



Lessons from the Palestinian 'War' Against Israel

Moshe Yaalon

Policy Focus #64 | January 2007

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Published in 2007 in the United States of America by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1828 L Street NW, Suite 1050, Washington, DC 20036.

Design by Daniel Kohan, Sensical Design and Communication

Front cover: An Israeli soldier stands next to a Hamas propaganda poster, March 7, 1996. The poster was seized during raids conducted in the wake of a suicide bombing campaign. Copyright AP Wide World Photos/Jacqueline Arzt.

About the Author

Lt. Gen. Moshe Yaalon served as chief of staff of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) from 2002 to 2005. Born in 1950 in Kiryat Haim, he was drafted into the IDF in 1968 and served in the Nahal Paratroop Regiment. He served as a reserve paratrooper during the 1973 Yom Kippur War and participated on the Suez front. He returned to active service after the war and completed officer's training.

General Yaalon held several command positions in the IDF Paratroop Brigade and commanded its reconnaissance unit during the 1978 Litani operation. He served in an elite unit between 1979 and 1982 and fought in Operation Peace for Galilee. He then rose to battalion commander before becoming deputy commander of the IDF Paratroop Brigade. Near the end of his term, he was wounded in Lebanon.

In 1986, General Yaalon left to pursue advanced studies at the command and staff college in Camberly, England. When he returned to Israel, he became commander of the elite unit in which he had previously served. In 1989-1990, he retrained in the IDF Armored Corps and received a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Haifa.

In February 1990, General Yaalon was appointed commander of the IDF Paratroop Brigade. In January 1992, he was appointed commanding officer for Judea and Samaria and promoted to the rank of brigadier-general. In August 1993, he was granted command over an armored division and the ground forces training facility at Tze'elim. In June 1995, he was appointed commanding officer for intelligence and promoted to the rank of major-general. In May 1998, he was appointed commander officer for Central Command.

On September 15, 2000, General Yaalon was appointed IDF deputy chief of staff. On July 9, 2002, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-general and appointed the seventeenth IDF chief of staff, a position he held until June 1, 2005.

General Yaalon is married and has three children.

Source: Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Preface

Lieutenant General (ret.) Moshe Yaalon joined The Washington Institute as its distinguished military fellow in November 2005, upon completion of an illustrious thirty-seven-year career in the Israel Defense Forces. The Institute is pleased to publish General Yaalon's fine study, a personal reflection on some of the political and military lessons learned from the violent conflict that followed the collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian summit meeting at Camp David in 2000. This study provides invaluable insight into the strategic outlook of a key Israeli decisionmaker during the bloodiest series of clashes in the history of the long and tragic Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and it describes the lessons he learned in the course of Israeli counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations against armed Palestinian groups.

Robert Satloff
Executive Director

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Introduction

On September 29, 2000, the eve of the Jewish New Year, Israel was confronted with a new wave of Palestinian attacks. In the unprecedented wave of violence and terror that followed, Israelis faced more than 140 suicide bombings and hundreds more rocket attacks launched by Palestinian terrorists. More than 1,100 Israelis died (over 70 percent of them civilians), and 7,800 injured in more than 25,000 different terror attacks.¹ Over the same period, more than 4,100 Palestinians were killed and nearly 30,000 injured—the vast majority of these in Israeli reprisals.²

While the Palestinians call the war “The Al-Aqsa Intifada,” Israelis have not yet settled on a name for the conflict. In part, Israelis are reluctant to name a war that has gone through and continues to go through many evolutions. Both sides in the conflict have continuously

changed strategies and tactics since 2000. Although the current period is one of relative calm, Palestinian attacks continue. The current ‘lull’ in the fighting, however, provides an important opportunity to assess the war’s many strategic and political lessons thus far.

Apart from the immediate Israeli-Palestinian theater, this war has noteworthy broader implications. At present, with the Western world facing a “global jihad,” American troops confronting terrorists in Iraq, and the recent attacks in Jordan and Egypt demonstrating that even Muslim nations are not secure from terrorism, sharing the lessons of Israel’s war on Palestinian terror is more important than ever before. This monograph—which draws on my thirty-seven years of experience as an Israeli soldier and military commander—explores those lessons.

¹ As of June 30, 2006, 1,114 Israelis had been killed and 7,844 had been injured. Statistics taken from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. Available online (www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Palestinian+terror+since+2000/Victims+of+Palestinian+Violence+and+Terrorism+sinc.htm).

² Statistics as of May 31, 2006, taken from Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics website. Available online (www.pcbs.gov.ps/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabID=3951&lang=en).

The Emergence of the Palestinian Terrorist Threat

Immediately following his election as Israeli prime minister on June 20, 1999, Ehud Barak declared his intention of reaching a peace agreement with Syria and a “final settlement” with the Palestinians within fifteen months—a period set to end in September 2000.¹ Regrettably, he was unable to fulfill his intentions. The Syrian track was discontinued in April 2000, while the Palestinian track stalled—and ultimately broke down—after the failed Camp David meetings in July 2000. The Palestinian track’s failure largely resulted from the two parties’ (Israel and the Palestinian Authority) falling out of sync: while Israel’s leadership was preparing a peace proposal it believed would formally end the conflict, Palestinian chairman Yasser Arafat was preparing for war.

At the time, I was commanding officer of Israel’s Central Command, responsible for the West Bank. This area includes eight Palestinian cities, more than 450 Palestinian villages, and about 120 Israeli settlements. In the months preceding Camp David, it was the assessment of my staff that the Palestinians were clearly preparing for war. Our forecast was that “the most likely scenario” would be a period of calm through the end of the millennial celebrations, followed by a period of tension and a gradual deterioration of the security situation. We further projected that this deterioration would peak in September 2000.

This analysis of the most likely scenario was based on our understanding of Arafat’s goals, strategy, rationale, and modus operandi. Arafat’s intentions will certainly be an issue of debate among historians for years to come. My own analysis at the time was that Arafat did not want a “two-state solution,” nor did he

intend to recognize Israel as a Jewish state. In my view, the wave of terror he initiated on September 29, 2000, was clearly intended to prevent a “two-state solution.”

Historically, Arafat was in good company among prior Palestinian and Arab leaders.² Arafat apparently believed Israeli society would recoil from a new wave of violence and terror, bringing it to the point of surrender and a willingness to soften its position even further than its leadership had done at Camp David. Thus, Arafat hoped to achieve more-favorable terms by prolonging the conflict rather than accepting a peace settlement based on the Oslo Accords.

Arafat understood the need to maintain legitimacy—particularly within the international arena—while executing this war. In this vein, he used then-opposition leader Ariel Sharon’s September 28, 2000, visit to the Temple Mount as an excuse to fuel tensions, creating the appearance of a spontaneous, popular uprising. To further this image, Arafat termed his war the “al-Aqsa Intifada”—“intifada” meaning “revolt” or “uprising” in Arabic.

His intent on stirring a popular uprising in response to Sharon’s Temple Mount visit was part of a well-established strategy. Arafat had attempted to use the same tactic in May 2000 on Nakba Day (i.e., “catastrophe day”)—the day on which Palestinians mark Israel’s establishment. After initially failing to prompt Palestinians to demonstrate against Israel in the streets, Arafat ordered Fatah Tanzim activists led by Marwan Barghouti³ to organize student

¹ Danna Harman and Elli Wohlgelemerter, “Barak Predicts Peace Deals in 15 Months. PM Briefs Arafat on Talks,” *Jerusalem Post*, July 18, 1999, p. 1.

² Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the grand mufti of Jerusalem and the man considered to be the first major Palestinian national leader, rejected outright the British-appointed Peel Commission’s partition plan in 1937. Ten years later, the Palestinian leadership rejected a second partition plan put forth by the United Nations.

³ Marwan Barghouti is one of the founders of the Tanzim movement, a paramilitary arm of the Fatah party. In the 2000 elections, he lost a bid for the position of secretary-general of Fatah. Arafat,

groups to start rioting. These activists then shot at Israeli soldiers from behind the mob they had gathered, inevitably creating violent images that fueled Palestinian support for Arafat’s agenda vis-à-vis Israel.

Following the outbreak of war in September 2000, Israeli attempts to reach a ceasefire with the Palestinian leadership failed.⁴ The most significant attempt occurred on October 4 at a summit in Paris, hosted by French president Jacques Chirac and attended by Arafat, Prime Minister Barak, and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Arafat claimed that the Palestinians had already suffered 174 casualties⁵ (compared with 4 Israeli casualties), thus establishing Israel as the aggressor. This claim was a typical Arafat embellishment:

between September 29 and October 4—the first week of the war—74 Palestinians were killed, far fewer than Arafat claimed. Moreover, these numbers reflect the Israel Defense Force’s high level of preparedness for the war, which it had anticipated well in advance of Arafat’s rejection at Camp David.

Nevertheless, Arafat arrived at the Paris summit as the “underdog,” successfully exploiting Israeli military superiority to issue falsehoods regarding “Israeli aggression.” At the close of the summit, with the encouragement of President Chirac, Arafat refused to sign a previously agreed-upon ceasefire agreement—a decision that, in my mind, confirmed our analysis that Arafat had no intention of working toward a peaceful solution of the conflict.

who wished to have him significantly placed within the party to head the resistance, cancelled the results and instated him through presidential authority. Barghouti is currently serving five life sentences in an Israeli prison.

⁴ Most notably, the meeting between the head of the Israeli General Security Service, Avi Dichter, and Jibril Rajoub and Mohammed Dahlan, head officials of the security organizations within the Palestinian Authority, on October 1, 2000: “The Israelis were given the impression that the Palestinians understood that the time had come to stop the shooting. But their promises again came to naught. The Israelis feel that Palestinian compliance with their requests is still minimal.” Amos Harel, “Did Major General Yaakov Or Fool Himself or Did the Israeli Government Fool Itself about the Damage of Arms Supplies to the PA?” *Haaretz* (Tel Aviv), October 3, 2000.

⁵ For an overview of these talks, see Jane Perlez, “No Deal Reached in Talks to Quell Mideast Fighting,” *New York Times*, October 5, 2000.

Palestinian Terror Capabilities

Palestinian *modus operandi* and terror capabilities were well-known before the signing of the Oslo Accords. My first experience with it at the senior level was as commander of the Judea and Samaria Division, between January 1992 and August 1993, a formative period in the development of Palestinian terrorist operations. During this period, nineteen Israelis were killed in a variety of terror incidents across Israel, most of which involved stabbings or shootings. Yet on April 16, 1993, Hamas launched the first successful Palestinian homicide-bomber attack, when the famed “Engineer,” Yahya Ayyash, initiated an attack at a junction in Mehola, killing one Israeli.¹

Until the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in May 1994—first in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, later in other Palestinian-dominated areas—terror operations were largely characterized by similarly small-scale suicide bombing attempts. The deployment of armed Palestinian policemen and security personnel created two significant changes in the dynamic: the amount of weapons and ammunition increased and, more significantly, Israel ceded its security responsibilities to these newly established security forces.

Early in the Oslo process, Area A—a conglomerate of areas in which the PA assumed responsibility for security—would become a safe haven for Palestinian terror organizations. In Gaza, Hamas enjoyed freedom of operation; Ayyash himself found sanctuary there and succeeded in perpetrating devastating suicide attacks throughout 1994 and 1995 until he was killed by Israeli forces on January 5, 1996.

Arafat balked at dismantling terror organizations. On this issue, in my capacity as director of military intelligence, I met him twice to encourage him to act against this activity; he responded by denying involvement and ac-

countability. Even when he arrested 1,200 Hamas activists in the spring of 1996—a move primarily resulting from American pressure—none of those arrested were charged or sentenced for their roles in murdering or killing Israelis. In most cases, they were merely charged with (and, in some cases, convicted of) undermining law and order and subverting Palestinian national interests. Their release, moreover, was just as imminent as the mitigated charges and became known as the “revolving door” phenomenon.

Following his success in initiating the September 1996 riots—launched in response to Israel’s opening of the Hasmonean Tunnel in the Old City of Jerusalem—Arafat began arming Fatah Tanzim activists in preparation for a new war. At that time, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad were developing makeshift explosives for use in roadside and suicide bombing attacks in Gaza and the West Bank. In Gaza, the PA and Hamas began producing hand grenades, mortars, and mortar shells in small workshops inside PA installations as well as in private workshops.

A milestone in the development of the conflict occurred on September 10, 1998, when Hamas leader Adel Awadallah and his brother were killed by Israeli troops. In a handbag that Awadallah had been carrying, Israeli soldiers found papers revealing Hamas’s intention of obtaining chemical agents to be used as weapons. Although Hamas failed to acquire and use chemical weapons, Israel found evidence that Hamas had previously tried to add poisonous materials to its explosives to increase the number of fatalities.

After the outbreak of the terror attacks in September 2000, Palestinian terror capabilities gradually improved. Two factors propelled this improvement. First, new terror groups were founded, including the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, which emerged from Fatah, and the

¹ See www.mideastweb.org/timeline.htm.

Popular Resistance Committees, a Fatah offshoot based in Gaza. Second, new weapons were introduced, some manufactured domestically and others smuggled in from Egypt. Hamas developed and produced the Qassam rocket, which became an essential weapon for striking Israeli towns and cities, especially from Gaza. The PA and terrorist organizations also succeeded in smuggling significant quantities of weapons and ammunition—mainly through underground tunnels dug under the Philadelphi Corridor—from Sinai into Gaza. Through these smuggling operations, the Palestinians acquired rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and advanced explosives; they further attempted to acquire air defense and antitank missiles, and katyusha rockets. Still, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) managed to thwart many of these smuggling operations, including the interception at sea in January 2002 of the *Karine-A*, a ship carrying substantial amounts of weapons and ammunition, en route from Iran to Gaza.

Following the implementation of the Disengagement Plan—the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the abandonment of the Philadelphi Corridor in August–September 2005—

Palestinians have found smuggling weapons from Sinai to Gaza even easier. The lack of any preventive force has allowed large quantities of weapons and ammunition to be smuggled by the PA and terror organizations. Moreover, these caches have increased in quality and now include recoilless antitank guns, katyushas, and antitank and anti-aircraft missiles.

A review of Palestinian terror methodology over the past two decades demonstrates the wide variety of Palestinian terror tactics throughout the protracted conflict. Their repertoire can be divided into several categories. Close-range projectile attacks use stones, Molotov cocktails, and even hand grenades. In addition, Palestinian terrorists have engaged Israeli soldiers and civilians at a distance, using sniper fire, roadside bombs, indirect fire (including mortars and Qassam rockets), and direct-fire rocket, RPG, or antitank-missile attacks. More rarely, terrorists attempt more “prestigious” attacks (which entail greater risk to the perpetrators but also provide them with enormous benefits upon successful completion). These include the heinous homicide-bombing attacks and kidnappings of Israeli citizens, either dead or alive.

The Nature of the Palestinian Threat: Terrorism versus Conventional War

Although the September 2000 Israeli-Palestinian war was at times as intense and fierce as a traditional war between conventional armed forces, its characteristics differed greatly from conventional war. In a conventional war, armed forces compete for victory by integrating tactical fire and movement. Yet when fighting a terrorist organization, superior firepower does not necessarily determine victory. The targets, tactics, environment, and goals—as well as the nature of the enemy and its motives—make the war against terrorism particularly challenging for an army that has been trained solely to overcome conventional threats.

As a rule, terrorists avoid direct clashes with armed forces. Instead, terrorists aim at “soft targets” that are mostly civilian in nature—making no distinction between combatants and noncombatants—to spread fear and anxiety amid the civilian population. In fact, beyond the physical damage it causes, terrorism seeks to accomplish a number of additional aims. First, it weakens the target country’s economy, because the unpredictable nature of the attacks affects consumer confidence and market stability. Second, it erodes the national resolve of the targeted society, causing ever larger numbers of people succumb to their fears and to placate the terrorists. Finally, an incessant terrorist campaign might influence the targeted population to question the legitimacy of its cause (which may come into question in the international arena as well) and may even succeed in undermining the targeted society’s willingness to defend its own interests. During the course of the most recent conflict, Palestinian terrorists struck buses, coffee shops, restaurants, and malls—exclusively civilian contexts—for this purpose.

Terrorists further exploit democratic societies’ regard for human life. Counterterrorist operations—both defensive and offensive—always carry the risk of collateral damage, which is inevitably used by terrorists to undermine the legitimacy of the defender, both domestically and internationally. In this vein, Palestinian terrorists—fully aware of Israelis’ sensibilities, democratic values, and respect for human life—based their operations almost entirely within highly populated urban areas. Any defensive measures taken by Israel—including traffic checkpoints, closures, and curfews—inevitably led to Palestinian suffering and to violations of their civil rights. This phenomenon was then used to further incite the Palestinian populace against Israel, as well as to undermine the legitimacy of Israel’s actions in international forums.

Palestinian terrorists were thus able to portray Israeli offensive operations as acts of aggression. The most prominent example, of course, was the April 2002 Israeli offensive in Jenin, which the Palestinians initially declared to be a “massacre,” though forty-eight of the fifty-three Palestinians killed in that offensive were armed combatants. Moreover, twenty-three Israeli soldiers and officers were killed in this battle, which indicates that parity and symmetry existed on some level between the two combatant sides. As deputy chief of staff, my observations at the time found that Israeli forces did their utmost to preserve the sanctity of human dignity during this battle: the IDF chose to eschew aerial bombardments and used ground operations instead, a decision that inevitably increased both the Israelis’ exposure to danger and the number of casualties incurred during the fighting. Despite the risks Israeli forces took on the ground, they were still berated by the Palestinian propaganda

outlets for using what was called excessive and undue force.

This incident is but one of the myriad where Palestinian propaganda—deliberately false yet extremely effective—portrayed Israel

as the belligerent Goliath despite the fact that it had been attacked without provocation. The goal was obviously to undermine the Israeli right to self-defense and to galvanize Arab and Muslim support against Israel.

The Israeli Response

Israel's military response to Palestinian terrorism was conditioned by its political stance. As the war evolved and the political stance changed, Israel's response changed, allowing it to eventually overcome the terror threat.

Initially, the Israeli government reaction to the violence was mixed: some believed that the outbreak of terror attacks was part of a spontaneous wave of violent uprising; others were convinced that the attacks were deliberately initiated by Yasser Arafat for political gain. At this early juncture, the government decided to avoid holding Arafat accountable as the initiator of the hostilities—so as not to undermine his credibility or legitimacy in the eyes of the world—and continued to treat him as a potential partner for peace.

Within nine months, however, the government had revised its assessment of Arafat's role in the conflict. On June 2, 2001, in the wake of a devastating suicide attack at the Dolphinarium discotheque that killed 21 Israelis—most of them teenagers—and injured 120 people, the government issued the following statement: "Arafat activates and supports terror." Yet this statement did not denote a major change in policy; it merely concluded that Arafat was not a viable partner for peace. The third stage in the evolution of Israeli policy—where Israel's perception of Arafat's role was solidified and became irreversible—occurred in 2002, when a Hamas homicide-bomber struck at the Netanya Park Hotel on March 29, the eve of the Passover holiday. The following morning, the government moved to consider Arafat an "enemy" and simultaneously authorized the IDF to begin Operation Defensive Shield.

From a military perspective, the complex nature of the conflict demanded significant improvisation and change on the part of the IDF. From the earliest days of the new wave of violence, protests against Israeli policy were held

throughout the territories, and many of them turned violent. During these incidents, the IDF frequently exchanged fire with Palestinian militants, the latter shooting from behind young rioters. These shooters were frequently Fatah activists, including members of the Palestinian police and security organizations.

By September 2000, IDF troops—having faced this threat previously during the September 1996 and May 2000 riots—were well prepared and protected. Previous experience led them to use specific tactics and techniques designed to target the terrorists without exposing themselves to harm, and to minimize collateral damage to the civilian surroundings. Crowd-control procedures called for troops to be deployed on two levels: some were placed directly in front of the demonstrators, adequately protected from potential Palestinian fire. Others, comprised primarily of sniper and observer units, were placed around the perimeter and were responsible for neutralizing Palestinian sniper attacks and relaying information to Israeli forces on the ground. These tactics proved, for the most part, to be successful. In the week that followed September 29, 2000, dozens of Palestinian snipers were killed. Not surprisingly, Arafat exploited the outcome of these clashes to cast Israel as the aggressor.

After about two weeks of riots and shooting, the Palestinians' modus operandi shifted. For example, when the Palestinian Authority reopened its schools following a two-week general strike, Palestinians reduced the frequency of riots and their attacks from among the rioters. Instead, they began specifically targeting civilians, shooting at Israeli villages and neighborhoods, industrial zones, and military installations. The IDF responded by returning fire.

Another shift in military policy began on October 12, 2000, when two IDF reservists

mistakenly drove their car into Ramallah. When they asked a Palestinian police officer for assistance, they were brought to the police station, where they were lynched by a gathering mob. Israel held the PA responsible for the reservists' deaths by not providing adequate protection and launched an airstrike against the police station using antitank missiles fired from an attack helicopter. This kind of operation was used frequently to confront the Palestinian Authority when it did not impose the rule of law—most often, property was damaged without casualties. In retaliation, Arafat released most of the imprisoned terrorists in Palestinian jails in October 2000. This reaction served as a signal to Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and other terrorist groups to join the war.

Israel was confronted with an acceleration of the hostilities, including an unprecedented wave of terror attacks, which peaked in early 2002. On March 29—eighteen months after the war's outbreak—a Hamas suicide-bomber struck at the Park Hotel in Netanya on Passover eve, just as Jews at the hotel were sitting down for their Seder meal. This act launched Operation Defensive Shield and marked Israel's official transition from defense to offense in confronting Palestinian terrorism.

Israel's reaction to these attacks changed gradually. In the beginning, as stated, Israel treated the Palestinian Authority as a potential partner and tried to coordinate with the PA to dismantle and hinder terrorist operations.

When this proved futile, Israel slowly began targeting Palestinian facilities as a way of holding Arafat accountable. Later, the IDF undertook offensive operations to confront terrorists throughout the territories, including within Palestinian-controlled Area A. As the hostilities intensified, the IDF launched more incursions to arrest wanted men, instead of delegating that activity to the Palestinian Authority.

Defensively, Israel tightened restrictions on the Palestinian population by constructing checkpoints and implementing closures and civil curfews. Moreover, the IDF deployed more troops around the Palestinian areas to prevent infiltrations. During the initial period of the war (from September 2000 to March 2002), these operations were easier and more successful in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank, because a fence had already been erected in Gaza. Additional measures were taken within Israel: checkpoints in and around city entrances, guards at the entrances of public areas and facilities, and efforts aimed at raising public awareness of the threat. Indeed, in many cases, civilian vigilance prevented attacks or minimized the damage.

Operation Defensive Shield thus heralded a watershed in the conflict, marking a significant change in Israeli attitudes toward the Palestinian Authority, and the military's switch from defensive to offensive operations. From March 29, 2002, the number of Israeli casualties from terror attacks dropped precipitously.

The Principles of Counterterrorism

My experiences in countering the terror threat have yielded many lessons.

CAPITULATION TO TERROR ONLY BEGETS MORE TERROR

History has proven that capitulating to terrorism serves only to generate more terror. This is the most important lesson. Recent history is rife with examples of this:

- In 1983, a Hizballah suicide-bomber orchestrated a deadly attack on a U.S. Marine base outside Beirut. The soldiers were there only to assist in the peacekeeping effort, but this attack caused the U.S. government to order their immediate withdrawal. To this day, neither the Hizballah organization nor the Iranian government that established it has paid any price for its involvement in this attack, and both remain a formidable threat to regional stability in the Middle East.
- In 1989, after a protracted conflict in Afghanistan with Muslim guerillas, the Soviet army withdrew after a ten-year occupation. This withdrawal was overwhelmingly perceived as a victory for Islam—rather than for the Afghan people—and encouraged Muslim extremists to pursue other targets they considered a threat to Islam. On the ground, some of the Afghan guerillas would later establish the al-Qaeda organization, and, based on their previous successes against one of the world's superpowers, would take on the other global superpower thirteen years later—on September 11, 2001.
- Finally, the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in August 2005 lent further impetus to terror, and led to the election of a Hamas government in January 2006. These and other examples illustrate fully that terrorism, if not dealt with harshly, merely begets more of the same. Any ca-

pitulation acts as nothing more than encouragement and legitimacy for terrorists and their tactics.

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND NATIONAL RESILIENCE

Terrorists prefer to target civilians because they are easy to hit and the effect of striking at civilians and terrifying the broader society weakens the state's ability to withstand further attacks. Again, any surrender to terror generates more terror; defeating terrorism thus requires resilience on the part of one's own society to withstand and confront terrorism. By withstand terrorism, I mean that a society must be able to absorb terror's costs—economically, emotionally, and in terms of lives lost—rather than surrender to it.

Democratic societies are uniquely susceptible to terrorism and can be easily manipulated by terrorists. A perfect example of this occurred in Spain, where the public responded to the 2004 Madrid train bombings by electing a government that immediately withdrew Spanish troops from Iraq.

Kidnapping and hostage situations have proven an especially potent tactic through which terrorists can draw the public into pressuring the government to accede to terrorist demands. In many cases, democratic governments have surrendered to such kidnappings; examples of these include paying ransoms or exchanging prisoners (by France or Germany) during the present conflict in Iraq. Israel, too, has succumbed to the power of this tactic. In 2004, Israel negotiated a deal with Hizballah arranging for the release of 435 prisoners in exchange for the bodies of three IDF soldiers and a civilian who was a colonel in the IDF reserves.

Israeli society demonstrated a great deal of resilience in the face of unremitting terror attacks. In my view, Israelis performed better

during this period than during the Lebanon war (1982–2000), when Israel ultimately withdrew unilaterally from southern Lebanon in May 2000. That move was perceived as a Hizballah victory (not only within Lebanon) and has been noted as a major factor in the Palestinians’ decision to shift their tactics from negotiation to terrorism only four months later.¹

A variety of domestic factors affect a democratic government’s ability to withstand terrorism. Among these factors are the level of social solidarity and political unity, and public confidence in the justice of their cause, and in their political leadership. When terrorists cause physical and psychological damage to the civilian population, public resolve is nearly as important as the military’s superiority in aircraft, tanks, and artillery.

In my view, two primary means exist of promoting resilience in the face of terrorism: leadership and education.

LEADERSHIP IN FIGHTING TERRORISM

The war against terrorism, at its very core, poses serious challenges to a nation’s leadership, on both the political and the strategic levels. No swift victory is possible in the war against terrorism. The political leadership must therefore convince its public that terrorism can be overcome—though success may emerge only in the long run, with many casualties absorbed along the way. It must press the public on the necessity of confronting terror until its defeat, rather than opting for some mode of surrender or capitulation.

The public is often highly sensitive to military casualties during a conventional war. Maintaining public confidence during a war against terrorism is even more difficult, because the civilian population—not just mili-

tary personnel—frequently finds itself on the front lines. Moreover, the lengthy duration of the war is hard for civilians to accept, particularly in an era when people have come to expect “instant solutions” to complex problems. The fight is thus often confronted by fickle public opinion.

Military leaders face an additional challenge—that of defining victory. In my capacity as chief of staff, I preferred to speak of “the decisive victory” that is reached when the opponent—terrorists, their supporters, and their political leadership—realizes that terrorism’s costs outweigh its benefits. To draw an analogy from boxing, victory over terror is achieved through winning points rather than through knockouts. A “decisive victory” is thus gained by winning various tactical engagements, reducing the overall threat to civilians, and strengthening the broader society’s resilience in the face of terrorism.

Democratic societies have difficulty, psychologically, understanding the extent to which they are on the front lines of this conflict. They have difficulty comprehending that in the face of terrorist threats their leaders cannot provide foolproof protection or immediate solutions. Citizens of liberal countries are accustomed to living in well-to-do societies, not societies at war. In my experience, this challenge of comprehension is frequently exploited by politicians to create false hopes—such as promises that victory is imminent. These hopes are nurtured even when they undermine strategic interests.

In addition, citizens in Western democracies—born into societies that expect “accountability” from their leaders—often blame their politicians for terrorism. This phenomenon seems to be a psychological coping mechanism that allows average citizens to believe that they retain a degree of control over their lives, because criticizing government policy or voting to change their leadership allows them to influence their situation through participation in the democratic process. Moreover, ap-

¹ A prominent example is the statement made by Palestinian Foreign Minister Farouk Kaddoumi in 2002, that “Hezbollah’s resistance can be used as an example [to the Palestinians].” Hussein Dakroub, “Senior Arafat Aide Holds First Meeting with Hezbollah Leader,” Associated Press, March 26, 2002.

pealing to the frustration of the citizenry is a tactic often used by the political opposition to manipulate public opinion to its own advantage. Israel witnessed this phenomenon both in its war against Hizballah in Lebanon and against the Palestinians: a series of devastating terrorist attacks in early 1996 were used by opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu as proof of the fact that Prime Minister Shimon Peres was incapable of fighting terror (Netanyahu won the following month’s general elections). Similarly, Ehud Barak came to power in 1999 after convincing the public that Netanyahu’s policies in Lebanon and in the Palestinian arena, were incapable of bringing about peace and security.

The foregoing characteristics present the political leadership—as well as the military echelon—with a formidable challenge. The political leadership finds itself under fire from political opponents, as well as from academic, professional, or media experts. In certain cases, political leaders respond by acceding to these critics out of domestic considerations, the first and foremost of which is almost always political survival. This goal may trump strategic interests in the decisionmaking process.

The military leadership, meanwhile, is challenged by a gap in legitimacy. The armed forces of any democracy are dependent on public support for the use of force. This support is, of course, an appropriate exercise of democratic checks and balances, a concept that does not exist in authoritarian governments. Thus, the military’s freedom to act depends on the legitimacy of military action in the eyes of the public.

Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israeli society is decidedly split. Israelis are divided not merely with regard to the future outcome of the conflict but also on the roots of the conflict. Many Israelis believed that the Palestinian leadership, led by Arafat, was ready to implement a two-state solution. Others concluded that the PA saw such a solution

as but a phase in a much longer conflict, one that entails the liberation of all of Israel from Jewish control. This kind of division hinders the development of a necessary consensus regarding the legitimacy of the use of force. Terrorists recognize the importance of legitimacy in democratic states, and the Palestinians exploited it to manipulate both Israeli and international public opinion, thus causing major problems for Israeli commanders.

In my years in the IDF, I therefore sometimes found myself in the position of acting to preserve this legitimacy, rather than doing what I believed to be in the military interest. One prominent example involved the demolition of houses in the Rafah area. IDF troops were deployed along the fourteen-kilometer border between Egyptian-controlled Sinai and PA-controlled Gaza in accordance with prior Israeli-Egyptian and Israeli-Palestinian agreements. Palestinian terrorists—including members of the Palestinian Authority security organizations—tried to smuggle weapons and ammunition from the Egyptian side to the Palestinian side through a series of underground tunnels. These tunnels frequently ran through Rafah, a densely populated Palestinian city, using Palestinian houses along the border for cover. Through these tunnel systems, Palestinians smuggled ammunition, explosives, detonators, rifles, and RPGs into Gaza.

Facing Egyptian incompetence in thwarting the smuggling, the IDF had to rely on its ability to operate in Palestinian urban areas to locate and destroy these tunnels. The fear existed—and remains, given Israel’s 2005 unilateral withdrawal from Gaza—that Palestinians will acquire longer-range and more-devastating weaponry. Given also that most of these tunnels were dug inside houses—many of which were booby-trapped to protect these tunnels—the IDF’s best option was to demolish these houses outright. In spite of the fact that the PA had previously forced the inhabitants to leave their homes to facilitate the smuggling operations,

Israel was castigated—both domestically and internationally—for the demolitions.

As chief of staff, I believed that these demolitions were essential; either the smugglers themselves or the PA security organizations should be held accountable. Still, Israel—not the Palestinian Authority, despite its violation of previous agreements regarding the type and volume of weapons that Palestinians could acquire—was vilified on all fronts (by the Israeli and foreign media, nongovernmental organizations, and of course, by the Palestinians themselves) for its actions.

The Palestinian propaganda machine was particularly effective in exploiting this issue. Indeed, the need to demolish houses is difficult to explain while watching an old Palestinian woman looking for her belongings in what used to be her house. Explaining such a scene is much more difficult when disagreements as to the nature of the problem exist within Israeli society.

EDUCATION IN FIGHTING TERRORISM

A society targeted by terrorists must be prepared to be on the front lines constantly. Education is very important in building national resolve, asserting the national narrative, and promoting a national vision. Education is a critical tool through which a society can build physical and psychological immunity against terror attacks.

In the wake of the hostilities initiated in September 2000, Israelis—and particularly the younger generation—proved sorely lacking in this respect. Throughout the 1990s, Israelis were taught that they were ushering in a new era of peace, not an era of renewed hostilities. Their failure to perceive a threat led to an overall laxness in their civic pride and knowledge of their heritage. I personally witnessed such cases among the soldiers under my command: they displayed ignorance about the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the roots of Zionism and their Jewish heritage, and the overall

legitimacy of the Jewish state’s establishment. This ignorance, and the doubts it sows regarding the justice of one’s actions (as well as the justice of Israel’s cause), is fatal to the counterterrorism effort in which Israel is engaged. During my tenure as chief of staff, I was instrumental in formulating an educational program for incoming soldiers to instill in them the faith in their mission that is so crucial to the success of the counterterrorist effort.

THE BEST DEFENSE IS A GOOD OFFENSE

The war against terror must be confronted in all walks of life—the political, economic, cultural, psychological, judicial, and military arenas included. The primary operational lesson I drew, among the host of lessons I have learned during the war against terror, is that the best defense is a good offense. Israel succeeded in reducing the threat of Palestinian terror and the number of Israeli casualties only by moving from the defense to the offense.

From September 29, 2000, to March 29, 2002, Israel relied on a defensive posture to protect itself. The IDF, the Israeli Security Agency (ISA, or Shin Bet), and the Israeli police were deployed in defensive operations around Palestinian urban areas (Area A), which, according to the Oslo agreement, were entirely under Palestinian control. These measures included setting up checkpoints and conducting routine patrols around populated areas to ensure that no unauthorized party managed to successfully cross over into Israeli territory. By contrast, the offensive measures undertaken by the IDF during this same period were mostly in retaliation to terror attacks, targeting PA facilities to press the Palestinian leadership to act against terrorists. Israel thus placed the onus of responsibility for these attacks on the PA, rather than on the terror organizations responsible for the attacks.

The Park Hotel attack in Netanya on Passover eve dramatically altered Israel’s stance. The Israeli government, by approving

Defensive Shield, opted to move from the defense to the offense. The effect and the implication of this decision went well beyond the arrests and killings of hundreds of terrorists:

- For the first time since the Oslo agreement, Israel decided to take responsibility for its own security. Since the implementation of the agreement in May 1994, Israel’s control over its security was decidedly crippled; Palestinian security organizations had sole responsibility over security in Area A. Palestinian terrorists consequently used Area A as a safe haven. Defensive Shield effectively changed this fact.
- Until Defensive Shield, Israel was seen by many Arabs as a “spider web,” to quote Lebanese Hizballah chief Hassan Nasrallah.² This phrase was used to denote the fact that like a spider web, Israel’s military and society seemed strong, but were actually very weak when put to the test. The Arabs concluded that Israelis were tired of wars and unwilling to fight and sacrifice their lives for cause and country. Like some Israelis, they believed that the reservists would not be ready to go to war with the same resilience they had exhibited in the past. Yet the performance of the IDF, and especially that of the reservists, proved otherwise. Their impressive mobilization, in which many volunteered to go to war (without being called up), coupled with Israeli popular support for the operation, had a significant strategic effect. It demonstrated the strength and resilience of the IDF and Israeli society even before a single shot had been fired.
- The operation significantly reduced Palestinian terror capabilities by resulting in the arrest and killing of hundreds of terrorists and by destroying workshops used to make explosives.
- Since the operation, the IDF has enjoyed greater freedom of operation in the West

Bank; the terror organizations have been unable to recover and have been forced to invest far more effort and resources on their own defensive and security measures.

- Before the operation, Israel absorbed far more casualties caused by terror cells in the West Bank than after the operation.

The success of Defensive Shield indicates that engaging in offensive operations is far more effective than relying on defensive measures in the war against terror. Arresting terrorists in their own surroundings (“in their beds”) is more effective than waiting for them to approach targets within Israel and catching them there. Often, failure to take the initiative made casualties inevitable—even when bombers were forced to detonate themselves before approaching their designated target (either by alert civilians or by guards posted at the entrances to public places). In this regard, offensive action is even more effective than the security fence.

The extent of the terror threat to Israeli civilians can be illustrated by observing the three geographical areas in which it emerges: first, within the terrorists’ own surroundings—their own homes, villages, and environments (what can be referred to as “the outer ring”); second, the areas between the terrorists’ point of origin and the security fence (the middle ring); and finally, the area between the security fence and potential targets within Israeli territory (the inner ring).

The most effective means of thwarting terror activity is, as stated, pursuing terrorists within their own immediate surroundings, through offensive operations. Several reasons exist why engaging terrorists in the outer ring is more advantageous. Operating in the outer ring enables Israeli forces to control the circumstances of its engagements with the terrorists, and because they have the initiative, often allows them to achieve surprise; it does not endanger civilians directly; and, building on the latter point, in the outer ring no civilians are specifically targeted as noncombat-

² In his victory speech at Bint Jbeil on June 20, 2000, following the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon.

ants. As has become abundantly clear in the past few years, terrorists assume that killing innocents yields greater results than targeting combatants alone. By both attacking terrorists in their own surroundings (and, more broadly, maintaining freedom of movement within enemy territory), Israel ensures its citizens receive the expected level of security all civilians deserve.

All these lessons emphasize the importance of relying first on *offense*, then *the fence*, and finally *defense*. This strategy, wherein the best defense is a good offense, proves just as advantageous in other arenas of the war on terror, specifically the political, economic, psychological, cultural, and legislative arenas. Seizing and maintaining the initiative and maintaining a credible offensive posture is more effective than merely responding to the terrorists’ initiatives.

OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF COUNTERTERRORISM

Intelligence Dominance. The key to fighting terror is superior intelligence. On the defensive front, dissemination of early warning information to all relevant security forces is crucial. Offensively, providing the real-time information needed to interdict terrorists and neutralize their infrastructure is essential.

Intelligence is important in any type of warfare, but the nature of the tactics used by terrorists makes intelligence of crucial importance for counterterrorism operations. Virtually indistinguishable from the civilians among whom they live, low-signature targets like terrorists can move about virtually undetected in populated areas, which also provides them with protection against conventional firepower. Moreover, terrorists may also enjoy the support of the local population, who grant them refuge and cover when warranted, thus complicating Israeli operational capabilities and forcing moral quandaries in an otherwise purely military action.

To this end, to avoid collateral damage, Israel must be capable of operating with precision in highly populated urban areas, specifically honing its capacity to distinguish between terrorists and civilians. This undoubtedly creates formidable intelligence challenges.

Information Dominance. The ability to convey real-time intelligence to the front lines has become crucial to the Israeli operation. To meet this need, C⁴I (command, control, communications, computers, and information) systems need to be capable of delivering raw materials—such as aerial photos or integrated intelligence products—to identify the location and identity of potential targets. Moreover, accurately differentiating between terrorists and civilians will better enable ground commanders and pilots to make quick decisions and perform effectively without worrying about the costs of potential mistakes.

These operational principles are relevant in all forms of warfare, but they merely provide an advantage in the conventional arena, whereas they are an essential part of achieving victory in counterterrorism. My experience indicates that to achieve this level of operational capability, the IDF’s intelligence units (visual, signal, human, and open-source intelligence) must disseminate their products to other intelligence agencies within the government (specifically, the Shin Bet, the Mossad, and the civilian police force) and coordinate activities with them. Only by integrating intelligence units and information from a wide variety of sources can such low-signature targets be successfully interdicted in real time.

Operational Creativity and Flexibility. As low-signature targets, terrorists can also be characterized as fleeting, ephemeral targets; they are liable to disappear by escaping or deceiving Israeli intelligence capabilities. This ability creates a particular challenge for operational units because these targets normally deploy at only a moment’s notice. Therefore,

operational units must always be alert, ready for rapid deployment without prolonged preparation. Units need to be well trained and versatile enough to operate effectively in a variety of circumstances; they need to be able to adapt quickly and seamlessly to new challenges and tactical shifts by the enemy.

Targeting or arresting terrorists is impossible without the element of surprise. Terrorists almost always operate near a civilian population that either supports them (in most cases) or fears them enough to allow them to act unhindered. Either way, Israeli forces seeking to thwart terrorist activity must bear in mind that the civilian population—almost by default—will alert the target to the presence of the Israeli forces if they are discovered. My experience demonstrates that terrorists prefer to reside in densely populated areas, such as refugee camps or in the densely populated traditional quarter or center of Palestinian cities (colloquially referred to as the *casbah*). There, they are aided by lookouts from among the local population (especially among the young) that warn them of any Israeli military activity in the vicinity.

To preserve the element of surprise, commanders of operational units should be creative enough to seamlessly alter their modus operandi as warranted. The need for creativity is especially pressing because of the nature of the terrorist mind-set: they are inherently suspicious of anyone who tries to approach them, and they are quick to apply the lessons learned through previous operations. In many cases terror organizations disseminate these lessons to their supporters, using many different forms of mass communication—including leaflets, internet websites, and even word of mouth—to this effect. The best way to achieve surprise is by assimilating into the local population and operating freely within urban areas. Over the years, the IDF has created several units that specialize in operating under cover among the Palestinians in order to arrest terrorist operatives. Without those units, this type of op-

eration would be unachievable, because surprise is key to its success and regular forces do not have the training necessary to operate under the radar in this area.

Encouraging creativity among commanders on all levels is, as stated, crucial. Also important for senior commanders is a degree of tolerance when dealing with the mistakes of lower-level commanders. Senior officials have a natural tendency to become more deeply involved in the operational aspects of their subordinates after experiencing some level of failure. Within the IDF, however, this situation often leads to senior officers’ taking control of matters best left to those on the ground. This phenomenon must therefore be avoided: as the motto of the IDF’s Special Forces unit goes, “who dares—wins.” In other words, success is built on taking risks, and a single setback should not warrant a return to the defensive mode of operation.

We witnessed a major difference in the way we could conduct operations between the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a result of Operation Defensive Shield: following that operation, Israel significantly altered its strategic approach to the West Bank. Since 2002, the IDF has enjoyed increased freedom of operation; its units are better equipped to engage terrorists through smaller-scale arrest operations (at the squad, platoon, or company level—no larger). In Gaza, however, the situation had become more difficult, prior to the implementation of the Disengagement Plan. The decision to operate from the outside, rather than take control of security from within, necessitated a reliance on targeted killings or military incursions. Because no freedom of movement exists, arrest missions such as those conducted in the West Bank are nearly impossible in Gaza. Any such similar mission in Gaza would require a massive number of troops, far more than the platoon-size operations conducted in the West Bank. The change of tactics and the emphasis on tar-

geted killings also necessitates large-scale aerial support, which increases both the chance of civilian casualties and the potential for condemnation by the international community.

Defensive Measures and Their Role in Security Procedure. Although the best defense is a good offense, no state can ignore the importance of defensive counterterrorist measures, if only to ensure that casualties remain at a minimum. Defensive measures should be appropriate to the perceived threat. And because defensive measures normally require massive resource outlays, the availability of military and economic resources must be considered.

Defensive measures may impose inconveniences or hardships on both sides. While checkpoints, closures, and curfews were necessary measures that saved many Israeli lives, among the Palestinians they created deep resentment, humiliation, and had a harmful impact on the Palestinian economy. The hardships created by these measures and the images they produced, were later exploited by the terrorists and the PA to mobilize local and international support for their cause.

The security fence has proven itself as an effective defensive system. It is composed of a number of components, including sensors, patrol roads, observation points, and rapid reaction forces, in addition to the fence itself (only some 5 percent of the length of the barrier consists of concrete walls, to prevent shooting at targets on the Israeli side). Although this barrier has reduced the number of infiltrations (and homicide-bombings), it is not foolproof. In my experience, any system of human design is subject to human circumvention; terrorists will not stop looking for ways to overcome this obstacle—and they will eventually succeed.

The benefits of the fence are obvious, but it has several costs as well:

- The financial costs: \$2 billion–\$3 billion.
- The political costs: The fence might influence the future borders of Israel and be

seen as a line of withdrawal for which nothing was given in return.

- The public relations costs: Palestinian propaganda has succeeded in vilifying Israel because of the fence, by referring to it as “the wall” (as in “the Berlin Wall”) or “the apartheid wall.”

Striking the Proper Balance between Achieving Security and “Winning Hearts and Minds.” Balance is another important counterterrorism principle. Most policy choices involve a trade-off between achieving maximum security for one’s own people, and winning the “hearts and minds” of the rival population. This dynamic is present at every level of policymaking pertaining to the struggle against terror.

Defensive measures, like closures, checkpoints, or curfews and especially the security fence, serve an important security function but may undermine efforts to gain favor with the rival populace. Similarly, offensive measures, such as targeted killings, may yield short-term benefits but may also deepen hatreds and spur revenge attacks. At the same time, abjuring security measures in order to alleviate the suffering of the rival population entails an enormous amount of risk: the battle for hearts and minds cannot be won overnight, and throughout the process of building the foundation for mutual trust, there will be extremists willing to use violence, even at the expense of their own people’s welfare.

Indeed, on several occasions, humanitarian considerations resulted in degraded security, to the detriment of the Israeli people. One prominent example occurred in early November 2000, when Shimon Peres met with Yasser Arafat to discuss yet another ceasefire proposal. Out of concern for the Palestinian population and in an attempt to gain the confidence of the Palestinian leadership, Israeli troops withdrew from positions surrounding Area A cities on November 2. On November 3, Palestinian Islamic Jihad militants exploded a car

bomb in the crowded Mahane Yehuda marketplace in Jerusalem, killing two civilians. Israeli forces likely would have been able to thwart or deter this attack if they had not withdrawn a day earlier.

In such cases, decisionmakers must find the right balance between contradictory considerations. Sadly, I have found no easy answers. Difficult as it may seem, striking the right balance in each case requires one to use common sense and remain open-minded enough to adapt quickly to each new scenario as it emerges.

Safeguarding Morality in War. Every war poses challenges to morality, and the war against terrorism has unfortunately proven to be particularly challenging in this respect. In conventional war, both sides understand and respect the boundaries between combatants and noncombatants (both physical and theoretical). Israeli counterterrorist operations are designed to keep the civilians of both sides as far from the conflict as humanly possible. Palestinian terrorists, however, prefer to use their own civilians as human shields while deliberately targeting Israeli civilians as part of their operational objectives.

Although terrorists play by a different set of rules, maintaining a high moral standard is vitally important both to solidify our national resolve and to prevail in the battle for the hearts and minds of the civilian population. It is vitally important both to fight and to adhere to moral standards. Western societies are adamant about consistently upholding at all times the values they embody. The military is thus subject to continuous public scrutiny regarding its use of force in light of societal standards of moral conduct. When a society goes to war, it must do its utmost to preserve the nation’s peacetime values. Undermining the domestic legitimacy of the military effort will undoubtedly lead to defeat in the war against terrorism.

In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, soldiers in the IDF must be equipped to make the right

decision under fire, balancing two contradictory values rooted in Israeli society: the biblical command “thou shalt not murder,” on the one hand, and the Talmudic exhortation “whoever comes to kill you, kill him first,” on the other. This balance cannot be achieved by merely memorizing the rules of engagement. Education is needed. As chief of staff, I personally initiated special educational programs and training to provide the Israeli armed forces, especially commanding officers, the values essential to the realities of the battlefield.

Yet education alone is not sufficient. Many methods can instill the proper values within the military ranks; example and inspection by the commanders are needed as well. By example, I mean that a commander must present himself in an exemplary manner—above all forms of reproach—both morally and professionally. A commander who instills confidence in his behavior will ultimately inspire his subordinates to follow his example. By inspection, I mean that defensive operations must be thorough. Soldiers and commanders may lower their alert level as a result of routine and thus increase their vulnerability as potential targets. This problem must be recognized and dealt with accordingly; the professional conduct of subordinates must not be allowed to flag.

What factors make maintaining values so great a challenge?

- Continuous, high-intensity fighting in civilian areas results in what we call a “desensitization” effect among soldiers in combat. This effect is natural—a survival instinct for combatants that allows them to cope more easily with the difficult and complicated situations they face daily.
- The blurring of the boundaries between combatants and civilians in enemy territory prevents Israeli soldiers from readily distinguishing between friend and foe. In addition, when soldiers observe popular support for terrorist groups and constant

indiscriminate hostility toward themselves, they may come to believe that “everyone is the enemy.” Such a mind-set might lead to a justification for collective punishment—because terrorists still walk freely among the local population.

- Terrorists do not hold the same values as Westerners and act in accordance with a different moral standard. Soldiers might question the constraints placed on their actions when faced with an enemy who does not uphold these same moral principles. After all, why should they, who experience intense physical and emotional strain when placed in seemingly endless life-or-death situations, who have lost brothers and comrades in arms, restrain their behavior in accordance with the values and ethical code exemplified by their country, yet disregarded by their opponents?
- Another factor might be the ever-present rationale that “the ends justify the means.” Given the perceived legitimacy of their right to self-defense, soldiers might assume that their actions are beyond reproach: the fact that everything they do is in self-defense and for the sake of survival may act as moral justification to use any means to win the war.
- Dehumanization of the enemy is another factor. It is easy to dehumanize people who are ready to become or support homicide-bombers, and soldiers may be tempted to treat any Palestinian (that is, anyone who supposedly shares this identity) inhumanely. The emotional toll as well—the frustration, anger, and fear that soldiers faced with this routine must endure—creates an atmosphere that might undermine the values and goals democratic societies strive to maintain.

- The soldiers and the lower-level commanders are young and inexperienced. Their youth leads them to naturally gravitate toward a “black and white” view of the world while ignoring the obvious “gray areas.” This factor is another challenge for their more-senior commanders.
- Finally, the Palestinians have shattered every bit of credit and trust granted them. Israel has paid dearly for blindly trusting the word of the Palestinian leadership. They have exploited morality in order to smuggle homicide-bombers, weapons, and explosives by ambulances or by using sick individuals, scheduled to be taken to Israeli hospitals, to smuggle weapons and explosives across the border (or to initiate suicide attacks themselves). The burden on Israeli soldiers—forced to consider the humanitarian situation on the one hand but aware of the heavy price in human life that their own people might pay for their mistake on the other—is very heavy indeed. Either way, soldiers are criticized and even blamed by nongovernmental organizations or the media for not being “humane” in their actions, or criticized by their own people for being “too humane” and not protecting Israeli security.

These factors make the challenge for commanders a formidable one. Education is a basic and necessary component in this domain, but leading by example and daily ongoing inspection by the commanders are crucial. Any misbehavior must be investigated and gravely dealt with. Although the situation is complicated, our orders and norms need not be. Military protocol should be equipped to deal with any eventuality encountered by soldiers and, ideally, eliminate any ambiguity concerning morality in wartime from the front line.

Conclusion: Can Democratic Societies Defeat Terror?

Democratic societies can definitely win the war on terror. We should—and are capable of—eliminating terror tactics entirely as a means to an end. The only way to reach this conclusion is to defeat the terrorists and those who use terrorism, militarily, politically, economically, and ideologically.

Terror has become the primary instrument of those groups who reject the existence of the state of Israel. Globally, it has become the weapon of those radical Islamists intent on defeating the West and imposing a new Caliphate. Any kind of capitulation to terrorist demands would only increase support for terrorism within the international community.

The radical Islamist ideologies and terror tactics threatening the international community today have no real connection to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Iranian Shiite revolution and the establishment of the al-Qaeda umbrella organization resulted from factors entirely unrelated to this conflict. But all of them drew encouragement from the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, the Israeli withdrawals from Lebanon in 2000 and from Gaza in 2005, and Spain's withdrawal from Iraq after the 2004 attacks in Madrid. Radical Islamists perceived those withdrawals as a victory for terrorist tactics and, ultimately, for their ideological positions. Today, Islamist extremists are further energized by the political victories of Hamas in the PA and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. They support the instability in Iraq and the difficulties faced by coalition troops there.

I have learned that despite ideological discrepancies and separate agendas, each organization is affected by the success or failure of others: every terrorist victory inspires and encourages terrorists across the globe; every failure acts as a global deterrent. Thus, a dire

need for global cooperation exists among all those who are faced with the threat of terrorism. One country cannot win its war on terror by pressing another to submit to terrorist demands. *Terror challenges the entire world order.* All nations threatened by terror should unite behind the position that there is no such thing as “legitimate terror.” It means moral consistency with regard to all types of terror the world over because no terrorist group discriminates between combatants and civilians, and no resistance movement can be acceptable that intentionally targets civilians. The civilized world must present a united front on this issue and ensure that this position is understood and implemented by all who desire to be a member of the international community in good standing.

Threat perception and moral consistency are basic conditions for winning against terror; additionally, we need the will and determination to win. In the current conflict between the radical Islamists and the West, the West has undoubtedly superior power, yet it lacks the will and the determination to fight through to the end. By contrast, the radical Islamists do not have superior military might, but they have both the will and the determination to vanquish the West. I fear that this situation is mirrored in the context of Israel versus Palestinian terror.

Any society challenged by terrorists should be ready to sacrifice—never to surrender. Western societies should be ready to absorb casualties and the economic costs of war—never to surrender. Endurance and resilience are more important in this kind of warfare than aircraft, artillery, or any other weapons systems. Unfortunately, when fighting terror, civilians are on the front lines.

All liberal societies must converge politically and coordinate fully to defeat terrorism

across the globe. As Israel has broken down stovepipes between its various security organizations to facilitate information-sharing, so should like-minded democracies cooperate in fighting terror. Terrorists do not stay in one country or in one region. Intelligence cooperation on a worldwide basis is vitally important, as is collaborating physically on counterterrorist missions and interdiction operations.

I have read many articles claiming that “there is no military solution to terror.” I claim that there is no military solution to any war. As the great military strategist Carl von Clausewitz said: “War is the continuation of politics by other means.” In war, the outcome is the outcome of political, economic, diplomatic, and military activity. The military might succeed on the battlefield, yet the political leadership might still surrender because of other considerations. In any type of warfare, coordination between the political, diplomatic, economic, and military branches of the political structure is vital. In the war against terror, as in any war of attrition, coordination among all policymakers, on a daily basis, is most important. In Israel, this war should be managed by the Prime Minister and the government on a daily basis. (Actually, the Israeli political system is not well suited to deal with this challenge.)

With respect to global terrorism and the war against radical Islamists, coordination among political, military, and economic leaders and members of the international community is vital. The targets in this war should include the terrorists, and terrorist facilities, finances, and state sponsors. The international community has the power to defeat these enemies. The key to victory is to fight the terrorists and their supporters by military means, while politically and economically isolating the terrorist organizations and the rogue regimes that support them.

Democracies need to drastically alter their legislation and policies, as well as international law, vis-à-vis the war on terror. Until recently, most democratic legislatures consid-

ered terror a crime best dealt with by the judiciary. After 9/11, legislation in some of these countries changed rapidly, but not enough. Terrorists exploit legislative “lacunae” to their advantage; as a result, they are able to raise the necessary resources for their organizations, to incite others to join terror organizations, and so forth. International law, meanwhile, is still based on the precepts of conventional warfare—and especially the experiences of World War II—and does not take into account how fighting the war against terrorism differs. We must find the proper legal balance between the need to ensure security and the need to ensure basic liberties to all individuals. Although passing through security checks at an airport may seem inconvenient, it is nonetheless a necessary precaution.

The last aspect of achieving victory in the war on terror is what I have found to be the first layer of any terror infrastructure—namely, education. Individuals are not born terrorists; they are raised and indoctrinated into the fold. The Palestinian education system, as well as the Wahhabi schools (*madradas*) in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, promotes the culture of holy war (jihad) and martyrdom (*istishhad*). As long as these institutions glorify dying for the cause—rather than living for it—we have no chance of winning this war. During my years in the IDF, the constant turnover of terrorists presented extremely discouraging prospects; for every head the IDF removed, another soon grew in its place.

The world’s democracies must do their utmost to promote a change in the values prized in Middle East countries: sanctifying life—not death; appreciating knowledge—not ignorance; accepting responsibility for their actions—not blaming others for their failures; allowing happiness in this world—not in a supposed afterlife for martyrs; and believing in their right and ability to be free—not submitting to tyrannical governments.

Changing these values will be a formidable challenge, and although I am not sure that

it is achievable, we all must try together. Democracies should promote and support Middle-Eastern moderates politically and financially. We should support nongovernmental organizations that work toward true development (not those who use this title to attack the West or Israel) and encourage joint projects between the West and the East, to bridge the cultural gap and introduce each side to the wonders of the other’s culture and heritage.

No instant solution or swift victory exists. The challenge for the international community is to speak the truth—not to ignore the threat and not to create false hopes for the sake of short-term political benefit. Terror must be defeated politically, economically, militarily, and, more important, ideologically. We, citizens of the world’s democracies, can succeed, and we have no other choice if we are to survive—both as individuals and as free nations.

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