Executive Summary

Introduction: Restoring a Security-First Peace Policy

Lt.-Gen. (ret.) Moshe Yaalon

- In his major policy speech at Bar-Ilan University in 2009, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu articulated a major shift in Israel's policy – a restoration of Israel's traditional security-based approach to achieving a lasting peace.

- When Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin entered into the Oslo Accords, he envisioned something along the lines of the "Allon Plan" for Judea and Samaria (the West Bank). Drafted shortly after the Six-Day War, the plan called for Israel to retain sovereignty in some of the territories it came to control in Judea and Samaria, and delineated a security border extending from the Jordan Valley up the steep eastern slopes of the Judea-Samaria mountain ridge and retained sovereignty over Jerusalem as Israel's united capital.

- In the aftermath of Arafat's rejection of Prime Minister Ehud Barak's peace offer, the Palestinian suicide bombing war that followed, Ariel Sharon's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the Second Lebanon War, the failed Annapolis talks, and the recent war in Gaza, the Netanyahu government is readopting the notion that safeguarding Israel's vital security requirements is the only path to a viable and durable peace with our Palestinian neighbors.

- The Palestinians have adhered to their historical narrative of armed struggle that denies Israel's right to exist as a Jewish nation-state, regardless of signed agreements or unilateral Israeli withdrawals. The Palestinians have interpreted Israeli territorial withdrawals as signs of weakness and retreat that have energized their struggle to force additional Israeli territorial concessions

- Until now, the Palestinians have only been asked for a "top-down" peace process, throughout which their leaders have held meetings, shaken hands, attended peace conferences, and even signed agreements with Israeli leaders. But when a peace process does not sprout from the grassroots of a society, it is both pointless and useless. Until three-year-old children in Ramallah stop being taught to idolize "martyrs" who blow themselves up for *jihad* against Israelis and Jews, there will only be a "peace process" in the imaginations of the self-deluded.

Defensible Borders to Secure Israel's Future

Maj.-Gen. (res.) Uzi Dayan

- It is commonly misunderstood just how vulnerable Israel actually is. Some 70 percent of its population and 80 percent of its industrial capacity are concentrated in the narrow coastal strip between the Mediterranean Sea and the West Bank. The adjacent West Bank hills topographically dominate the relatively flat and exposed coastal plain, providing a distinct advantage to an attacker for observation, fire, and defense from an Israeli ground response.

- If the West Bank were to fall into hostile hands, the resulting situation would pose a constant threat to Israel's national infrastructure, including Ben-Gurion International Airport, the Trans-Israel Highway toll road, Israel's National Water Carrier, and its high-voltage electric power lines.

- By its presence along the eastern perimeter of the West Bank in the Jordan Valley and the Judean Desert, Israel has been able to prevent weapons smuggling and the infiltration of hostile forces. Indeed, one of the most important preconditions of a successful counter-insurgency or counter-terrorism strategy is isolating the area of conflict in order to cut off any reinforcement of hostile forces with manpower and material.

- The entire Jordan Rift Valley constitutes a natural physical barrier against attack that averages between 3,000 to 4,600 feet. There are only five east-west passes through which an attacking army can move, each of which can be defended with relative ease. For this reason, the Jordan Valley has been viewed as the front line for Israel's defense in an extremely uncertain Middle East.

- The advent of ballistic missiles and rockets has increased the importance of terrain and strategic depth for Israel, since its small standing army may have to fight for longer periods of time without reinforcements from the reserve forces, whose timely arrival may be delayed or prevented by rocket fire. Israel's standing army may also have to operate for a considerable period of time without major assistance from the air force, which may be busy destroying the air defense systems of enemy states and suppressing ballistic missile launches aimed at Israeli cities.

The U.S. and "Defensible Borders": How Washington Has Understood UN Security Council Resolution 242 and Israel's Security Needs

Dr. Dore Gold

- The United States has historically backed Israel's view that UN Security Council Resolution 242, adopted in the wake of the Six-Day War on November 22, 1967, does not require a full withdrawal to the 1949 armistice lines (also called the 1967 borders). There is no basis to the argument that the U.S. has traditionally demanded of Israel either a full withdrawal or a nearly full withdrawal from the territories it captured in the Six-Day War.

- In the international legal community there was an acute awareness that Jordan had illegally invaded the West Bank in 1948 and held it until 1967, when Israel captured the territory in a war of self-defense. Israel's entitlement to changes in the pre-1967 lines did not arise because it had been vulnerable, but rather because it had been the victim of aggression in 1967.

- When asked what was the "minimum territory" that Israel "might be justified in retaining in order to permit a more effective defense," the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), General Earl Wheeler, responded on June 29, 1967: "From a strictly military point of view, Israel would require the retention of some captured Arab territory in order to provide militarily defensible borders." Regarding the West Bank, the JCS specifically suggested "a boundary along the commanding terrain overlooking the Jordan River," and considered taking this defense line up to the crest of the mountain ridge.

- The Clinton parameters of 2000 did not become official U.S. policy. After President George W. Bush came into office, U.S. officials informed the newly-elected Sharon government that the administration would not be bound by the Clinton parameters discussed with Israel's Barak government. Conversely, it was understood that the Sharon government would likewise not be bound by its predecessor's proposals.

- President Bush wrote to Prime Minister Sharon on April 14, 2004: "In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949."

Key Principles of a Demilitarized Palestinian State

Maj.-Gen. (res.) Aharon Ze'evi Farkash

- Israel's definition of demilitarization is that no security threat – whether symmetrical, asymmetrical, military, or terrorist – be allowed to develop either within or by way of Palestinian territory, and that no Palestinian army or military capabilities be established which could constitute a threat to Israel.

- In Israeli-Palestinian negotiations to date, the heads of the PLO and the PA have refused to agree to a "demilitarized" Palestinian state. They claim the right to have high-trajectory weapons (mortars), anti-tank missiles (RPGs), and armored vehicles equipped with machine guns, in order to control security in their territory and protect their central government.

- Israel's current military freedom of operation in the West Bank, which enables the IDF to reach every place where prohibited arms are manufactured or hidden, has thus far prevented terrorists there from being able to manufacture rockets and launch them at Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. It has also enabled the IDF to intercept suicide bombers before they are able to carry out their malicious missions.

- A major problem Israel faces in dealing with a non-state actor such as the Palestinian Authority is that, unlike state actors such as Egypt or Jordan, classic principles of deterrence and punishment are far less effective, as there is no unified government that asserts control over people, weapons, and terrorist groups. This is illustrated by the split between Fatah in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza.

- The Palestinian Authority must commit to the cessation of incitement to terrorism, and to the building of a "culture of peace." This will entail forming joint structures for preventing incitement; neutralizing all channels of support for terrorist organizations (such as the transfer of funds to and activities conducted by extremist associations disguised as organizations established to help the needy); and eliminating school curricula that encourage violence, martyrdom and suicide. This will also require a commitment on the part of the Palestinian state to prevent the delivery of hostile sermons in mosques and other religious and cultural institutions.

Control of Territorial Airspace and the Electromagnetic Spectrum

Brig.-Gen. (res.) Udi Dekel

- During the Camp David Summit in 2000, Israel insisted its control of airspace over the West Bank was essential to prevent the threat of a suicide attack by a civilian aircraft laden with explosives on a major Israeli city. The Americans responded that the Israelis had a vivid imagination which they employed to justify exaggerated security demands. A year later, on September 11, 2001, Al-Qaeda sent airliners plunging into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, causing the death of thousands.

- The distance between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea is approximately 40 nautical miles. A combat aircraft can fly across the country in less than four minutes, and a plane could penetrate the country via the Jordan Valley and reach Jerusalem in less than two minutes.

- In the past, prior to a planned Iraqi mission to carry out an aerial attack on Israel's nuclear research compound in Dimona, Jordan permitted Iraqi combat planes to use its airspace and to fly on a route parallel to the Israeli border in order to take aerial photographs of Israeli territory. Thus, despite the current relative calm, Israel cannot entrust its security to the goodwill of the Jordanians or the Palestinians.

- Israel suffers from a major topographical security disadvantage because all of its international civil aviation could be exposed to possible attack from hostile Palestinian elements using shoulder-launched anti-aircraft missiles, fired from the West Bank mountain ridge, at planes during take-off or landing at Ben-Gurion International Airport.

- A Palestinian entity located on the central mountain ridge enjoys a topographical advantage compared to largely coastal Israel. A small Palestinian transmitter station on Mount Eival, near Nablus, for example, could jam virtually the entire communication system in Israeli areas broadcasting on the same frequencies.

The Risks of Foreign Peacekeeping Forces in the West Bank

Maj.-Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror

- Just before the 1967 Six-Day War, UNEF, the United Nations Emergency Force in Sinai, retreated from the area just before hostilities broke out. European monitors stationed along the Egyptian border with Gaza in accordance with the 2005 agreement brokered by Secretary of State Rice fled their positions when internecine fighting between Hamas and Fatah heated up.

- UNIFIL in Lebanon has never caught any Hizbullah terrorists. When Hizbullah moved its artillery positions to within 50 meters of a UN position and then fired on Israeli targets, UNIFIL did nothing. But if Israel employed counter-fire against the very same Hizbullah artillery, then the UN Division for Peacekeeping Operations would issue a formal diplomatic complaint.

- In the Bosnian War, there was a largely Western military presence. Yet the Dutch UN contingent abandoned the Muslims of Srebrenica as they were attacked by the Bosnian Serb Army, leading to the mass murder of over 8,000 civilians in 1995.

- After a UN Observer Mission was dispatched to Lebanon, in October 1983 both the French paratrooper barracks and the U.S. Marine headquarters were attacked by Shiite suicide bombers on orders from Tehran, causing the deaths of nearly three hundred servicemen. Within a year, both forces withdrew from Lebanon, demonstrating that peacekeepers will quickly leave the theater when attacked.

- It would be a serious mistake to believe that Israeli requirements for verifying complete Palestinian demilitarization could be guaranteed by international forces operating in the West Bank. International forces have never been successful anywhere in the world in a situation where one of the parties was ready to ignore the fulfillment of its responsibilities.

Israel's Return to Security-Based Diplomacy

Dan Diker

- Since the 1993 Oslo Declaration of Principles signed with Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization, Israel's vital security requirements have been relegated to a position of secondary importance. Israel's traditional "security-based diplomacy" approach to foreign relations had been set aside. Instead, a doctrine of "diplomacy-based security" had come to dominate Israeli diplomatic thinking, as peace agreements were thought to be the guarantor of Israel's safety.

- Israel's previous policy of making concessions first and trying to enforce its vital security requirements second has raised international expectations that Israel will continue to offer an intransigent Palestinian leadership greater concessions. Throughout this period, Israel's unprecedented concessions were rejected by the Palestinians but simultaneously pocketed, so as to form the basis for the next round of negotiations.

- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's foreign policy speech at Bar-Ilan University on June 14, 2009, represented a fundamental restoration of Israel's security- and rights-based approach to the conflict. Netanyahu insisted that reciprocity govern relations between the sides: that Israel be recognized as the nation-state of the Jewish people, that a future Palestinian state be demilitarized, and that Israel's critical security needs be honored.

- Netanyahu's insistence on a demilitarized Palestinian state and defensible borders did not represent a new strategy. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the Knesset on October 5, 1995: "The borders of the State of Israel, during the permanent solution, will be beyond the lines which existed before the Six-Day War. We will not return to the 4 June 1967 lines." In fact, Rabin told the IDF leadership that Israel would need to retain approximately 50 percent of the West Bank in any future settlement.

- Yigal Allon, a commander of the pre-state Palmach and foreign minister under Rabin, was the architect of the defensible borders doctrine. In Allon's view, which was shared by successive Israeli prime ministers, the concept of defensible borders means that Israel has a right and a responsibility to establish boundaries that provide for its citizens' basic security requirements, as opposed to accepting a geography that invites attack. This has always meant that Israel would retain some territories east of the 1949 armistice lines as part of any peace agreement with the Palestinians, especially in the largely unpopulated Jordan Valley.