

Security Challenges Facing the US and Israel

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An analysis of the different characteristics of global and regional conflicts indicates the following five mega-trends. First is the transition from a uni-polar to a multi-polar world due to dramatic economic, military, and political changes. The second is related to globalization and the potential inherent in globalization to exercise violence and terrorism by rogue countries and radical elements. The third trend is the rise of radical Islam concomitant with the weakening of the Arab Sunni state. The fourth is signified by the developing nuclear threat and the possibility that such weaponry might land in irresponsible hands and prompt asymmetric fighting and terrorism – the leading way to achieving political and ideological objectives. The fifth trend is the clash between civilizations; this development will be discussed without mentioning the conventional threats.¹ Despite the significance of conventional threats, it is more important to understand that in recent years there has been a deep change in the weak that do not possess tanks and do not have air forces. However, if the world is unprepared when these weak realize that there is a way in this asymmetric war to achieve political goals, it will be impossible to cope with that threat.

The most important trend is the transition from a world led by the United States and its allies in Europe to a multi-polar world because of dramatic economic and political weakening and the transition of those strengths from the West to the South and the East. The events in Georgia, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Iraq, and the Second Lebanon War, and

1. The analysis of these mega-trends is based in part on the work of Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat and deliberations at the Israel Presidential Conference in May 2008.

the terrorism from Gaza, all challenge Western military supremacy and defy its deterrence. The weakening of the US standing in the world is an implication of this trend, and this prevents the United States from creating an effective coalition against Iran and North Korea.

The second trend is globalization, which brings about new security and military intelligence challenges. There are many advantages to globalization. On the other hand, due to the interrelations of global networks of information, technology, and economy it erodes the physical and cultural boundaries between states. In addition, globalization gives rise to very powerful local religious sentiments. In this era, when we witness the decline in the legitimacy of deploying military forces, the complexity and problematic aspects of resorting to force have risen drastically.

It is obvious that the economy and the technological revolution in science will continue to be the principal factors in the advancement of globalization. However, globalization also heightens, intensifies, and increases threats; it enhances the efficacy of non-state actors. The weight of terrorism rises and we witness how the nature of wars is changing towards asymmetric conflicts and wars, for the most part led by Islamic religious extremists.

With globalization and the loss of control of central governments, there is an increasing trend toward "localization." This was present in Iraq, in Jenin, in Hebron, and in Jericho. In other words, with the combination of identification of the local leadership and the infusion of money, employment is provided to local citizens and simultaneously security issues are dealt with, which contributes to stability. However, areas with dysfunctional central governments such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Authority constitute fertile ground for the rise of hostile elements that are not deterred by the central government exercising military power.

The third facet related to economic globalization is expressed in the loss of employment in democratic countries. There is a drastic drop in the employment of these who do not belong to the IT world. This increases the gap between the rich and the poor and also results in growing domestic violence, such as what occurred recently in Athens. The fourth dimension concerns technological globalization and the internet. Its weight is absolutely decisive to the process of globalization in the world and is used increasingly by terrorist groups. It improves their ability to carry out

terror attacks, raise funds, recruit new volunteers, and guide them. The recent Mumbai terrorist attack exemplifies these activities well. The use of Google and other internet resources helped the terrorists move around Mumbai and attain their objectives.

The third major trend is the rise of radical Islam, the violence caused by non-state actors, and the strengthening of Iran. This is a growing challenge to the West and also to the moderate Arab states, most of which are Sunni. Most of them have tried to show solidarity by sending their representatives to Annapolis not because of the desire to solve the Israel-Palestinian conflict but because they believe that it is important to deal with the problem of Iran before it acquires nuclear power. Hamas, Hizbollah, and Islamic Jihad, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan and Egypt, al-Qaeda in North Africa and Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and radicalization among Islamic elements in the East – these are becoming a growing threat to the stability of regimes around the world and to the peace processes in the Middle East. The expansion of radical Islam among non-Arab Islamic populations increased the awareness of Sunni-leaning countries such as Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia that are able to deal with domestic terrorism better than non-Arab regimes in the East.

This trend can be seen not only in the Middle East but also in the Far East and in Europe. The Muslim population on the European continent increases by one million each year. The birth rate of Muslims in Europe is three times higher than that of Europeans. In Europe in the near future, one out of every five will be a Muslim. Already today we see people going to the mosque on Friday in London, five times more than non-Muslims going to church on Sunday. It is obvious that not all of them will be radical, but it is easier to recruit in Europe, and therefore radical Islam is an important challenge to the US, Europe, and moderate Sunni Arab states.

The fourth trend is related to the growing threat of acquisition of non-conventional weaponry by rogue countries (North Korea and Iran) and irresponsible non-state elements that are making efforts to acquire a nuclear weapon. There is great danger in the fall of non-conventional weapons into the hands of terrorist organizations.

Pakistan is one of the most dangerous places in the world. It possesses sixty to eighty nuclear warheads, and it lacks a stable regime and exports terror, like Iran, from which Shiite terror finds its way to the West. Thus,

the fact that Iran is attaining nuclear capability encourages Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Turkey, and even Syria to move towards obtaining nuclear weapons. That may result in a completely new Middle East. Countries with great aspirations like Iran and North Korea and organizations like al-Qaeda will do everything possible to strengthen their position by acquiring nuclear capability.

The fifth trend is related to the rise of global terrorism. Israel has rich experience in dealing with it from the beginning of the nineties: in the First and the Second Gulf Wars, in the First and Second Lebanon Wars, and in the first and second intifadas. Israel gradually accumulated the information and acquired expertise in this sphere. In order to accomplish political and ideological objectives confronting the democratic world, it has to be recognized that the struggle with terror is a global and not just a regional issue. The prevailing perception in the United States suggests that there is a persistent conflict between the democratic world and global terrorism. The latter signifies a very complicated threat nurtured by religious enthusiasm. This threat comes from the population, is directed against the population, and is found inside the population. The representatives of global terror do not try to avoid hurting civilians. On the contrary, they are interested in a situation in which civilians are hit because in a democratic regime civilian victims are the ones who will impact on the government more than anything else. Hence, in the asymmetric war the civilian population is part of the struggle.

The change in the nature of war is very deep and it compels security forces to understand that this war is dissimilar to the symmetrical type of war. In order to be successful, security forces have not only to comprehend this change, but also reorganize themselves accordingly and train the military force in a way that will allow conducting operations among the civilian population.

Israel and the United States share the same objective of attaining long lasting stability and calm as a sine qua non for the political echelons to conduct negotiations. As said in the Bible, "And the land was peaceful for forty years." Shorter periods, six or even two years, would also be good.

To summarize: the five trends discussed above have meanings relevant to the security bodies and the decision makers. The preparation for and the response to these challenges and the combination between them compel

the military and political leaderships to prepare themselves accordingly and at the end of the day be able to cope better with the problems of global terrorism and asymmetric warfare.

The threats posed by countries such as North Korea and Iran have to be addressed accordingly, and it is obvious that the message of North Korea is important for Iran. In order to secure military achievements and translate them into political assets, political solutions should be based on military actions in a cycle that will be determined on the ground. One does not have to undertake large scale activities: small scale actions suffice for hitting essential military targets. And the last point is to consolidate covert and effective modus operandi, to have precise intelligence and other capabilities that together will bring about the necessary results.

On a related note, technological cooperation between Israel and the US in intelligence is of the first order. We are the senior partners of the Americans in this regard; there is an immense fusion here between questions that we have asked because of the threats that we faced and the solutions we have found through technologies that helped the United States when they faced problems that we had tackled before. This cooperation is based on trust and differentiation – the ability of both sides to identify the qualitative advantage that each party has.

I think that we need to draw a distinction between two aspects of the relations between Israel and the United States with regard to security: first of all there is the annual grant that is given for free as a gift to the State of Israel and we can only say thank you very much. We are well aware of the fact that this is a large portion of the defense aid provided by Congress to foreign countries; we are at the top of the list and to a certain extent perhaps we feel a little uncomfortable being at the top of the list.

In cooperation in technological development of weaponry systems, we see a significant decline from the level of cooperation that used to exist compared to what we have today. In Israel there is a growing desire to have a trade off, where US aid is reduced in exchange for the enhancement of technological cooperation between the two states. The solution for the problem has to be found in the political echelon. Israel's prime minister and Israel's defense minister must broach the subject with their American counterparts. Perhaps they will find a way to build that trust, which is

probably the key in order to reach those improvements that we would like to have.

One other point: I have realized that when the other side, especially the Americans, see that we have something to contribute in certain areas, they open up their doors. The message needs to be that we should be good, excellent in technological areas, and innovative; then they would have no choice but to open up their doors also in sensitive issues. Therefore, I think that we must not reduce our investment in R & D, and must allow our creative officers who serve in technological units to attain achievements that would open up foreign doors, because this product is required across the ocean.