by the material capacity necessary for terrorist attack. (pre-emptive strike)	1	
		August 2022 ⁵³			
		Operation Breaking Dawn targeting PIJ and Hamas. During the 66-hour operation IDF killed PIJ leadership including PIJ group commander in northern Gaza, Jabari. In total 170 targets were eliminated by IDF, military infrastructure and personnel. Another	Material capabilities of PIJ. Stable terrorist organization capable and equipped to commit terrorist action.	2 – emergency after rocket attack from Gaza	

⁵³ Fabian, E. & TOI STAFF. (2022). Days after Gaza ceasefire, Gantz says Islamic Jihad leaders should be ‘worried.’ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/days-after-ceasefire-gantz-says-islamic-jihad-leaders-in-gaza-should-be-worried/>

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		important successfully eliminated target was PIJ southern Gaza commander, Mansour.		
		July 2022 ⁵⁴		
		Operation Breaking Dawn. IAF destroying Hamas underground facility producing drones and rockets. Retaliatory attack after rockets launched from Gaza at Israel. IDF did not know who fired the rockets, therefore, Hamas' material capabilities were deterred. Hit by GBU-28.	Material and infrastructural capabilities of Hamas.	1
		April 2022 ⁴⁷		
		IAF strikes targeting 6 Hamas facilities including training camp in northern Gaza Strip. Israel considering Hamas responsible for any attack on Israel. Retaliatory strike after rockets fired from Gaza.	Material and personnel capacity of Hamas.	1
		January 2022 ⁵⁵		
		Shelling of Hamas outposts in northern Gaza by IDF tanks as a response on a shot Israeli citizen near the Israeli border.	Direct response after targeting Israeli citizen.	1
		Targeting Hamas rocket production facility belonging to Hamas in Gaza as a retaliatory strike after the rockets	Material and weapon capacity in enough amount for strike at Israeli residences.	1-deterrence Hamas is still considered

⁵⁴ Fabian, E. (2022). Gaza airstrike significantly sets back Hamas rocket production, says IDF. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/gaza-airstrike-significantly-sets-back-hamas-rocket-production-says-idf/>

⁵⁵ Fabian, E. & Boxerman, A. (2022). Israel carries out airstrikes in Gaza in response to rockets off Tel Aviv coast. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-reportedly-strikes-gaza-after-rockets-land-off-tel-aviv-coast/>

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		launched at Tel Aviv most probably by PIJ anti-craft missiles.		responsible due their supplies and safe space provision.
		July 2020 ⁵⁶		
		Retaliatory attack at rocket launchers belonging to Hamas after rocket strike on Israeli territories.	Rocket launched from Gaza.	1
		October 2018 ⁵⁷		
		Retaliatory air strike at Hamas positions in Gaza after installation of IED on the southern border fence during Palestinian protests. Hamas is accused of staging the protests and riots.	Israeli border security.	1
		December 2017 ⁵⁸		
		Hamas training facilities destroyed by IAF strike. Retaliatory attack after rockets launched from Gaza.	Personnel trained for terrorist activities threatening Israeli society.	1

⁵⁶ Gross, J. A. & TOI STAFF. (2020). IDF strikes Hamas targets in response to Gaza rocket fire. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-reportedly-strikes-hamas-targets-in-response-to-gaza-rocket-fire/>

⁵⁷ Gross, J. A. & TOI STAFF. (2018). IDF bombs Hamas post after explosive damages Gaza fence. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-bombs-hamas-post-after-explosive-damages-gaza-fence/>

⁵⁸ TOI STAFF & Gross, J. A. (2017). IDF strikes Hamas targets after Gaza rocket hits Israeli town. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-strikes-hamas-targets-after-gaza-rocket-hits-israeli-town/>

Semi-Conclusion 4

In summary, the analysis of the Israeli military operations shows the Israeli military operations to be of material or personnel character targets with the objective of cumulative deterrence. The threat embodied in Hezbollah and its possible entrenchment on the Israel-Syria border has forced Israel to conduct military operations in Syrian territory to prevent the Shi'a organization from cooperating with the Syrian Army. Additionally, the usage of Syrian territory for logistic transfers of either material necessary for manufacturing armaments or the armaments in the form of rocket and missiles to Hezbollah from Iran represents another threat for Israel to be eliminated in order to achieve their objective of deterrence and to maintain their regional technological superiority.

All of the military operations provide the State of Israel with the regional position allowing it to manage the enmity environment by cumulative perceptual deterrence using Military Qualitative Edge advantage. Based on this premise, Syria and Lebanon are pushed out of the scope of high-intensity conflict in conduct by lowering Hezbollah's operational capabilities. Thus, Hezbollah is restrained from entrenching in Syria through cooperation with the Syrian Army, securitized via IDF's military interception.

Palestinian territories, however, are considered a threat to the Israeli home front. Hence, Israeli objectives of their military securitization seem to lower unconventional combat capabilities. The observed current pattern seems to be of tit-for-tat character between Israel and ITN. The material and financial provision provided to the Palestinian sub-state organizations and terrorist organizations through ITN increase the Israeli vulnerability localized in the Palestinian territories. Therefore, the Israeli regional perspective shift in terms of security strategy was inevitable.

Regarding Iran and its nuclear and material capabilities, Israel's objective seems to be to lower its technological development and manufacturing capabilities by targeting either its facilities or personnel. As shown in the previous chapter, the US assassination of Soleimani can be located within the synchronicity of US-Israel strategic cooperation. All Israeli operations lead to militarily securitizing the region's Iranian nuclear and strategic threats.

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Hence, by observation of Israeli operations, Iran can be considered the source of Israeli insecurity that represents the need for a reconceptualization of their regional security perspective enhanced by Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria as well as Hamas and other organizations of ITN in the Palestinian territories.

CONCLUSION

The security perspective of the State of Israel in the deeply regionalized post-Cold War era is conditioned by a) the security threat continuity and its development since the end of the 2006 Lebanon War, b) intersubjectivity among the regional players decentralizing the Palestinian issue from the regional security dynamics, c) the development of Israeli vulnerability enhanced by the Iranian Threat Network that is balanced by the alignment with global level player providing the Qualitative Military Edge advantage.

The 2006 Lebanon War is the beginning of contemporary Israel's perception of the region resulting in an Israeli pragmatic security approach. The emergence of the sub-state organization using an unconventional strategy, Hezbollah, imposed the security precedence for Israeli securitization of territorial integrity and society. Furthermore, precedence is observed in the development of threatening sub-state organizations across the whole region as well. Hence, the Lebanon War in 2006 forced the State of Israel to change its regional military strategy, which led to the emergence of the Dahiya Doctrine in 2008. Observably, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have shifted from a strategy based on "deterrence by punishment" in the form of conventional high-intensity conflict to outward offensive deterrence with cumulative character targeting the enemy material capabilities and commanding personnel. In such a pattern, the IDF successfully prolong the period without war. The continuity of hostile environment is maintained by unfulfilling the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 requiring Hezbollah's disarmament. Conversely, Hezbollah is supported by Iran in terms of material capabilities and shared goals threatening Israel's territorial integrity.

Decentralizing the Palestinian issue from the center of regional dynamics has caused the removal of enmity relations between the State of Israel and the Arab states. Thus, the intersubjectivity between these regional players has shifted from the Cold War in accordance with shared geopolitical and economic stances threatened by the shared conventional and unconventional enemies. The decentralization of the Palestinian issue is another sign of regional pragmatism influenced by the shared security threats causing ontological insecurity. Such unitizing element stimulates mutual cooperation in order to power-balance Iran using its Threat Network in the region. Therefore, the emergence of

the security conglomerate can be detected according to the Copenhagen Security School framework. Consequently, the Palestinian territories have shifted their character from the Israeli perspective from the regional threat to semi-regional vulnerability due to the Iranian support of enemy sub-state organizations and simultaneously due to the inefficiency of the Palestinian Authority. Therefore, there is no opposition from the Arab states to Israeli legally legitimized use of force based on the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement 1995. These elements establish the conditions for Israeli military securitization on the regional level.

The strategic interdependency with the US assured the State of Israel of the possession of the regional technological supremacy that deepened the pragmatic relations with the Arab states, which are US allies as well. Accordingly, the Israeli security conglomerate includes all three levels of the power layout. The alignment with the US is lowering the Israeli-Arab coercion due to regional shared geopolitical and economic interests mutually threatened by the Iranian strive for regional hegemony through its non-conventional regional network. The Iranian nuclear development, along with their development in rocket and missile capabilities, both possibly to be delivered to the Iranian Threat Network organizations, strengthen the US to balance the power favoring the State of Israel and its allied Arab states. Hence, the decentralization of the Palestinian issue is also in the interest of the US due to their pragmatic strategic interests, which are observably synchronized with those of Israel. The security equilibrium of regional dynamics based on the regional interests of all mentioned players is observably located in Syria, which is currently under condition of civil war. For the State of Israel, the military security interests.

Following these conditions, the targeted entities of the Israeli military securitization, considered the security communication per se, observably prove the continual threat since the 2006 Lebanon War. Since the end of the conflict, the pragmatic shift can be observed. The main regional Israeli objectives are a) to restrain Syria from cooperation with Hezbollah in the form of allowance for its entrenchment on the border and b) to block the shipments of armaments being delivered from Iran through Syria to Lebanon and eventually to the Palestinian territories. Observably the eliminated targets have either the personnel or material character. Adequately, the Qualitative Military Edge advantage

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provides the IDF with the ability to manage threats in the enmity environment of sub-state entities and consequently cumulate the perceptual deterrence with the use of force. It results in maintaining Syria and Lebanon under the level of open-war conflict and simultaneously lowering the vulnerability of Palestinian territories. Additionally, by targeting the Iranian development capabilities either in the form of personnel or material, the State of Israel lowers the threshold of ontological fear.

RESUMÉ

Izraelsko-Palestínsky konflikt od Studenej vojny determinantom pre regionálne a svetové dianie. Nezhody ohľadom teritórií spôsobili vznik znepriatelené vzťahy medzi Izraelom a Arabskými štátmi v regióne. Avšak, od konca Studenej vojny, regionálna dynamika 90. rokov minulého storočia nastavila kooperatívny trend. Ten však bol z pohľadu Izraela narušený Hizbolláhom v roku 2006, kedy ich vojenská konfrontácia v Libanonskej vojne prinútila Izrael zmeniť vojenskú doktrínu a prispôbiť sa nekonvenčným hrozbám. Zároveň sa kvôli bezpečnostnej situácii musel Izrael prispôbiť regionálnemu daniu, ktoré v súčasnosti dokazuje manažovať vo svoj prospech vďaka kvalitatívnej vojenskej výhode. Kodanská bezpečnostná škola poskytuje teoretické šošovky na charakterizáciu časového prvku ovplyvňujúceho bezpečnostnú stratégiu Izraela.

Libanonská vojna v roku 2006 bola pre Izrael významná. Ustanovila Hizballáh ako neustálu hrozbu, ktorá prinútila Izrael prísť s novou vojenskou doktrínou schopnou efektívne zaútočiť na konvenčných a nekonvenčných nepriateľov. Novovzniknutá doktrína Dahiya je založená na chybách z libanonskej vojny. Poskytuje operačné budovanie na vytvorenie kumulatívneho odstrašovania, ktoré sa považuje za začiatok kontroly Izraela nad dynamikou regionálnej bezpečnosti. Zároveň vnímanie bezpečnostnej situácie v regióne v rámci trojrozmerného mocenského usporiadania ukazuje, že od momentu zavedenia doktríny Dahiya sa štát Izrael stal hráčom so širokým regionálnym dosahom.

Na základe regionálnej analýzy autor tézy potvrdzuje, že regionálna dynamika na Blízkom východe v súčasnosti nie je určená palestínskym územným sporom. Palestínske územia sú vnútorne rozdelené geograficky a politicky. Zároveň sú ovplyvnené Iránskou sieťou teroristických hrozieb, ktorej cieľom je získať schopnosť zamerať sa na izraelské územie a obyvateľstvo. Palestínska samospráva je v dôsledku iránskeho vplyvu *de facto* neefektívna. Izrael je teda závislý od Izraelsko-palestínskej dočasnej dohody 1995, na základe ktorej sú vojenské operácie právne legitimizované. Dokazuje to, že palestínske územia sú zo strategického hľadiska Izraela polo-regionálnou zraniteľnosťou a nie regionálnou hrozbou. Izraelská stratégia považuje územie Izraela za domáci front proti útokom z palestínskych území. V súlade s tým už dynamika regionálneho nepriateľstva nemá izraelsko-arabskú

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povahu. Je dokázaný opak. Pozoroval sa trend spolupráce založený na spoločných strategických cieľoch, ako aj spoločných strategických nepriateľoch – medzinárodný terorizmus podporoval Irán. Je to znak regionálneho pragmatizmu.

Americko-izraelská spolupráca poskytuje priestor na vytvorenie regionálneho bezpečnostného konglomerátu sledovaného prostredníctvom teoretického rámca Kodanskej bezpečnostnej školy. Poskytnutie Kvalitatívnej bezpečnostnej výhody Izraelu premost'uje zabezpečenie národných záujmov USA so záujmami Izraela a ostatných členov konglomerátu. Je veľmi ovplyvnená spoločnými cieľmi v Sýrskej občianskej vojne za účelom zabezpečiť rovnováhu síl a ekonomických záujmov v regióne. Pre Izrael je občianska vojna pozorovateľne strategicky dôležitá kvôli materiálnym presunom výzbroje do Hizballáhu. Zároveň môže prípadné ukotvenie Hizballáhu v Sýrii vážne ohroziť Izrael od severnej hranice. V súlade s tým USA ako poskytovateľ kvalitatívnej vojenskej hrany predstavujú vyrovnávajúci technologický prvok v rovnováhe síl a zjednocujúci faktor proti regionálnemu terorizmu a Iránu.

V dôsledku toho autor dokazuje, že Izrael v hlboko regionalizovanom období po studenej vojne je podmienený kontinuitou bezpečnostných hrozieb a jej vývojom od konca libanonskej vojny v roku 2006, intersubjektivitou medzi regionálnymi hráčmi decentralizujúcimi palestínsky problém od regionálnej bezpečnostnej dynamiky, a rozvoj izraelskej zraniteľnosti posilnený Iránskou sieťou hrozieb, ktorá je vyvážená zosúladením s globálnym hráčom poskytujúcim Kvalitatívnu technologickú výhodu. Všetky tieto podmienky sú pozorovateľne dokázané v autorovej analýze vojenských operácií v Libanone, Sýrii, palestínskych územiach a Iráne.

APPENDIX 1: Written Communication with Galia Lindenstrauss

My thesis examines Israeli security conditions in the Middle East and their development since the Lebanon War 2006 through the theoretical framework of the Copenhagen Security School. The aim to eliminate the Shi'a sub-state organization, Hezbollah, have led the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to reconceptualize the regional strategy in order to create the cumulative deterrence. The thesis has examined the IDF's military operations in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and Palestinian territories. Modification of the theoretical framework allows the thesis to consider the IDF's operation to be a type of strategical communication *per se* in regard to securitization of Israeli territorial integrity and population. Furthermore, the thesis analysis the Israeli regional security circumstances that allows to build a depiction of the regional security complex through 3-dimensional power layout. The analysis provides the thesis to observe the regional security circumstances conditioning military securitization.

The following questions are believed to improve the quality of thesis' research. Once more, I would like to express my grate gratitude for your time and willingness. I believe your knowledge and experiences are priceless for my thesis.

Michal Žiga

Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. Do you think the Dahiya Doctrine successfully delineates the Israeli “Red Lines” to Israeli regional adversaries?

While the 2006 Lebanon war was seen unfavorably in the immediate term

in Israel’s public opinion, in the long run it provided it with more than 15 years of relative calm on the Northern front. This can also be explained by the events of the Arab Spring, but also some would argue that the Dahiya doctrine was effective. The Dahiya doctrine is also meant to warn the international community that the price of another war in Lebanon would be very high, so that certain international players (US, France) pressure actors within Lebanese society to contain some of Hezbollah’s activities.

2. Would you consider the Russian-Iranian cooperation regarding the military-technological capabilities to represent a threat that could lead to advanced armament supplies to Hezbollah?

Definitely the war in Ukraine is pushing Russia and Iran together and Moscow no longer feels itself restrained as it did in the past in some of the weapons technologies transfers Iran is asking from it. Ukraine is also a testing ground for Iranian UAVs and hence it is highly likely that some of these lessons will be applied by Iran and its proxies toward Israel. The growing cooperation between Russia and Iran is seen with deep concern in Israel.

3. Does Iran represent a sufficient unitizing element for security related regional alignment mediated by the US?

A big motivation for the Abraham’s accords and also Saudi Arabia’s more positive stance toward Israel in recent years has been the joint threat from Iran. The US

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decision to move Israel to CENTCOM areas of command has also facilitated more cooperation in the region. In the covert level, there is unprecedented cooperation. With regard to a formal regional alliance – chances still seem slim. Growing cooperation between Israel and the Gulf States is also causing Iran to react more aggressively. Hence, it is not clear whether the Arab Gulf states will not be at some point deterred to lower their level of cooperation with Israel.

4. What can we expect from the declared Octopus Doctrine directly targeting Iran as the source of regional disability?

The Middle East suffers from chronic instability, but this instability manifests itself each period in different ways. Taking however the Cold War comparison, direct conflict is more dangerous (especially if Iran passes the threshold of becoming a Nuclear state) than confrontation by proxies. However, in contrast to the Cold War the proxy wars in the Middle East were anyhow in the immediate proximity of the regional powers, so it was also very prone to escalation.

5. Can the Russian involvement in Syria in conduct with escalation US-Russian competition result in favor of Hezbollah?

Russia saved the Assad regime which was in the interest of Iran and Hezbollah, and since 2015 this ‘victory’ (that should be put in the context that Syria is still very weak and fragile) has held. This assisted Iran and Hezbollah in maintaining their supply routes. However, Assad does not enable Hezbollah to react from Syria’s territory to attacks by Israel, so there are also constraints. US presence in Syria is important yet very small (800 people). Hence it is not a big arena for US-Russian competition

APPENDIX 2: Transcript of Online Interview with Nimrod Goren

My thesis examines Israeli security conditions in the Middle East and their development since the Lebanon War 2006 through the theoretical framework of the Copenhagen Security School. The aim to eliminate the Shi'a sub-state organization, Hezbollah, have led the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to reconceptualize the regional strategy in order to create the cumulative deterrence. The thesis has examined the IDF's military operations in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and Palestinian territories. Modification of the theoretical framework allows the thesis to consider the IDF's operation to be a type of strategical communication *per se* in regard to securitization of Israeli territorial integrity and population. Furthermore, the thesis analysis the Israeli regional security circumstances that allows to build a depiction of the regional security complex through 3-dimensional power layout. The analysis provides the thesis to observe the regional security circumstances conditioning military securitization.

The following questions are believed to improve the quality of thesis' research. Once more, I would like to express my grate gratitude for your time and willingness. I believe your knowledge and experiences are priceless for my thesis.

Michal Žiga

Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts

QUESTIONS:

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1. Do you consider the military-technological cooperation between the US and the State of Israel to be positively affecting the development of Israeli-Arab ties?

I think, stoically it wasn't important factor that could contribute to these relationships. It begins with the basic element of an alliance between Israel and the US, it gives more leverage to having relationships prised for Arab countries enabled them to have better relations with the US ties. For some Arab got closer prised to either be in closer relationship with Washington or something to get from the US in return strategically, And then the all kind cooperation behind the scenes between military that involved the Israeli, American, and some Arab countries against joint threats like Iran. Sometimes these are opened like joined military exercises but for many years it was happening behind the scenes. So overall it is a positive factor that impacts. It is not the most important one, but inherently have some positive impact for Israel to have better relationships.

- a) So when it is said that it was many years behind the scenes behind the closed doors?

For many years Israel and Arab countries did not have official diplomatic relations. It changes overtime. But even when there are no official diplomatic ties, with most of the countries, it was security cooperation happening behind the scenes. And that was usually done with the American involvement. So the American-Israeli cooperation was linked to another country of interest but it was necessarily being visible. With some countries it became more public as with Egypt in certain points of times. And now with the UAE of course, and sometime with Maroco. For many years it was done in a way that was not in the public eye.

- b) So mainly for intelligence cooperation or something similar?

It could be training, sharing of information, exchanging of information, coordination of priorities, strategic dialogue. And with each country it was different addictive omit, even though these relationships exist even when those countries do not have direct diplomatic ties.

So, still we can consider the US to be the middle part these two parts.

With some of the countries. Israel and the Arab states even have some direct mechanism that is not always happened. But there is an American component that makes things a bit easier. So when there is an alignment between security interests of Israel, the US, and any of the Arab state, it makes the cooperation a bit softer. It is not bilateral, it is not only Israel and an Arab country. It is another powerful component in the equation.

But sometimes it happened the opposite. For example, when the US negotiated the Iran deal, many of the Gulf states were not aligning with the American interest. They opposed the deal. So they were cooperating over the security issues without the American, because the goal was different. So, it changes. So there is not one size fits or formula.

- c) What usually are those changing elements to do it directly and not via the US?

I think it depends on whether the interest of both countries are interest of the Americans. And it could be either an interest that goes in opposition to what the US is doing and sometimes is the US not really engaged on, it is not really important for. So those are the two reasons that make not be involved. Either that it thinks differently, or that is not a really big thing for its, it is does not touch a point of their direct interest. And then it is not what relates to the direct relationships Israel had with a specific country. So for example if a country is total enemy of Israel like Lebanon, if throughout the years it is not that engaged as with the countries in the Gulf. As it is with Qatar, the Saudis, the Emirates. There were channels that were operating throughout the years in the direct manner.

- d) And in this regard, does it also deeply depends on the people in the government?

The thing is that there is a different evolution of that. Because it was very much linked to the Palestinian issue. For many decades, the relationships of Israel with the Arab countries could become more significant, when there was a progress made on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. And what happened during the Abraham Accords was that some Arab countries were willing to overlook without such progress and advance the relationship with Israel without it. Now when Netanyahu comes back to power now, most of that countries immediately expressed their interest to continue the cooperation but the things deteriorating more, escalating more between Israeli and Palestinians, those countries are gradually stepping away. So notice, they linked progress towards peace with the cooperation but they cannot maintain the same level of tie when things are going negatively or going backward. Even when happen that something regarding security coordination is still happening as before behind the scene as military cooperation. Sometimes it hatch for the political one. The same things happen for the business side, sometimes economic relations continue to flourish even when there are political differences. It is a bit of a complex matrix, but definitely when something happens that impacts the security but not necessarily in an equal manner.

- e) So can we claim that there is a gap between the political sector and the military one?

In certain extent. It mostly depends on interest. If the countries can really benefit from security cooperation, they find a way to continue it even during the politically more difficult times. It also depends on the history of bilateral relation. So if there is country like, you know, Egypt with relationship lasting for more than 40 years. There are all the way very strong relationship between the security people directly. They can communicate without the involvement on the political level. So it easier for them to continue. When new countries are brought into the diplomatic relationship, there is not a lot of connection already varied. So there the dependence on the political ties is more important. The newer the relationship, somehow the more it is linked between politics than security.

- 2. Observing the current global security affairs, is there a chance to create an institutionalized regional alignment to balance Russian-Iranian cooperation? If yes, would it decrease the vulnerability of the Palestinian territories?

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Firstly we have NATO. So the attempt is to utilize NATO for this goal. And to revitalize to add new countries to maybe improve its mechanism with countries that are on the neighborhood of NATO that are not really part of it. So, I think it will be much easier to upgrade the current mechanism that exist than to start a new one. There are some discussions whether to create like a Middle Eastern NATO. Following the Abraham Accords, it is really difficult to do. For the Arab countries to go so far in their cooperation with Israel on security so public, it is still difficult. Especially for time with political relations are stumbling away. So I think that behind the scenes cooperation definitely yes. Coordination through multilateral setting and that is something the US sometimes convince, it could bring different countries together for specific issue and upgrading the current NATO are the best things to do, or the more realistic to do.

- a) So, from your point of view, the SCOTO proposed by the Trump administration, and Biden's proposal for the Regional Complex Cooperation is something not realistic for now?

Not yet. If you look ahead and you envision the situation when the Palestinian peace is reached, therefore the normalization of relations are possible for all countries, then it could be a part of the package. And currently there are countries for regional security that are not engaged directly with Israel, like Iraq for example. So, it is very difficult to bring all of those together under one formula, one umbrella at the moment. But it could be consolidated gradually. So it could be beginning through informal setting, or ad hoc meetings, or upgrading of NATO. And eventually, at a certain point of time, when conditions are right you could move ahead and far to create something more formal. Now, it is, let's say, not relevant.

- b) Would you say that the possible or raising Russian-Iranian issue globally, mainly after the Putin's claim stopping the formal observation of nuclear weapons would it be the unitizing element or would it increase something like that?

The Russian issue, especially Ukraine, is effectively unifying most of the West together on the similar pattern. The involvement of Iran enables Israel to step in without criticizing Russia. Because Israel's government does not want to criticize

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Russia directly, but it could go through criticizing the Iranian involvement. It is also from Israel talking point vis-à-vis European countries in order to convince them to confirm tougher stands on Iran. So the fact that Iran is involving Ukraine, and for Europe is Ukraine very important issue, may create bigger appetite in Europe to be tougher on Iran. And there are things how it plays out in this manner. It is not relevant with the Israel-Arab relations in the current settings.

c) So at the end of the day it requires the US or the Europe to be involved?

Honestly, yes.

3. Do you think that Abraham Accords have gained the sufficient value for securing the regional cooperation among the Arab states with the State of Israel?

Yes, of course. Some Arab states, because it does not include most of the Arab states, but a small group of the Arab state have been moving forward. Definitely, the Abraham Accords are important in their bilateral relations and enabled Israel to have opened and good relations with the UAE, Bahrain, or Morocco. Although, Morocco is not officially a part of the Abraham Accords. It normalized its ties but it does not want to be linked together with the others specifically. And a good development was convening at the Egypt summit a year ago, which managed to take this relationship to be only bilateral and to being in a multilateral settings or creating like a regional grouping that is looking into cooperation in different areas and there were seek working groups that are informed. And it was not only the Abraham Accords states, but also Egypt was brought in, which is important. And of course, the US is also participating. So taking these bilateral relations were important per se and enabling some sort of more regional cooperation through them. That is positive development. Again, we are not sure how it is going forward, because this meeting was planned to be next month in Morocco, will not happened at the scheduled time. So there is the question mark how it moves forward, but in principle there is the relationship, there is a cause, for Israel very important. They are differently changing our landscape in the region, increasing our integration within.

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4. Is the approach of unilateral diplomatic endeavors regarding the Israeli-Palestinian issue a threat for the Two-States Solution?

We differentiate the Palestinian track and the regional track, because the Oslo Accords are still valid and people debate it. But still the distribution of the West Bank into areas A, B, and C is still reality on the ground. So the Accords were never canceled. No Israeli government, even the most extreme one, would not go legally extend the Accords. The reality on the ground is still not a good one, but it still based on what was decided in the Oslo process. And the Abraham Accords are different because they go on other states. The challenge is how to combine them, that is something that different actors are looking at, how to ensure the Palestinians are also benefiting from the Abraham Accords. They are critical of the Accords, mostly of the UAE and Bahrain, less of Morocco. But they do not want take part in regional cooperation like the Negev forum. But still the Abraham Accords can create all kind of cooperation and projects, which may indirectly benefit the Palestinians as well. Whether on the topic of electricity, of water, or environment, economy perhaps, maybe on security even, I do not know. But I think the goal is to try and merge them together in a way that helps advance Israeli-Palestinian peace. So that is a political debate in Israeli, because of the Israeli right either want to do Abraham Accords to bypass the Palestinian issue. And within the peace camp it was exactly the opposite. We need to enhance the relation with the Arab world in a way reaching the peace with the Palestinians, not the opposite. That is ideological-politically within the Israeli public. But unilateral actions could also be related to things that Israel is doing on the ground in the West Bank. Whether with settlements, or military activities, and those definitely damage the change to reach the Two-States solution. Because the ideology behind them is the one that do not aspire for two-states solution, but rather to increase the control over the territory. The current government do not promote of enhance the two-state solution.

- a) So this is the biggest threat for peace?

Yes, there are more obstacles, but this is the major one. You need a leadership that wants to promote it. If you have a leadership that wants to jeopardize it, you cannot really move forward.

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- b) Would you say that the current Netanyahu's newly formed government will for partial annexation of those territories?

I am not sure they will do it officially. So what we saw in the past of Netanyahu declaring the intension to annex, I do not think he will do it again. But they are doing it de facto on the ground. So step by step without a big declaration of what actually happening. You see the increased Israeli control over the Palestinian territories, in area C the most, but also in other places. So that is the reality that is taking shape without a big title. Nobody is putting a big name on it, but that is what happening.

- c) And still, building all those settlements is legally and on the ground of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement 1995. Would you expect the International Court of Justice to examination of the whole case will have some impact on the document?

It could have an impact on it, but it is still not clear how much. We do not know what the phrase of the process will be. How significant it will become. Whether countries like the US and Germany will enable the process to move forward beyond a certain point. But it is concerning Israel about the unification of that. But not in the way that leads to policy changes at the moment. Mostly because the things that are investigated, we already done, so it happened in the past. But it is definitely something that is our concern, it will be a situation in which people with certain military bureau accused of different issues in different countries that will be a change to the negative. But Israel will mostly deal with it diplomatically to find a way preventing of happening, rather than changing its policy in the current situation. It will pressure the US, and other allies in Europe to try to block this process or minimize it as much as possible.

- d) So the Israeli-Palestinian Accords are still the basic ground for Israeli actions?

Basically, the agreements is the distribution of Areas A,B,C. What Israel is doing on the ground is not bind by these agreements. It is not a legitimacy for Israel to expand settlements in the way it is being done now. I think it is the legal framework

like the Paris protocol on the economic ties that shapes the Israeli-Palestinian economy that entrance or it is advised. And ABC distribution. And all of it is quite outdated, so many things have happened through out these decades in the region. So many changes have been taking place. So the reason it needs new documents with no negotiations is very difficult to come up with them. So basically, you are stuck with agreements from the past that are not necessarily relevant today. But those are the ones you have, so you need to make the most out of them. And then, multinational organization like the Quartet and others were put in place to somehow bridge this gap. So between what could be done on the ground now and what is legally bind from the past is the conditioning how you merge it.

5. Is there a possibility that the regional development will lead to a modification of the Arab Peace Initiative from the side of Saudi Arabia?

I think it is because Saudi Arabia is looking for a way towards normalization with Israel in a slow pace. And for the Saudi it is very important agreeing on the Palestinian issue. They need to have a linkage. The Saudi Arabia have for many years been very commenting the topic. Maybe when Mohammed bin Salman takes power, will be less. But Saudi-Israel is still the important issue for them. And like the emirates signed the Abraham Accords, it was not the term for dropping the Israeli annexation. Then, Saudis will need something in that regard as well. And the current Arab Peace Initiative, you know, it was drafted 20 years ago and so many changes took place since. There is a need to revise and update it. The way it could serve, perhaps, the menu from which Saudis will get what they will need later on to normalize its relations with Israel in a way it advances the peace with the Palestinians. Whether it could actually actually be done, I am not sure. The Saudis have some motivation to do that. They convened it in the New York in the UN in the last September, nothing really came out of it. But at least a conversation has the beginning and it is not clear what it will entail. So what will the Arab Peace Initiative include when all kind of countries have already moved forward with Israel. Because the countries not included, whether it is Libya, Lebanon, Algeria, Syria. These are not countries that will normalize relations with Israel. So it is kind of inbetween the differences between the Arab countries and how they relate reason and maked it bit difficult to find an initiative that finds the way to conclude a consensus. The API

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got it 20 years ago and it will be actually is relevant and feasible in driving the peace forward. But it is an effort that is worth doing, because it is needed. And maybe a formula will be found.

Even when some Arab countries want to do normalize their ties, they do not have the capacity for that now. Lybia and Syria are thorn in a terrible war domestically. Saudis are the important country to be involved. There also not in major Muslim countries are also relevant, like Indonesia. But looking the big game changer, it is Saudi Arabia. And that is linked to the Palestinian issue, therefore you need some sort of formula that will enable that it would not happen again. I do not think that the current government will be able to do that because they are so far away from the Palestinian issue that I am not sure the Saudis will be able to do it with such a government. But the government of Israel could change, maybe 2 or 3 years from now, we will have a different government.

a) So most probably, it can go again through the behind the doors policies?

It would require the presence of either the US or European union. I think the European Union is more interested now in improving its relationship with the GCC and is investing more into the region of the Gulf and they have been meeting recently with the Saudis or the Arab League on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. I think Europe could be some sort of a driving force toward that. Even when Europe in practical terms differentiates in how their members behave and consider the Palestinian-Israeli issue, especially like Hungary and others. But Europe is well positioned. The US and the Saudi do not have good relationship now, or the best kind of relationship. So, I think, it will be place of involvement.

6. What approach should, in your point of view, implement the Palestinian Authority under the current regional circumstances significant for the trend of “normalization.”

In terms of the normalization, I think, the Palestinians should first find the way to improve their relation with the UAE. There is big divide between the leadership of the UAE and the PA. And this prevents all kind of linkages from happening. The

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UAE is strong driving force in the normalization process. For example, there is the Eastern Med. Gas Forum that includes Israel and the Palestinians as full members of the organization. When UAE wanted to become the observer of that, the PA vetoed that. They blocked the UAE participation. So, firstly you need to have the UAE and the Palestinians to work together. Once, it is happening, the Palestinians could benefit from some of the regional projects in which the Emirates and maybe Jordan are involved in without direct engagement with Israel. But that, I think, is for Palestinian benefit. And then the eternal issue in the PA, the leadership issue. We do not know how long Abbas will stay in power, but definitely people are planning for the days after. The PA is losing legitimacy. Sometimes losing control in the cities in the West Bank. And that is what is worsening in a way. So maybe you have to wait for the leadership change to happen. But we are praying for the leadership change and looking for ways to unite the West Bank, and Gaza, and to go to elections. I think, that is the very component in the domestic level, which the Europeans and the others can support. And in terms of Israel, it is kind of finding a balance between the confrontation approach or such a government, but also a where coordination could be done with especially the security drive. To make sure that the things are not escalating too much. I think it is the interest of all people to avoid a full escalation. And there are mechanism that find the way to prevent it, Jordan is involved in that, the Americans are involved in that. I think that Palestinians do not have a lot of options at the moment in the international arena. They do not have lot of leverage. You see them trying to act through the Security Council, not always successful. But things deteriorate more, then they will more opportunities they do have now.

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