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The Oslo Disaster, 23 Years Later

Prof. Efraim Karsh takes his piercing pen to the Oslo peace process – “one of the worst-ever calamities to have hit Israelis and Palestinians”.



INSIDE

- Israeli West Bank Policy – Whereto?
- Should ISIS be Wiped Out?
- Evaluating the Iran Deal, One Year Later
- Strategic Challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean
- IDF Challenges of the Future
- Saudi Arabia and the New Regional Landscape
- Efraim Karsh becomes BESA Center Director
- Mourning the Passing of Muzy Wertheim



Bar-Ilan University

The Oslo Disaster, 23 Years Later



Prof. Efraim Karsh

Prof. Efraim Karsh, the incoming director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, has penned a comprehensive study on what he calls "the Oslo Disaster" and "the starker strategic blunder in Israel's history."

"Twenty-three years after its euphoric launch on the White House lawn," Karsh writes, "the Oslo 'peace process' stands as one of the worst calamities ever to have afflicted Israelis and Palestinians, substantially worsening the position of both parties and making the prospects for peace and reconciliation ever more remote."

"The process has led to establishment of an ineradicable terror entity on Israel's doorstep, deepened Israel's internal cleavages, destabilized its political system, and weakened its international standing."

"It has been a disaster for West Bank and Gaza Palestinians too. It has brought about subjugation to corrupt and repressive PLO and

Hamas regimes. These regimes have reversed the hesitant advent of civil society in these territories, shattered their socioeconomic wellbeing, and made the prospects for peace and reconciliation with Israel ever more remote."

"This abject failure is a direct result of the Palestinian leadership's perception of the process as a pathway not to a two-state solution – meaning Israel alongside a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza – but to the subversion of the State of Israel. They view Oslo not as a path to nation-building and state creation, but to the formation of a repressive terror entity that perpetuates conflict with Israel, while keeping its hapless constituents in constant and bewildered awe as Palestinian leaders line their pockets from the proceeds of this misery."

Karsh details how the Oslo process has weakened Israel's national security in several key respects.

On the strategic and military levels, it allowed the PLO to achieve in one fell swoop its strategic vision of transforming the West Bank and the Gaza Strip into terror hotbeds that would disrupt Israel's way of life (to use Yasser Arafat's words).

Politically and diplomatically, he says, Oslo instantaneously transformed the PLO (and, to a lesser extent, Hamas) into an internationally accepted political actor while upholding its commitment to Israel's destruction, edging toward fully fledged statehood outside the Oslo framework, and steadily undermining Israel's international standing.

The ending of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian population of the territories within three-and-a-half years from the onset of the process has gone totally unnoticed (due partly to Palestinian propaganda, partly to Israel's failure to get this critical point across), with the Jewish state still subject to international opprobrium for the nonexistent "occupation."

Domestically, Oslo radicalized Israel's Arab minority, nipping in the bud its decades-long "Israelization" process and putting it on a collision course with Israel's Jewish community. No less importantly, it made Israeli politics captive to the vicissitudes of Palestinian-Israeli relations, with the PLO and Hamas becoming the effective arbiters of Israel's political discourse and electoral process.

"On the face of it," Karsh writes, "Israel's massive setbacks can be considered

Palestinian gains. Yet one's loss is not necessarily the other's gain. The Palestinian leadership's zero-sum approach and predication of Palestinian national identity on hatred of the 'other,' rather than on a distinct shared legacy, has resulted in decades of dispersal and statelessness."

"Even if the PLO were to succeed in gaining international recognition of a fully fledged Palestinian state (with or without a formal peace treaty with Israel) and in preventing Hamas from seizing power, it would still be a failed entity in the worst tradition of Arab dictatorships, in permanent conflict with its Israeli neighbor while brutally repressing its unfortunate subjects."

Karsh bemoans that fact that "there has been no real reckoning by the Oslo architects and their erstwhile 'peace camp' successors, both in Israel and abroad, of the worst blunder in Israel's history, and no rethinking of its disastrously misconceived assumptions – let alone any public admission of guilt or show of remorse over its horrific costs."

"Instead, they continue to willfully ignore the Palestinian leadership's total lack of interest in the two-state solution and serial violation of

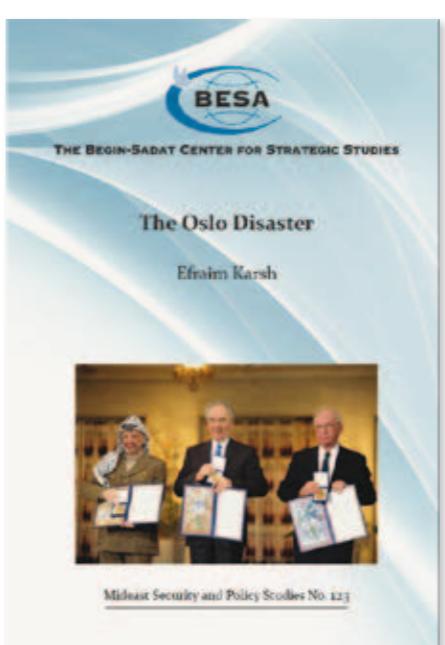
contractual obligations. They continue to whitewash ongoing Palestinian violence, belittle the extent of Israeli suffering, and blame Jerusalem for the stalled process despite the public endorsement of the two-state solution by five successive Israeli prime ministers: Peres, Barak, Sharon, Olmert, and Netanyahu."

"Not only has the same terror-tainted Palestinian leadership come to be universally viewed as the prospective

government of a future Palestinian state, but its goal of having this state established without negotiating with Israel, or even recognizing its right to exist, seems to be gaining ever wider currency. This soft racism – asking nothing of the Palestinians as if they are too dim or too primitive to be held accountable for their own words and actions – is an assured recipe for disaster."

"For so long as not a single Palestinian leader evinces genuine acceptance of the two-state solution or acts in a way signifying an unqualified embrace of the idea, there can be no true or lasting reconciliation with Israel. And so long as the territories continue to be governed by the PLO's and Hamas's rule of the jungle, no Palestinian civil society, let alone a viable state, can develop."

"Sadly, the possibility of a Palestinian spring, which seemed to be in the offing in 1993 when the PLO hovered on the verge of extinction and West Bank and Gaza leadership appeared eager to strike a historic deal within the framework of the Washington peace negotiations, has been destroyed for the foreseeable future by the Oslo 'peace process'."



Mideast Security and Policy Studies No. 123

BESA CENTER ASSOCIATES IN ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Israeli West Bank Policy – Whereto?



Yaakov Amidror, Hillel Frisch, Gershon Hacohen, Efraim Inbar, Eran Lerman and Max Singer discuss Israel's policies on the Palestinian issue, in a post-Obama and post-Abbas era.

The upshot of their debate: Apply Obama's first rule of governance. "Don't do stupid things." It is wiser for Israel to defer action than to take steps that threaten to make a bad situation worse. Conflict management is currently the least-worst option.

With Barack Obama's term as president of the US coming to an end, and Mahmoud Abbas' tenure as Palestinian leader winding down too, the Israeli government will soon have an opportunity to recalibrate its diplomatic policies. Israeli policy on the Palestinian issue has been ham-fistedly frozen for two decades.

But in which direction should Israel go? Fortify or vitiate the Fatah-led dictatorship in Ramallah? Redeploy from parts of the West Bank, or re-assert Israel's sovereign presence in major parts of Judea and Samaria through renewed building?

Do withdrawals toward the coastal plain offer a saner and safer future for Israel; or is building a united and "greater" Jerusalem from Jericho to Jaffa the DNA that holds the key to the future of Israel and Zionism – as General Gershon Hacohen argues?

Muddle through, or attempt a radical paradigm shift?

These questions have been argued out in recent months in the seminar rooms and on the website of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies by center associates, including Maj. Gen. (res.) Gershon Hacohen, Maj. Gen.

(res.) Yaakov Amidror (the Rosshandler senior fellow at the center, and a former national security advisor to the Prime Minister), Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman (a former deputy national security advisor), and professors Hillel Frisch (an Arabist), Efraim Inbar (a strategist), and Max Singer (a defense expert).

The upshot of their debate: Apply Obama's first rule of governance. "Don't do stupid things." It is wiser for Israel to defer action than to take steps that threaten to make a bad situation worse.

Frisch mapped out five possible Israeli approaches: caretaker conflict management, creative friction, constructive chaos, unilateral withdrawal, and unilateral annexation.



Prof. Hillel Frisch



Prof. Efraim Inbar

The caretaker option is probably the most feasible, he feels; unilateral withdrawal is the least; and none of the options is ideal. In every case, Israel will have to maintain a significant military presence in Judea and Samaria.

Frisch completely dismisses a sixth option: Rapid establishment of a full-fledged Palestinian state. Neither he nor his colleagues view this as feasible or advisable in the foreseeable future.

Inbar says that "Israelis have gradually come to realize that at present the Palestinians are neither a partner for comprehensive peace nor capable of establishing a viable state, unfortunately. The Palestinian Authority has no intention of accepting a Jewish



Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror

state in any borders, and the two sides remain far apart on most of the concrete issues to be resolved."

"Israel's recent governments are left, willy-nilly, with a de facto conflict-management approach, without foreclosing any options. While there are costs to this wait-and-see approach, let's remember this was the approach favored by David Ben-Gurion. He believed in buying time to build a stronger state and in hanging on until opponents yield their radical goals or circumstances change for the better."

Amidror too dislikes the drive for unilateral Israeli initiatives. "A partial withdrawal would likely increase, rather than decrease, Palestinian terrorism, as Palestinians would be motivated to push harder for total Israeli withdrawal. On the other hand, Israeli annexation would inflame Palestinian passions and engender severe opposition to Israel abroad."

"This is not the time to embark on useless experiments or risky unilateral initiatives, either in the hope of preparing the ground for an eventual Palestinian state or in the hope of thwarting it. When standing on the edge of a cliff, it is wiser to keep still than to step forward," Amidror concludes.

Lerman agrees, noting that many factors bind both Prime Minister Netanyahu and Opposition Leader Herzog to their current position of genuine but hung support for

the two-state rubric. This includes the sensitivities of neighbors who matter (Jordan, Egypt, etc.), the views of Diaspora Jewry and of Western diplomatic allies, and defense establishment preferences for the status quo.

But Lerman also warns that the false Palestinian narrative of one-sided victimhood is a major hindrance to all peace efforts. "Global actors that want to help achieve peace need to assist the Palestinians in moving beyond wallowing in self-pity and rituals of bashing Israel," he says.

"The concept of painful but practical compromises seems alien to the Palestinians, and the international community is not doing its part to help the Palestinians mature towards this realization."



Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman

Along these lines, Singer says that Washington and Brussels must robustly make clear their distaste for Palestinian denial of the Jewish People's connection to the land of Israel and Jerusalem. They should modify their aid programs to reduce Palestinian use of foreign money to support terror; determinedly defend free speech in Palestinian society; and act to resettle Palestinian refugees outside of Israel.

Singer also feels that Israel should improve its public diplomacy "by moving from appeasement to truth-telling." Specifically, Israel should formally adopt the report of Israel



Dr. Max Singer

Supreme Court Justice Edmond Levy to challenge the myth that Israel has stolen Palestinian land. "Even opponents of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and supporters of a two-state solution should support Levy's affirmation of Israel's historic and settlement rights in the territories. This is critical in leveling the diplomatic playing field. Israel must not go into future negotiations as a guilty party."

General Hacohen goes beyond his BESA Center colleagues. To him, caretaking and truth-telling are insufficient. He believes in Israeli activism that forces the adversary onto the defensive and creates advantageous new situations. This means maneuvering and expanding in Jerusalem and the Judean/Samarian heartland. "Settlements are forward outposts of Zionism, in addition to their being critical to Israel's military deployment in the territories. Where there is a farmer on his land," he says, "the army has the strength to rule."



Maj. Gen. (res.) Gershon Hacohen

CONFERENCE

The Day After Abbas

The BESA Center held a June conference which examined scenarios for the Palestinian Authority after the retirement or departure of Mahmoud Abbas. Lectures related to the expected battles for succession among Palestinian leadership, Israel's diplomatic dilemmas, and likely international scenarios. Might this transition be a watershed moment, forcing a reassessment of the feasible contours of accommodating Palestinian independence?



Minister Ze'ev Elkin

PA President Mahmoud Abbas is old, sick and tired. He has little to show for his incorrigible efforts at isolating Israel diplomatically or forcing Israel into hasty withdrawals.

His regime is viewed as utterly corrupt by 95.5 percent of Palestinians (according to a recent Palestinian poll). The tens of billions of dollars in international aid he has swallowed have failed to build any real institutional basis for good or democratic Palestinian government.

Abbas' underlings are jockeying aggressively around him for pole position in the battle to succeed him as West Bank despot. Hamas, too, smells blood.

Where does leave Israel? That was the focus of a June conference on "The Day After Abbas," which was addressed by Ze'ev Elkin, who was then the Minister

of Immigrant Absorption and Minister of Jerusalem Affairs (Likud), and Amir Peretz MK, former Defense Minister (Zionist Union), as well as experts.

Elkin said that Israel must prepare itself for a long period of instability and even chaos in the West Bank, in the era after Abbas. "I don't see any mechanism for an orderly transition of power, or new elections," he said.

"There are many competing centers of power in the PA, ranging from the party (Fatah), the movement (PLO), the bureaucracy (PA), multiple formal security organs, and many militias, gangs and clans. We could see open warfare among these elements."

"Meanwhile, Israel must maintain border security, ensure the safety of Jewish residents in Judea and Samaria, handle water and other infrastructure matters, and deal with Palestinian diplomatic initiatives that attack Israel."

His conclusion: Israel may need to consider a "paradigm change" with regard to administration of the territories; meaning greater Israeli intervention.



Former Defense Minister Amir Peretz

Elkin added that Israel continues to make a major mistake by ignoring the education towards hate of Israel that is prevalent in the PA. "This is the source of evil that eventually leads to terrorism, and which of course dims the likelihood of any practical compromises for peace in future."

Peretz attacked Elkin and the Israeli right wing for ignoring and isolating Abbas over the years. "We will all yet miss Abu Mazen," he said. "Israel does not have the power or the right to organize Palestinian leadership at will, but it should act to strengthen the PA.

In fact, we should be focusing on the day before Abbas goes to improve the situation and build a better basis for peace; not on the day after Abbas," he said.

"Time is not on our side. Every day that we fail to reinforce PA institutions and leadership increases the chances that we'll get ISIS and Al Qaeda and Hamas in the West Bank after Abbas." Peretz called on the Israeli government to freeze all settlement construction; to permit much greater numbers of Palestinian workers into Israel; and to remove roadblocks in the West Bank."



Maj. Gen. (res.) Gershon Hacohen



Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies associates agreed with Minister Elkin about the need for a new Israeli paradigm regarding the Palestinians, but disagreed which way to go. Lt. Col. (res.) Dr. Mordechai Kedar argued for the recognition of a series of mini-states in the West Bank, what he calls "Palestinian emirates." Maj. Gen. (res.) Gershon Hacohen called for repudiation of the two state construct and instead for long-term struggle for complete Israeli sovereignty in the territories. Prof. Efraim Inbar argued for maintaining the status quo.



Prof. Efraim Inbar, Minister Ze'ev Elkin, Ehud Yaari and Maj. Gen. (res.) Eitan Dangot (l. to r.)

In a fascinating presentation, the former Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, Maj. Gen. (res.) Eitan Dangot, explained how Israel does and probably can maintain the status quo.

Also addressing the conference were Ehud Yaari, Arab affairs commentator for Israel TV2 News, Prof. As'ad Ghanem of Haifa U., and Prof. Hillel Frisch and Prof. Jonathan Rynhold of the BESA Center.



CONFERENCE IDF Challenges



In March, the BESA Center held a day-long conference which asked: How can and should the IDF adapt to meet new threats, and respond to changes in Israeli society?

8



Maj. Gen. Yair Golan

Maj. Gen. Yair Golan, IDF Deputy Chief of Staff, headlined the conference with a talk on the importance of multi-year planning. (In the process, he made some controversial remarks about Israel's ties with Turkey, which were widely reported in the media). But Golan wasn't present for the sharp criticism of IDF planning that was expressed by expert speakers at the conference.

and army budgeting process. The budget, he said, suffers from political vicissitudes, and does not truly prioritize long-term priorities.

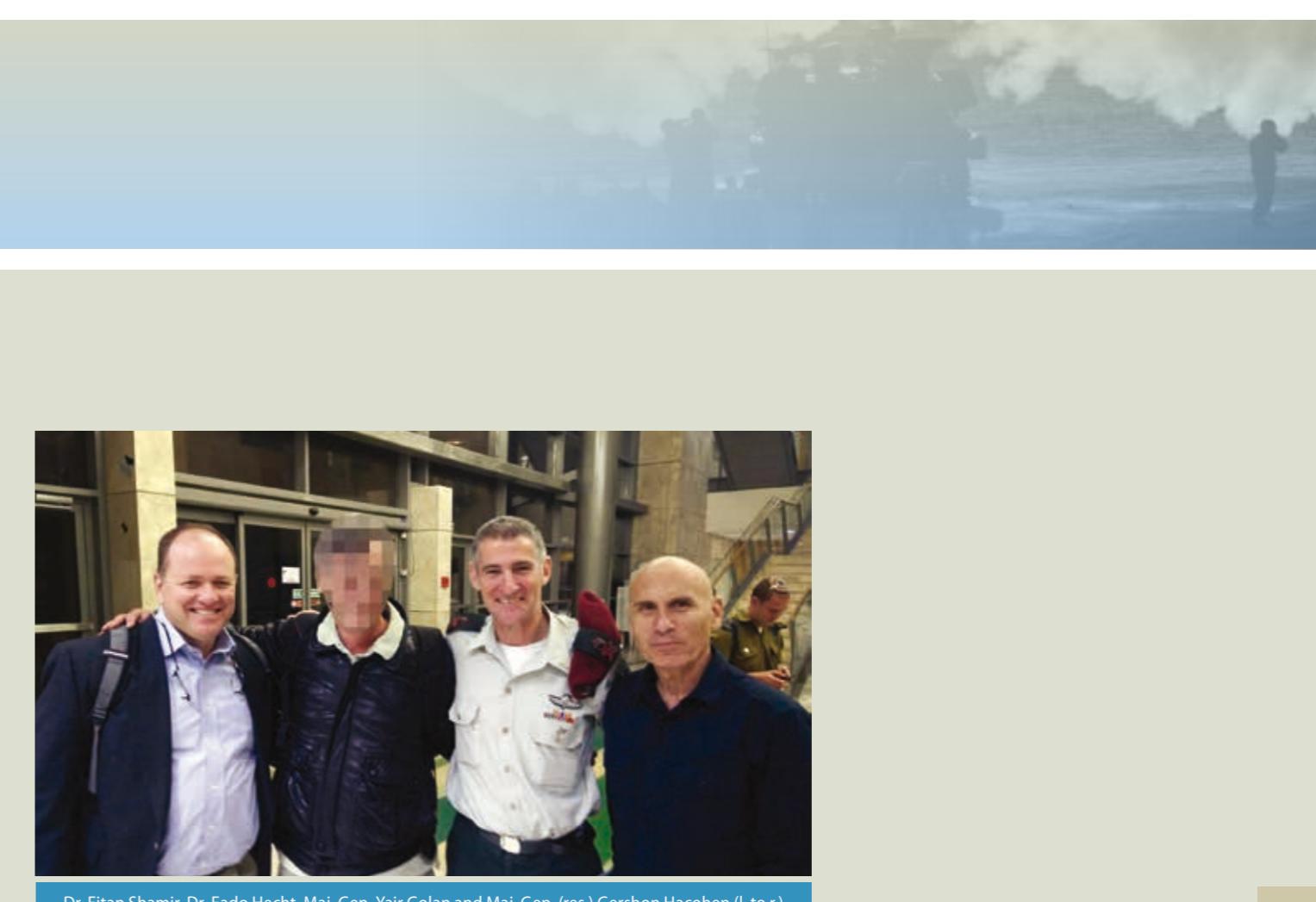
Brig. Gen. (res.) Moni Chorev of the BESA Center critiqued the IDF's de-emphasis on major ground formations. **Maj. Gen. (res.) Gershon Hacohen** and **Dr. Eitan Shamir** of the BESA Center

critiqued the IDF's over-reliance on American weaponry and operational concepts.

Brig. Gen. (res.) Yossi Kuperwasser of the JCPA (former head of research in IDF Intelligence and director general of the Ministry of Strategic Affairs) and **Dr. Edward Luttwak** of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington outlined the threat map for Israel, which starts with Iran and its allies, and continues to the Sunni extremist forces operation in Syria and Sinai.



Maj. Gen. (res.) Gershon Hacohen



Dr. Eitan Shamir, Dr. Eado Hecht, Maj. Gen. Yair Golan and Maj. Gen. (res.) Gershon Hacohen (l. to r.)

9

Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror, the Rosshandler Fellow at the BESA Center, outlined Israel's intelligence challenges with regard to these adversaries.

Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman of the BESA Center presented the welter of constraints that Israel's allies place on Israel in responding to regional threats.

Prof. Gabi Ben-Dor of Haifa U. and **Prof. Udi Lebel** of the BESA Center and Ariel U. related to the challenges of keeping the Israeli public resilient over the long term and the IDF above the left-right ideological fray.



Brig. Gen. (res.) Yossi Kuperwasser

The March conference was held in honor of Mr. Muzy Wertheim, a founder and supporter of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies. (Sorrowfully, Mr. Wertheim passed away in August).

The center has published a collection of the lectures given at the conference (Hebrew), and posted videos of the lectures on its website.



לראותם בדף זה



Dr. Edward Luttwak

Should ISIS be Wiped Out?

Prof. Efraim Inbar sparks an international debate by arguing that the West should not seek the destruction of ISIS, only its weakening. His colleagues strongly disagree.



In August, Prof. Efraim Inbar published a BESA Center Perspectives Paper in which he controversially argued that a weak but functioning ISIS is actually useful.

"The continued existence of ISIS can undermine the appeal of the caliphate among radical Muslims; keep bad actors focused on one another rather than on Western targets; and hamper Iran's quest for regional hegemony," Inbar wrote.

"A lingering ISIS would help undermine Tehran's ambitious plan for domination of the Middle East, while a complete defeat of ISIS would only enhance Iranian hegemony, buttress Russia's role in the region, and prolong Syrian President Bashar Assad's tyranny."

Inbar's argument was so unusual that the most conservative Iranian newspaper, *Kayhan* (which is considered the mouthpiece of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei), highlighted Inbar's views on its front page with the headline: "A Zionist think tank leader says Islamic State is useful in the battle against Iran. Don't demolish ISIS!" Inbar's "defense of ISIS" is "proof that the terrorist infidels (i.e., ISIS) represent the Zionists and America in their battle against Iran," editorialized *Kayhan*.

Of course, Inbar wasn't seeking to defend ISIS at all, but rather was pointing to the fact that the Obama administration has inflated the threat

from ISIS in order to legitimize Iran as a "responsible actor" that will, supposedly, fight ISIS in the Middle East. This was part of the Obama administration's rationale for its rotten nuclear deal with Iran.

The reactions to Inbar's article came fast – as befits a place of intellectual ferment and policy creativity like the BESA Center. Inbar's colleague, Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman (a former deputy director of Israel's National Security Council), published a counter-article declaring that the continued existence of ISIS fortifies, rather than enervates, Iran's quest for hegemony. "The destruction of IS should be the first stage in a campaign designed ultimately to isolate and contain Iran," he wrote.

Lerman admitted that Inbar's hard-knuckled, realist point of view reflects the anguish felt by many in Israel and across the region as they watch the US administration and others get their priorities wrong, by defining Iran as an asset and a potential ally in the war against the so-called caliphate.

"Even so, a strategy that leaves ISIS bruised but alive would pose serious dangers. The norm that terror cannot be tolerated is a precious one...and the coordinated Western campaign against ISIS is a development Israelis and others should welcome, not disparage. Moreover, the total defeat of ISIS on the battlefield likely would lead to the collapse of the ideas for which

ISIS stands. Furthermore, the continued existence of ISIS and its horrors is a gift to Ayatollah Khamenei. He uses it to lure Turkey, blame the Saudis, and justify the ravages inflicted on Sunnis in Iraq and Syria by Iran's proxies."

Lerman similarly rejected President Obama's raw, realist attempt to portray Iran and ISIS as balancing rivals. The Western and Sunni "camp of stability," he says, must craft a strategy that sees all Islamists – Iran, ISIS, and the Ikhwan (Moslem Brotherhood) – as enemies. "Together, these partners should outline a phased campaign that begins with the destruction of ISIS, moves on to the marginalization of the Moslem Brotherhood, and ultimately isolates the Iranian regime and takes back the gains it made in the name of fighting ISIS."

Paraphrasing the Roman senator Cato, Lerman concluded his article thus: *Raqua Delenda Est*, i.e., the capital of the ISIS state needs to be taken and the organization destroyed.

Inbar was similarly challenged by another colleague, Prof. Steven David of Johns Hopkins University (a member of the International Academic Advisory Board of the Begin-Sadat Center). "Defeating ISIS and the horror it perpetuates requires nothing less than the elimination of its caliphate. Through control of territory, ISIS is able to inspire and train recruits, to direct terrorist attacks, and to demonstrate the West's



Prof. Efraim Inbar



Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman.



Prof. Steven David

inability to eradicate a pressing threat," Prof. David wrote.

"In the heart of the Middle East, ISIS thumbs its nose at the world, killing hundreds of innocents while destabilizing a critical region. What does this say about the West's ability to protect its own? With each terrorist outrage and triumphant claim of responsibility from ISIS, the West's credibility shrinks. If a collection of the world's most powerful states cannot eliminate an ongoing threat to its interests perpetuated by maybe 30,000 fanatics armed with little more than pick-up trucks, the ability of the West to ensure the security of its own countries – to say nothing of creating a liberal world order – is called into question."

Inbar is standing his ground. To Dr. Lerman's argument that ISIS excuses Iran's drive for regional hegemony, Inbar points out that Iran doesn't need this excuse. To Prof. David's argument that the success of ISIS exposes Western weakness, Inbar responds that Western weakness is much more manifest through Obama's capitulation to Rouhani, Assad and Vladimir Putin than it is to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi of ISIS. The threat to the West of Iranian nuclear weapons and Iranian Mideast hegemony (and of Russian revanchism in Europe) is far greater than the terrorist nuisance of ISIS.

And to the argument that destruction of Baghdadi's caliphate will cap terrorism, Inbar retorts that Islamic insurgents already are deeply embedded in dozens

of countries around the world, with Shiite (Iranian/Hezbollah) and other Sunni networks to serve them.

Earlier this year, Prof. Hillel Frisch conducted a study on the threat to Israeli national security posed by ISIS. He concluded that that Israel should remain militarily neutral in the conflict with ISIS, as long as those fighting ISIS, especially Iran, do not cross Israel's "red lines" by introducing advanced weaponry to the region or by attempting to set-up bases of terror on Israel's borders.

Evaluating the Iran Deal One Year Later



One year later, BESA Center experts have not changed their minds about the very problematic contours of the JCPOA that the American administration and its allies concluded with Iran. Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror and Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman dispute President Obama's assertion in August that "even Israel" admits in retrospect that the US was right to sign the nuclear deal with Iran.

Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror

General Amidror, the Anne and Greg Rosshandler Senior Fellow at the BESA Center, was National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of Israel until 2.5 years ago, and played a significant role in the dialogue between Jerusalem and Washington over how to confront Iran's nuclear weapons drive.

I continue to believe that the US lost a historic opportunity to use its clear advantage at the start of the negotiations to achieve more significant accomplishments. Iran was the weak side in the negotiations, but the US did not properly use the cards it held, making concessions instead of extracting them.

Instead of demanding the dismantling of Iranian nuclear capability, the US left Iran with its full capability concerning enriched uranium – only at a reduced scale and subject to strict monitoring. It is by no means clear that monitoring has, in fact, become any stricter – the opposite appears to be the case. Even worse, the deal allows Iran to advance in two important fields related to its nuclear future.

First, Iran can continue developing the next generation of centrifuges for enrichment. Second, Iran can continue developing heavy long-distance missiles. But the biggest problem with the deal lies in the fact that Iran has been given the legitimacy to maintain, develop, and move forward along the path of uranium enrichment after the deal. This legitimacy will allow Iran to get much closer to a nuclear bomb by the time the deal expires.

Proponents of the agreement boast about the few years' delay, pointing out that the Iranians had a similar capability prior to the deal. But this argument is disingenuous. Iran's capability was hardly similar when most of the world was applying pressure and imposing debilitating sanctions on its economy.



Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror

At the end of the deal, the Iranians will have the same capability, but without global opposition and certainly without sanctions. Fifteen years may seem a long time to a president or a prime minister who is focused on his term in office, but it is the blink of an eye to a nation.

The scope of the deal's damage is wider still. It has turned Iran into a superpower that aspires to become a major influencer throughout the Middle East. This is hardly a new goal for Iran, but now that it is perceived as the country that made the US bend to its will, Iran sees itself differently and is seen differently by others.

Iran is growing stronger militarily, thanks to the acquisition of modern weapons; economically, thanks to major investments and the procurement of large purchase contracts with countries around the world; and politically, because it now has both deal-procured immunity and much more money with which to fund its emissaries, from Hezbollah to Hamas.

Israel cannot remain indifferent to the consequences of the deal. As it turned out, the US was determined not to use the military option, contrary to its promises. If Iran does go for the bomb, it will therefore be up to Israel to be prepared to act independently. Obama administration efforts to hide the negotiations

from Israel, its shirking of commitments to Israel, and the end result – justify pessimism in Jerusalem.

However, it is possible that Washington's approach might change. To this end, Israel must build a close working relationship with the new US administration in 2017. Iran is the only country that has the potential to pose a threat to the existence of Israel. Israel has no choice but to prepare for the possibility that it may have to eliminate that threat on its own if such potential is realized. At the same time, Israel must try to recruit the US to join in this tremendous effort.

Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman

Dr. Lerman served for six years as deputy for foreign policy and international affairs at the Israel National Security Council, and dealt extensively with the Iranian nuclear challenge.

One year on, the nuclear deal with Iran clearly has made the region and the world more dangerous, notwithstanding the temporary respite won in Iran's pursuit of a nuclear weapon. The JCPOA has in no way moderated Iran's stance, nor made it a legitimate member of the community of nations.

The Obama administration's advocacy of warmer relations with Tehran appears totally removed from realities on the ground. Iran is using its new legal position to obscure, rather than clarify, past activities and present inventories. Its work on ballistic missiles and on the acquisition of materials for Iran's non-conventional weapons arsenal continues apace; repression has worsened; regional subversion is at its peak; and exterminatory positions towards Israel are openly put forward.

Silence can be misleading. The absence of ongoing overt opposition to the deal by Israeli government officials should not be misconstrued as a sign of complacency. Nor should the points raised by former officials and leaders – challenging Prime Minister Netanyahu's priorities and decrying what they describe as his alarmist style – be read as signs of acceptance of Obama's arguments in favor of the deal. The government has simply shifted gears,

because there is no point in fighting a lost battle – at least until January 2017.

Other critics of the government, meanwhile, believe that because the JCPOA (as almost everyone is willing to acknowledge) has given us a few years' breathing space, Israel should turn her energies to other issues, particularly those concerning the Palestinians. None of these views should be interpreted, however, as having reversed the broadly held belief that the JCPOA was, and is, a bad deal – and certainly far worse than what could have been achieved, given the immense levers the P5+1 were in a position to use at the time.

It is true that the JCPOA was never meant to resolve any issue other than the nuclear program. But the administration is well aware of Iran's support for terrorist organizations like Hezbollah, and its threats towards



Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman.

Israel. One might have expected that the president and his secretary of state would maximize their remaining leverage on Iran to bring these practices to an end. What they are doing instead – in looking for ways to enable Iran to access dollars, among other things – is the opposite of what their own language would have led us (or Iran) to believe.

NEW BESA CENTER RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

Efraim Karsh Becomes Director of the BESA Center



Prof. Efraim Karsh

Prof. Efraim Karsh has become director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies. He succeeds Prof. Efraim Inbar, who has led the center since its formation in 1993.

A renowned authority on Middle Eastern history and politics, Prof. Karsh taught for 25 years at King's College London, where he founded and directed the Middle East and Mediterranean Studies Program (currently the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies). In 2013 he joined Bar-Ilan University as professor of political science.

He has been a visiting professor at Harvard and Columbia universities, the Sorbonne, and the London School of Economics, and a research associate at the International Institute for Strategic Studies and the Wilson Center's Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies. In 2011-12 he served as director of the Philadelphia-based think tank, the Middle East Forum.

Prof. Karsh has authored over 100 scholarly articles and sixteen books, including *Palestine Betrayed* (Yale, 2010); *Islamic Imperialism: A History* (Yale, 2006); *Arafat's War: The Man and his Battle for Israeli Conquest* (Grove, 2003); *Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East 1798-1923* (Harvard, 1999); *Fabricating Israeli History: The "New Historians"* (Routledge, 1997); *The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991* (Princeton, 1993); *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography* (The Free Press, 1991); *The Soviet Union and Syria* (Routledge, 1988); and *Neutrality and Small States* (Routledge, 1988).

He is editor of the *Middle East Quarterly* and *Israel Affairs* academic journals, and has published op-ed articles in *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, *London Times*, *Der Spiegel*, and many other global newspapers.

In his 2015 book, *The Tail Wags the Dog: International Politics and the Middle East* (Bloomsbury), Karsh debunks Edward Said's "Orientalist" notion that the agonies of the Middle East are traceable to the rough handling of the region by Western powers – first European colonialists, then American cold warriors.

Karsh argues that the view of Moslems and Arabs as victims – a view that underlies US President Barack Obama's outreach to Iran – is misguided. Instead, Karsh propounds a radically different interpretation, that Middle Eastern history has in fact been the culmination of long existing indigenous trends, passions and patterns of behavior.

"I intend to build on my predecessor's incredible achievements," says Karsh. "Prof. Inbar built Israel's top security think tank from scratch, and has earned it a sterling international reputation for strategic prescience and intellectual fearlessness. The center will continue to offer fresh thinking on Israel's key defense, political, and diplomatic challenges in a rapidly-changing Middle East."

Prof. Udi Lebel Joins the BESA Center



Prof. Udi Lebel

Prof. Udi Lebel (Ph.D. King's College, London U.), a specialist in civil-military relations, has joined the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies as a research associate. He studies the political psychology of bereavement; trauma and national memory; and the sociology of security communities. He is an associate professor at Ariel University.

Efraim Inbar Concludes 25-Year Tenure as Founding Director of the Center



Prof. Efraim Inbar

Prof. Efraim Inbar has formally retired from the political science department at Bar-Ilan University, and handed over the BESA Center director's chair. Inbar remains a senior research associate at the center.

Inbar founded the Bar-Ilan University Center for Strategic Studies in 1991, which was renamed the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies in 1993. He has led the center to a position of sterling global stature.

Over these years, the center has published over 500 original research studies and policy papers, plus 20 books. It has conducted more than 450 symposia and conferences for defense, military industry, and intelligence and foreign policy specialists, as well as diplomats, businesspeople, academics and politicians.

The center also has developed cooperative relations with leading strategic research institutes throughout the world, from Ankara to Washington and from London to Seoul. The center's impact on Israeli and global discourse regarding regional strategic challenges has been significant.

Inbar's area of specialization is the politics and strategy of Israeli national security. He has authored five books, including *Outcast Countries in the World Community* (1985), *War and Peace in Israeli Politics*, *Labor Party Positions on National Security* (1991), *The Israeli-Turkish Entente* (2001), and *Israel's National Security: Issues and Challenges since the Yom Kippur War* (2008).

His magnum opus on Rabin and Israel's National Security (1999) is considered the ultimate book on this topic, and it won the Award of Excellence from Israel's National Council for Commemorating Israel's Prime Ministers.

He also has edited 13 books of collected scholarly articles, and written over 70 articles in professional journals including *Armed Forces and Society*, *Defense Analysis*, *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, *Middle East Journal*, *Political Science Quarterly*, *Review of International Studies*, *Security Studies*, *Survival and Terrorism* and *Political Violence*.

He has served as visiting professor at Georgetown, Johns Hopkins and Boston Universities. He was a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington and at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London; and has been a Manfred Warner NATO and Onassis Fellow. He has lectured at more than 100 academic institutions on four continents, including Harvard, MIT, Columbia, Oxford, Sorbonne and Yale universities.

Prof. Inbar served in the Israel Defense Forces as a paratrooper, and served in reserve at the IDF Staff and Command College. He was a member of the

political-strategic committee of the Israeli National Planning Council and chairman of the Ministry of Education committee for national security curriculum.

"Few scholars anywhere can match Efraim Inbar's achievement in building the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies from the ground up into an internationally-renowned think tank with real impact," says the noted strategist Prof. Yehezkel Dror of the Hebrew University.

Dror has been a member of the center's International Academic Advisory Board for two decades. "Efraim Inbar's accomplishment is heroic and almost miraculous," he says. "Both critical scholarship, and the State of Israel, have been very well served by his wise leadership."

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Saudi Arabia, the Gulf and the New Regional Landscape



Prof. Efraim Inbar with Prof. Michael Herb, Prof. P.R. Kumaraswamy, and Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi (l. to r.)

In June, experts from Belgium, Bahrain, France, Germany, India, the UK, US and Israel convened at the BESA Center and at Haifa's National Security Studies Center for a two-day international conference to study developments in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. Prof. Joshua Teitelbaum (BESA) and Dr. Dan Schueftan (NSSC) co-organized the conclave.

Dr. Guido Steinberg (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik) spoke on domestic security in Saudi Arabia, warning that if he was an adviser to the Saudi authorities, he would tell them to protect the Prophet's Mosque in Medina against an attack. Steinberg's prescient warning was issued on June 21. Indeed and alas, an Islamic State suicide bomber struck the holy site just two weeks later, on July 4.

Prof. Gregory Gause (Texas A & M U) discussed Saudi Arabia's King Salman. He remarked that many observers had stressed Salman was radically changing Saudi policies for a post-oil era, inaugurating a less cautious and more muscular foreign policy, and transferring power to the next generation of the Saudi royal family. But in fact the labor economy would not be able to adjust to economic change, and foreign policy change was limited to Yemen where the Saudis were least likely to come into conflict with Iran. Salman's main impact has been limited to bringing his family faction to the fore.

Prof. Joshua Teitelbaum (BESA Center) discussed Saudi Arabia's minority Shiite population. He noted that they were the Wahhabi regime's "ultimate other," always sacrificed when the government wanted to shore up its domestic

position or attack Iran. While the Shiites were a constant source of worry for the House of Saud, they were too few and despised by too many to be an existential threat.



Prof. Joshua Teitelbaum

Dr. Paul Rivlin (Moshe Dayan Center) maintained that in the short term, as a result of the chaos brought about by the Arab uprisings, the Gulf regimes enjoyed increased legitimacy as a result of their stability and were not threatened by the drop in the price of oil. Yet, he cautioned, this bargain would not be enough in the long term, as alternatives to reliance and oil were not readily forthcoming.

Prof. Robert Lieber (Georgetown U.) noted that the US relationship with Saudi Arabia had been seriously damaged by the shift in longstanding US foreign policy strategy under the administration of President Obama. His policies of retrenchment and retreat from American foreign policy commitments had undercut all three component of this alliance: deterrence, defense, and especially reassurance.

Prof. P R Kumaraswamy (Jawaharlal Nehru U.) discussed Indian-GCC relations, noting that Delhi had a huge economic engagement with the region in energy imports, bilateral trade, labor migration and remittances. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has realized this and made Gulf relations a priority.

Prof. Kristian Coates Ulrichsen (Washington U.) addressed the audience on Qatar under Amir Tamim. He observed that while Qatar will continue be involved in diplomacy and mediation, it would soon face the social and financial pressures of hosting the 2022 World Cup.

Clarisse Pasztor (European Union External Action Service), maintained that the EU and the Gulf countries did not agree on everything, but did cooperate in areas where interests



Dr. Kristian Coates Ulrichsen



Prof. Bob Lieber, Dr. Max Singer and Prof. Norman Bailey (l. to r.)

greatly coincided, such as counter-terrorism, Syria, and Yemen.

Dr. Dan Schueftan (National Security Studies Center) spoke about the rationale behind Israel's relations with regional allies. With respect to countries like Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Jordan, there is a commonality of interests in combating Iran and internal radical threats, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood. Yet there could not be an open alliance, because the political costs of open cooperation outweigh the benefits.



Dr. Dan Schueftan

Dr. Yoel Guzansky (INSS) discussed nuclear proliferation in the Arabian Peninsula after the Iran deal, explaining that the GCC countries were not prepared to waive their rights to enrich nuclear fuel. They would therefore require strict monitoring to ensure that

they did not turn civilian into nuclear use.

Dr. Alon Levkowitz (BESA Center), speaking on China, Asia and the GCC, remarked that Beijing sees the GCC countries as an important part of its security, due to its heavy investment in the Gulf region. Japan and South Korea are interested in a free trade agreement with the GCC, and China is involving Israel, since with the railroad it plans to build between Eilat and Haifa, it will be able to transship commodities from the GCC to the Mediterranean and beyond.

Prof. Michael Herb (Georgia State U.) discussed Gulf strategies for dealing with low oil prices. These include borrowing, raising taxes, cutting spending, and cutting subsidies. Yet many of these make no sense in the Gulf as they have a very serious political cost.

Prof. Meir Litvak (Moshe Dayan Center) explained the strategic rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia as based both on power politics and competing religious visions, Sunni (Saudi Arabia) and Shiite (Iran). The Iranians believe they have surrounded the Saudis in Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon and Syria, while the Saudi feel weakened by the nuclear agreement and US retrenchment. This tension is so deep that it will not be resolved in the future, he concluded.

Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror (BESA Center) stressed that Saudi Arabia was experiencing trauma caused by the Iran deal and American retrenchment. As it assessed its new regional role, he explained, it would behoove Riyadh to consider Israel as a partner in a large peace framework. But for that to come about, he concluded, Saudi Arabia needed to pressure the Palestinians to cooperate.

Ambassador John Jenkins (IISS Bahrain) is a world expert on the Persian Gulf and radical Islam. He pointed out how the various GCC states were dealing with the present crisis. Saudi Arabia's young people, for example, have great hopes for young Minister of Defense, Muhammad bin Salman, while the UAE showered its citizens with wealth and prestige. Bahrain kept a tight lid on its Shiite majority, while Oman stood at a slight distance from its GCC allies.

Other presentations were made by **Anne Sunik** (German Institute of Global and Area Studies), who discussed agreement and discord in the GCC; **Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi** (Middle East Forum) who analyzed the GCC efforts in the Syrian civil war; **Dr. Efrat Aviv** (BESA Center), who outlined the Saudi-Turkish alliance; and **Prof. Dr. Robert Kappel** (German Institute of Global and Area Studies) who offered observations on German and EU Gulf policy.

In summing up the conference, **Prof. Gabriel Ben-Dor** (Haifa U.) noted that the Gulf regimes do not only buy popular support. They also enjoy legitimacy, a political culture, and a tradition that has proven surprisingly resilient.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Strategic Challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean



B'nai B'rith International executive vice president Dan Mariaschin, former Italian foreign minister Giulio Terzi, Greek minister of defense Panos Kammenos, and Conference of Presidents executive vice president Malcolm Hoenlein (l. to r.)

"The Eastern Mediterranean has become a key area for global security, with two dangerous challenges, and an important opportunity," says **Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman** of the BESA Center, who co-convened the conference with **Mr. Alan Schneider**, director of the B'nai B'rith World Center in Jerusalem.

"The challenges are the regional refugee crisis due to chaotic conditions in Syria, Libya and beyond; and the growing hold upon Mediterranean shores of totalitarian Islamism in its various forms. The opportunity lies in energy cooperation between Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Greece and Cyprus (with a role for Italy); and perhaps with Turkey too."

The conference was capped by addresses from **Mr. Panos Kammenos**, the Greek Minister of Defense; **Mr. Giulio Terzi**, former Foreign Minister of Italy; and Maj. Gen. (res.) Amos Gilead, head of the politico-military department in the Israel Ministry of Defense. Visiting members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations participated in this session.

Kammenos offered a comprehensive and very forceful articulation of Greece's views on the dangers of radical

Islam, the problematic behavior of Turkey, and his country's new alliance with Israel.

Opening the conference was **Prof. David Abulafia** of Cambridge University, scion of a family which has left its mark on Mediterranean history, and the author of *The Great Sea*. Abulafia reminded participants that trade and cultural links have existed across the Mediterranean since the dawn of civilization; but warned against the impact of present divisive trends. **Dr. Michael Doran** of the Hudson Institute and **Prof. Efraim Inbar** of the BESA Center also spoke of strategic



Panos Kammenos, Greek Minister of Defense

In partnership with B'nai B'rith International, the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies hosted in February the first conference of its kind in Israel on Mediterranean security, and specifically on the Eastern Mediterranean as a strategic environment.

B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL



Prof. David Abulafia, Dr. Michael Doran and Mr. Dan Mariaschin (l. to r.)



Maj. Gen. (res.) Amos Gilead, Mr. Gary P. Saltzman and Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman (l. to r.)

dangers and instability, fueled by the loss of US authority in the region.

This was followed by a comprehensive survey of the changing strategic dynamics in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the rising danger of Islamist terror and subversion. **Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror** offered the Israeli point of view; former Greek Minister of Internal Security **Vassilis Kiklias** gave a spirited explanation of his country's views; and former Israeli Ambassador in Egypt **Zvi Mazel** sounded the alarm as to Egypt's economic and political prospects.

Adding to the understanding of this highly complex strategic landscape were scholars and practitioners from France (**Bruno Tertrais**, who related, among other, to the West's growing military involvement in Libya), Cyprus (DCM **Michalis Firillas**), and Turkey (scholar and journalist **Burak Bekdil**). The range of reaction in the international community to these challenges was discussed by Dr. Jonathan Rynhold; by the German DCM in Israel **Monica Iwersen**; and by Russia expert Dr. **Anna Geifman**.

Dr. Ehud Eiran of Haifa University presented the findings of an ongoing project on Mediterranean security, reminding participants of Ben Gurion's

strong commitment to the role of the sea in Israel's future, and linked it to the present challenge of protecting Israel's EEZ and sustaining regional stability against the rising threats.

Prof. Hillel Frisch of the BESA Center surveyed radical Islamist organizations operating in the region. **Dr. Amit Mor**, among Israel's leading energy experts, explored the implications of the gas finds in the Eastern Mediterranean for regional cooperation.

Avivit Bar Ilan, the leading authority in the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Dr. Amit Mor, Mr. Alan Schneider, Mr. Vassilis Kiklias and Ambassador Zvi Mazel (l. to r.)

on Euro-med cooperation, discussed the role that the "Union for the Mediterranean" could play in regional cooperation. **Ambassador Arye Mekel** of the BESA Center (former Israeli envoy to Greece) focused on strategic commonalities between Israel, Greece and Cyprus.

Dr. Lerman published a BESA Center study in March, *The Mediterranean as a Strategic Environment: Learning a New Geopolitical Language*, which argues that it is time to let go of the old colonial concept, the "Middle East," and re-learn to think in



Mr. Martin Oliner

CONFERENCE

Minorities in the Middle East

In January 2016, the center held a conference on minorities in the Middle East. Lecturers included Prof. Ofra Bengio (Dayan Center, on the Kurds), Dr. Jocelyne Cesari (Georgetown U. and Birmingham U.), Prof. Hillel Frisch (BESA Center, on Israeli Arabs), Dr. Efrat Aviv (BESA Center, on Jews in Turkey), Prof. Jonathan Fox (BESA Center), Prof. Matthias Basedau (German Institute of Global and Area Studies), Prof. Joshua Teitelbaum (BESA Center, on Shiites in Saudi Arabia), and Dr. Eldad Pardo (Truman Institute, on minorities in Iran).



Prof. Ofra Bengio, Prof. Hillel Frisch, Dr. Efrat Aviv and Dr. Jocelyne Cesari (l. to r.)



Dr. Efrat Aviv



Prof. Jonathan Fox, Prof. Matthias Basedau, Prof. Joshua Teitelbaum and Dr. Eldad Pardo (l. to r.)

SEMINAR

The Strategic Environment of India



Dr. A. Lele, S. Rajiv, Ambassador Prasad, Dr. M. Kedar, Dr. M. Singh Roy, and Mr. Uzi Rubin (l. to r.)

In September, the center held a seminar with the Indian Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses (IDSA), as part of its Peretz and Sheindel Sherman Strategic Dialogues Program.

Among the Indian colleagues participating were Ambassador Jayant Prasad (speaking on India's Foreign Policy), Gp. Capt. (retd.) Dr. Ajey Lele (India's Strategic Engagement with Southeast Asia), Dr. Meena Singh Roy (India and West Asia), S. Samuel C. Rajiv (The India-Israel Maturing Partnership), and Indian Ambassador to Israel, Mr. Pavan Kapoor.

SEMINAR

Greece's Strategic Role in the Eastern Mediterranean



Ambassador Arye Mekel

Prof. Aristotle Tziampiris spoke on continuity and change in Greece's Eastern Mediterranean foreign policy. Prof. Athanassios Platias spoke on sources of instability in the Eastern Mediterranean. Prof. Petros Liacouras and Prof. Nikolaos Farantouris spoke on energy resources and partnerships.

Simultaneously, the center published Ambassador Arye Mekel's paper entitled "A New Geopolitical Bloc is Born in the Eastern Mediterranean: Israel, Greece and Cyprus." Mekel says that from an Israeli perspective, the recent strengthening of alliance ties with Greece and Cyprus constitutes a win-win situation.

"Greece is ready right now to assist Israel within the European Union, as it proved recently when it led the opposition to labeling settlement products. This represents a sharp change in Greek policy within the European Union. Cyprus almost automatically

In the spring, the center held a seminar with colleagues from the University of Piraeus in Greece, as part of its Peretz and Sheindel Sherman Strategic Dialogues Program.

supports the Greek position, which gives the Greeks a double vote within EU institutions."

"A new geopolitical bloc is emerging that has military and political significance, and stands as a counterweight to Turkish ambitions. Stronger Israeli relations with Greece and Cyprus may also serve to encourage Turkey to show more flexibility in negotiations regarding normalization of ties between Ankara and Jerusalem," Mekel wrote.

Indeed, Turkey signed a reconciliation accord with Israel in August.

Ambassador Mekel, a senior research associate at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, served as Israel's envoy to Greece from 2010 to 2014. He was also deputy Israeli ambassador to the UN, diplomatic advisor to Prime Minister Shamir, and spokesman of the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Prof. P. Liacouras, Prof. N. Farantouris, Greek embassy personnel, Prof. A. Tziampiris, the Ambassador of Cyprus, Prof. A. Platias and Prof. E. Inbar.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

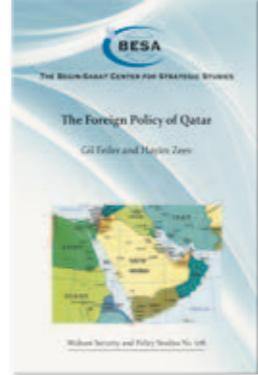


US Foreign Policy and Global Standing in the 21st Century: Realities and Perceptions

Edited by Professors Efraim Inbar and Jonathan Rynhold

BESA Studies in International Security, book published by Routledge 2016

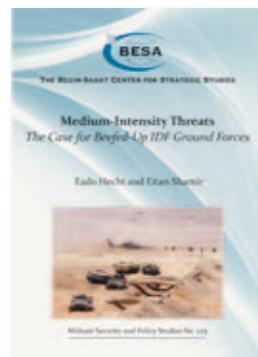
This volume examines how the foreign policies pursued by Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama have affected elite and public perceptions of the United States. By examining America's standing from the perspective of different actors from across various regions, including China, Russia, Latin America and the Middle East, while also assessing how these perceptions interact with America's own policies, this book presents a fresh interpretation of America's global standing. The book is based on the presentations at a December 2014 international conference at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.



The Foreign Policy of Qatar

Dr. Gil Feiler | November 2016

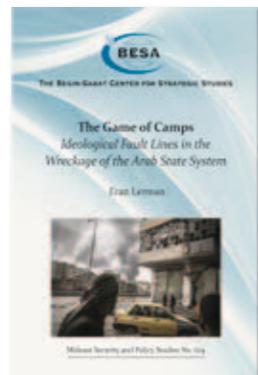
The study examines the mindset underlying Qatar's foreign interventions, with particular attention to the 2009 peace agreement in Lebanon and the current war against Iranian involvement in Yemen; and considers Qatar's future in the GCC and the world.



Medium-Intensity Threats: The Case for Beefed-Up IDF Ground Forces

Dr. Edo Hecht and Dr. Eitan Shamir | October 2016

This study argues that the rise in capabilities of non-state actors represents a new intermediate level between low- and high-intensity threats; that is, the medium-intensity threat. It describes several plausible threat scenarios that show a clear need for large, highly capable, maneuvering IDF ground formations; and argues that the IDF's prioritization of air force and precision-fire assets over ground units is a mistake.

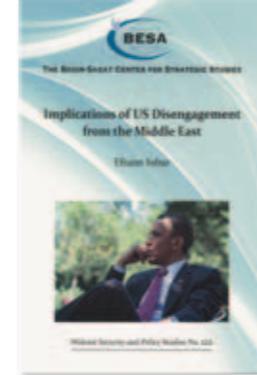


The Game of Camps: Ideological Fault Lines in the Wreckage of the Arab State System

Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman | September 2016

This study maps four Arab ideological camps and their interactions: The Iranian camp, Islamic State camp, Muslim Brotherhood camp, and the "counter camp" – which consists of the forces of stability, ranging from Saudi Arabia and most of the Gulf states to Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, as well as the Kurds and other non-Arab players. Israel shares the fears and goals of the latter camp,

and is joined with it in countering Iran. The US administration's courtship of Iran, as well as the hope held broadly in the West that the Muslim Brotherhood could play a constructive role, has done little to restore stability or restrain the rise of radicalism.



Implications of US Disengagement from the Middle East

Prof. Efraim Inbar | July 2016

The adverse implications of US withdrawal from the Middle East are manifold, including: the acceleration of Tehran's drive to regional hegemony, the palpable risk of regional nuclear proliferation following the JCPOA, the spread of jihadist Islam, and Russia's growing penetration of the region. Manifest US weakness is also bound to have ripple effects far beyond the Middle East.



Trends in US Congressional Support for Israel

Dr. Amnon Cavari and Elan Nyer | June 2016

While congressional support for Israel has historically transcended the partisan divide, Republicans and Democrats are growing less cooperative with regard to the means by which to express that support. The authors term this development as "congressional dysergia." Tensions between the executive branch and

Congress are growing as well, as exhibited in conflicts between the Republican-dominated Congress and President Obama.



The Return of the Russian Bear to the Middle East

Dr. Shai Har-Zvi | June 2016

A study of the aggressive new posture in Russian foreign policy under President Vladimir Putin, in the wake of its intervention in Syria and the Crimean Peninsula.

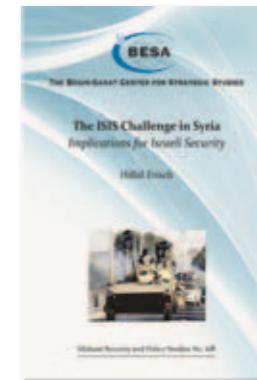


Indian Responses to Israel's Gaza Operations

S. Samuel C. Rajiv | May 2016

A study that examines Indian governmental responses to the three major Israeli military interventions in the Gaza Strip over the past decade. It reviews the unprecedented parliamentary debate that took place in India during Operation Protective Edge,

when the government sidestepped opposition demands for a resolution critical of Israel. It also assesses the Modi government's intention to inject new dynamism into the India-Israel relationship.



The ISIS Challenge in Syria: Implications for Israeli Security

Prof. Hillel Frisch | May 2016

A study of the strategic goals and military performance of ISIS; the relative strength of its opponents; and the threat to Israeli national security posed by ISIS. As long as Iran does not infringe on Israel's "red lines" (regarding the transfer of advanced weaponry and terrorist bases on its borders) Israel should remain militarily neutral in the conflict with ISIS.

NEW PUBLICATION

The New Threat of Very Accurate Missiles

by Dr. Max Singer



Dr. Max Singer

Precision-guided medium-range missiles, a relatively new technology, are beginning to proliferate in the Middle East. When they work as designed, they can deliver half a ton of high explosive to within meters of their targets. This means that for many targets, they are almost as effective as nuclear weapons. With their capacity to destroy capital facilities like power plants, they introduce a new way for Israel to decisively lose a war. Israel will have to get the difficult balance between offense and defense right before the next war.

Much attention has been given to the need to avoid becoming a world containing many small nuclear powers. But there is another possibility: that the world will contain many countries in possession of precision-guided missiles. These missiles can't kill as many people as nuclear weapons can, but they can still produce many casualties and cause significant strategic damage.

Israel faces at least two enemies that already have this capability, or are likely to have it within the next few years – Iran and Hezbollah. Someday, Hamas might also acquire such weapons. In a next war, Israel could suffer thousands of civilian deaths, as well as the destruction of its main electric power plants, water desalination capabilities, international airport, and other critical infrastructures. Note that two-thirds of Israel's electricity is produced by only six power plants.



Nobody knows how badly life in Israel would be hurt by a small number of missiles destroying important structures. But the loss of electricity alone would be immensely damaging to Israel's standard of living and its ability to maintain its economy. And

Israel, unlike most countries, could expect little if any help from its neighbors.

The IDF's effectiveness could also be sharply reduced by the destruction of key facilities. The economic damage from a small number of missiles hitting cleverly chosen targets might be great enough to cause a significant fraction of Israelis and foreign investors to leave the country.

Missile defense systems like Iron Dome and David's Sling are recognized as potent ways of protecting the country from the threat of accurate missiles aimed at essential Israeli infrastructure. However, some will argue that increased missile defense would provide less protection against precision-guided missiles than offensive improvements that might increase deterrence and enhance Israel's ability, in the air and on the ground, to prevent missiles from being launched.

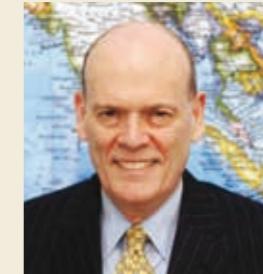
The challenge to Israeli leadership will be to find the best balance between defense and offense and to overcome internal IDF resistance to moving budgets to implement that balance.

Dr. Max Singer, a senior research associate at the BESA Center, is a founder of the Hudson Institute. He specializes in US defense policy, US-Israel relations, and long-term strategic planning. This text is excerpted from his BESA Center Perspectives Paper (No. 356), published in August.

LECTURES



Dr. Charles Asher Small, executive director of the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP), lectured at the center in December 2015 on "The BDS Element in the Delegitimization Campaign of Israel."



Prof. Michael Mandelbaum, Christian A. Herter Professor and Director of the American Foreign Policy program at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, lectured in June on "The Past, Present and Future of American Foreign Policy."



Michael Eisenstadt, the Kahn Fellow and Director of the Military and Security Studies Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, lectured in June on "Rethinking U.S. Military Strategy toward the Middle East."



Mr. Jay Solomon, the senior foreign affairs correspondent of *The Wall Street Journal*, lectured in September at the center on "The Iran Wars: Spy Games, Bank Battles, and the Secret Deals That Reshaped the Middle East," which is the title of his new book.



Uzi Rubin, founder and director of the Arrow defense program against long-range missiles in the Israeli Ministry of Defense and a senior research associate at the BESA Center, lectured in March on "The Impact of High-Tech Revolutions on the Future Battlefield."



Dr. Dov Waxman, professor of political science and Israel studies at Northeastern University, and the Stotsky Professor of Jewish Historical and Cultural Studies, lectured in June on "Trouble in the Tribe: The American Jewish Conflict Over Israel."



Dr. Emanuele Ottolenghi, senior fellow with the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies in Washington DC lectured in July on "Iran's Involvement in Latin America."



Prof. Peter Berkowitz, Tad and Dianne Taube Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University lectured in September on "Clintonism, Trumpism, and the Future of American Exceptionalism."



Dr. Colin Rubenstein, executive director of the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC), lectured in February on "Israel's Opportunities in Southeast Asia."

BESA CENTER PERSPECTIVES PAPERS

No. 371
Tip of the Iceberg: Russian Use of Power in Syria
 October 9, 2016 | Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror

No. 370
Israel should avoid Turkey; include Cyprus in Gas Export Projects
 October 7, 2016 | Ariel Ben Solomon

No. 369
The Gaza Tunnels Get Too Much Attention
 October 6, 2016 | Prof. Efraim Inbar

No. 368
Separation is not the Answer
 September 29, 2016 | Maj. Gen. (res.) Gershon Hacohen

No. 367
Khamenei's Slant on WWII: Iran Must Not Go the Way of Germany and Japan
 September 28, 2016 | Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman

No. 366
US-Israel Relations: Beyond the \$38 Billion
 September 27, 2016 | Prof. Jonathan Rynhold

No. 365
A Wealth of Friendship
 September 20, 2016 | Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror

No. 364
The Turks in Syria and the Kurds in "Rojava": Prelude to Tragedy or Reasonable Compromise?
 September 12, 2016 | Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman

No. 363
China's New Position on the Middle East
 September 11, 2016 | Roie Yellinek

No. 362
The Erdoğan-Gülen Rivalry
 September 7, 2016 | Dr. Efrat Aviv

No. 361
The Middle East Will Remain a Source of Terrorism
 September 1, 2016 | Prof. Efraim Inbar

No. 360
Cyberspace, the Final Frontier
 August 30, 2016 | Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror

No. 359
Turkey, the Refugee Crisis and Brexit: Concerns and Opportunities for Greece
 August 12, 2016 | Ambassador Arye Mekel

No. 358
Islamic State Should be Wiped Out
 August 11, 2016 | Prof. Steven R. David

No. 357
Raqqa Delenda Est: Why Baghdadi's "Caliphate" Should Be Destroyed
 August 10, 2016 | Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman

No. 356
The New Threat of Very Accurate Missiles
 August 9, 2016 | Dr. Max Singer

No. 355
The Iran Deal One Year Later: The Fuse Is Still Burning
 August 8, 2016 | Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror

No. 354
A Covenant of Shadows
 August 7, 2016 | Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror

No. 353
The Destruction of Islamic State is a Strategic Mistake
 August 2, 2016 | Prof. Efraim Inbar

No. 352
Regional Implications of the Failed Coup d'État and Purges in Turkey
 August 1, 2016 | Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman

No. 351
Erdogan's Turkey Takes a Fork in the Road
 July 29, 2016 | Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror

No. 350
A Year after the JCPOA: An Interim Report on the Nuclear Deal with Iran
 July 14, 2016 | Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman

No. 349
Lebanon 2006-2016: Deterrence is an Elusive Concept
 July 10, 2016 | Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror

No. 348
The Turkish-Israeli Reconciliation: A Balance Sheet
 July 6, 2016 | Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman

No. 347
The Importance of Interests in Israel-Turkey Reconciliation
 July 5, 2016 | Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror

No. 346
Occupation Is Not the Problem
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 June 30, 2016 | Prof. Efraim Inbar

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 June 7, 2016 | Lt. Col. (res.) Dr. Dany Shoham

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Why Israel Should Not Adopt Unilateral Initiatives
 June 1, 2016 | Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror

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IN MEMORIAM: Muzi Wertheim



Mr. Muzi Wertheim and his wife Hassia receive an award in 2013 from the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies upon the center's 20th anniversary, from Prof. Efraim Inbar (at left).

The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies mourns the passing in August of Mr. Muzi Wertheim, one of the titans of modern Israeli industry and a founder of the Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University. He was 86.

Mr. Wertheim's legendary career spanned the history of Israel. He fought in Israel's War of Independence as part of the Palmach brigade, and served in the Mossad for a decade.

"Muzi," as everyone called him, opened the center's inaugural conference in May 1991. For the past 25 years, he has been a loyal friend of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

"Muzi was a great Israeli patriot, a very wise man, and a stalwart supporter," says the center director Prof. Efraim Inbar. "He was a true friend."

"He also was widely-read and possessed a deep interest in regional security affairs. Muzi would often share his insights with center associates. Then he would bring out rare books from his magnificent collection of Judaica manuscripts and reflect on Jewish history and Israel's future – in which he believed passionately."

In his business career, Mr. Wertheim was chairman of the Central Bottling Company (which manufactures Coca Cola in Israel) and of Bank Mizrach-Tefachot. For many years, he was chairman of the Israel-America Chamber of Commerce.

The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies expresses deep condolences to his wife Hassia and his children Dudi and Drorit. May they be comforted among the builders of Jerusalem and Zion – of which few were greater than Muzi.

The BESA Center

The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University seeks to contribute to the advancement of Middle East peace and security by conducting policy-relevant research on strategic subjects, particularly as they relate to the national security and foreign policy of Israel. Founded by Thomas O. Hecht, a Canadian Jewish community leader, the Center is a non-partisan and independent institute dedicated to the memory of the late Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin and the late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat.

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