

Policy Focus

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Special Studies
on Palestinian Politics
and the Peace Process

The West Bank Fence:
A Vital Component in Israel's
Strategy of Defense

Doron Almog



The Washington Institute
for Near East Policy

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Don't ever take a fence down until you know the reason why it was put up.

—John F. Kennedy

About the Author

Maj. Gen. Doron Almog, a 2003 visiting military fellow at The Washington Institute, began his distinguished service in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in 1969. Throughout a military career that has spanned four wars, he gained tremendous experience in combat and special clandestine operations in the ongoing fight against terrorism, including the dramatic July 1976 rescue of Israeli hostages in Entebbe, Uganda.

As a para-brigade commander, he led troops through two intensive years (1988–1990) of battle against Hizballah bases in southern Lebanon. In 1993, he commanded IDF forces in Gaza tasked with fighting Palestinian terrorism while simultaneously withdrawing from approximately 80 percent of that territory. In 2000–2003, he served as head of the IDF's Southern Command, conducting a robust campaign against terrorism that combined defensive and offensive operations stretching across the entire Gaza Strip. As a result of his efforts, the Southern Command was able to achieve an unprecedented level of containment, preventing every single terrorist attempt to breach the security barrier surrounding Gaza.

In addition to his extensive accomplishments on the ground, General Almog was appointed head of the Doctrine and Training Division at General Headquarters in 1996. There he established annual, strategy-defining doctrinal seminars, as well as a simulation game system that has become a fundamental tool in strategic operations and one of the IDF's essential decisionmaking components. General Almog holds a master's degree in business administration from Tel Aviv University and a master's degree in international relations from Haifa University.

The general is married and has two children. The father of a brain-damaged child, he serves as chairman of the Aleh Negev project, a rehabilitative special-needs village currently under construction in southern Israel. Aleh is a national organization committed to providing a hopeful future for brain-damaged children throughout Israel (see www.aleh.org/eng/index_eng.htm).

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*Doron Almog
March 2004*

Executive Summary

During the mid-1990s, Israel constructed an electronic fence around the Gaza Strip in the wake of a military redeployment mandated by the Oslo Accords. As part of this process, the Palestinian Authority was given jurisdiction over most of Gaza, including a one-kilometer-wide security perimeter established near the fence. This perimeter was never strictly monitored, however, and in late 2000, most of the Gaza fence was demolished by Palestinian aggression following the eruption of the so-called “al-Aqsa intifada.”

Soon thereafter, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Southern Command attempted to uncover the reasons behind the barrier’s operational failure. The lessons learned from that assessment guided Israel’s reconstruction of the Gaza fence in 2001 and helped the IDF achieve unprecedented containment of terrorist infiltration from Gaza.

In the West Bank, however, suicide bombers and other terrorists continue to infiltrate Israeli cities with relative ease, as they have done throughout the past three and a half years of conflict. These conditions inspired the establishment of a “seam zone” in the West Bank based on the defensive model that has succeeded in Gaza—that is, a multi-component defensive layout that includes an electronic fence as the primary barrier.

In order to replicate the success of the Gaza fence in the West Bank, however, all of the essential elements of the Gaza defensive model must be implemented as a package, without any exceptions. Although the fence is a vital component of the defensive strategy that the IDF has sought to employ in its continued war against Palestinian terrorism, even a strong, well-designed barrier can be infiltrated as a result of various unavoidable factors (e.g., inclement weather, peculiarities in terrain, human error). Hence, a comprehensive defensive model is needed to help compensate for these potential failures in the fence itself.

Essential Components

When the Gaza fence was reconstructed, the IDF buttressed it with an Israeli-monitored “security buffer zone” and established new

rules of engagement to enhance its effectiveness. In addition, the military implemented a variety of important new security features such as enhanced interception capabilities, improved high-tech sensors, overlapping observation posts, and a continuous monitoring and videotaping system. This defensive array was thronged with professional, motivated Israeli troops who could combine the new security features with enhanced strategic, operational, and tactical intelligence capabilities in order to thwart any terrorist attempt to cross into Israel from Gaza.

Although most of these components have been implemented in the seam zone currently under construction in the West Bank, two key elements have been omitted: bulldozed security buffer zones and special rules of engagement for those military personnel responsible for monitoring the fence and its environs. Terrorists have been quick to exploit these omissions, and Israeli civilians have consequently paid a heavy price. In order to protect its citizens—including those in large West Bank settlements—Israel must assert control over the vital buffer areas needed to maximize the effectiveness of the fence (a measure sometimes referred to as “territorial overcharge”). In addition, the IDF must implement rules of engagement that give soldiers in the field increased authority to make timely decisions.

International Law

Although the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is asymmetrical, the scale and intensity of Palestinian terrorist violence justify the application of international laws of war. Under these laws, civilian areas that are used for military purposes lose their immunity and become legitimate targets for seizure or destruction. Those designing the West Bank seam zone should assume that terrorists will continue to exploit the proximity of Palestinian and Israeli infrastructure in order to launch attacks against Israelis through a variety of means. The only feasible way for the IDF to prevent—or at least reduce—such attacks is to deprive terrorists of convenient territorial platforms from which to mount them. The military has sought to carry out this strategy in the most humane manner possible, taking all relevant factors into consideration in order to avoid causing harm to Palestinian civilians or undue disruption to their daily lives.

Economic Improvement

Israel must look beyond direct security measures in crafting a comprehensive defensive strategy for the West Bank. Economic measures in particular could play a key role, counterbalancing Israeli military actions and helping both sides maintain a measure of peace and stability in a time of crisis. Indeed, one of the most important lessons that the IDF has learned in Gaza is the necessity of fostering an “economy of conflict” along the Israeli-Palestinian border—that is, viable economic cooperation even in the absence of a negotiated solution to the conflict.

The Erez Industrial Zone at the northern border of Gaza epitomizes the potential benefits of this sort of cooperation. Unilateral and joint business ventures within this zone employ thousands of Palestinians and hundreds of Israelis, and these ventures have remained relatively stable even during recent periods of local and international economic crisis. Much of the zone’s success can be attributed to the IDF’s stringent security measures and to the higher wages that Erez’s Palestinian workers receive relative to those in Gaza proper.

For the benefit of Israelis and Palestinians alike, the Erez economic model should be duplicated along various border areas in both southern Gaza and the West Bank. From this perspective, the dearth of buffer zones in the West Bank constitutes not only a serious security risk, but also an economic impediment. Indeed, there is a direct correlation between the seam zone project and the health of the Palestinian economy, which remains greatly dependent on its Israeli counterpart. Ideally, the West Bank seam zone will include cooperative economic zones similar to Erez, as well as smoothly functioning corridors facilitating the import and export of goods, all of which would likely improve the daily lives of Palestinians and curtail the black market activity that aids terrorists. Although such economic measures cannot erase the animosity between the two peoples, they can soften the cumulative impact of longstanding hostility and increase the influence of Palestinian moderates.

Terrorist Adaptation

The West Bank seam zone project must take other long-term factors into account as well. For example, if the IDF applies the lessons it has

learned in Gaza and drastically improves its terrorist containment in the West Bank, one can safely assume that militants there will attempt to bypass the associated security measures by developing new tactics and technologies. As in Gaza, the use of indirect weapons (e.g., rockets and mortars fired from Palestinian territory into Israel) would most likely be the first tactic implemented, in addition to increased direct attacks against military and civilian targets inside the West Bank itself. The IDF must develop a military response to this probable scenario.

Implications for the Political Process

By thwarting terrorists before they are able to kill innocents, the IDF can give negotiators greater flexibility in proposing peace initiatives. In doing so, the military would broaden the potential for political negotiations even as it enhanced its ability to safeguard the Israeli people from terrorism.

Yet, even if political negotiations resume and eventually result in the establishment of a Palestinian state, the forces of extremist Islamic ideology would not necessarily be deterred from fostering new waves of terrorism well into the future. The Israeli-Palestinian political process—which includes the Quartet’s visionary Roadmap—depends on the substantial support of a strong defensive system in the West Bank, one capable of foiling terrorist attempts to infiltrate Israel. Indeed, the implementation of a new strategy in the West Bank reflects renewed Israeli determination to undertake significant defensive steps on the ground—steps that, unfortunately, were neglected in the effort to achieve a peaceful solution in a purely political context. The seam zone project is among the most important of these steps.

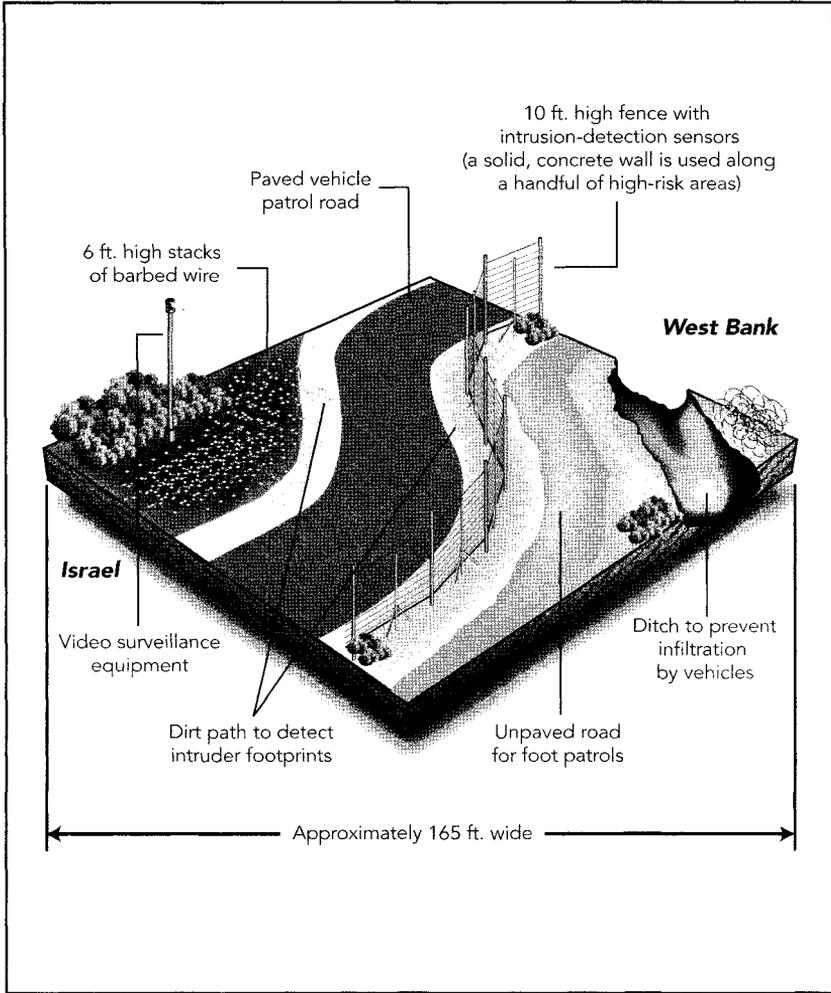
A Vital Need

Over the past several months, the West Bank seam zone has been the subject of much international and regional criticism, even from Israel’s allies. From the Israeli perspective, however, this is a time of war. Demographic and economic realities have become more pressing than ever, and no Palestinian constituency seems willing to enforce obedience to a single, disciplined authority dedicated to dismantling terrorist organizations. Hence, Israel faces a choice between continuing its war against Palestinian terrorism without a defensive shield in the West

Bank (in other words, suffering casualties without an effective solution) or shaping new strategic terms that support long-term Israeli interests.

The mission of containing Palestinian terrorism now rests squarely on Israel's shoulders. In accordance with its legitimate right to defend itself, the state of Israel must take radical, yet appropriate, steps to prevent terrorists from infiltrating its population centers—terrorists whose *raison d'être* is to undermine the state's very existence. Comprehensive defensive and offensive capabilities are indispensable if Israel is to confront terrorists wherever they are, impede their activities, and deter their instigators. For the time being, the security aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must take precedence over political issues such as settlements, borders, and refugees.

The Israeli Security Fence



Introduction

Since September 2000, Israel has been fighting a furious wave of Palestinian terrorism, one that has resulted in approximately 900 Israeli deaths, tens of thousands of casualties, countless bereaved families, an economy in deep recession, and an abyss of credibility between two wounded peoples. More than any other factor, this “index of blood”—that is, the sheer number of fatalities and their totally unpredictable nature—has afflicted both the spirit and the economy of Israel. Unfortunately, no clear end to the conflict is in sight.

Close scrutiny of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank shows that both of the densely populated areas give rise to and harbor a considerable amount of terrorist activity. Perhaps surprisingly, Gaza has been the more violent of the two territories. For example, from September 2000 (when the current wave of Palestinian violence began) to January 2004, approximately 55 percent of the terrorist attacks launched against Israelis occurred within Gaza.¹ During this same period, however, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) thwarted all of the hundreds of attempts by Gaza terrorists to infiltrate Israel and perpetrate attacks in the heart of the country. Attaining this strategic goal of 100 percent containment was the IDF Southern Command’s greatest achievement during the first three and a half years of conflict.² Such containment was made possible by the effective, strategic use of well-organized defensive operations.

Although Israel’s human losses in the area under the Southern Command’s jurisdiction have been heavy, they have amounted to less than 10 percent of overall Israeli losses since September 2000.³ Moreover, of the eighty-four Israelis killed in this sector, fifty-eight were soldiers. The fact that nearly 70 percent of the fatalities were military rather than civilian indicates that, in most cases, members of the Southern Command gave their lives in order to save civilians. Although these military losses are not inconsequential, it must be remembered that the supreme task of the military is to protect the nation and its strategic assets with minimal loss of life.

Current conditions in the West Bank offer a stark contrast to the Southern Command’s achievements in Gaza. Given the ease with which

suicide bombers infiltrate Israeli cities from the West Bank, the IDF must implement an improved military defensive system that will prevent terrorists from killing Israeli civilians. Accordingly, the Israeli defensive model around Gaza has inspired the building of a security fence, or “seam zone,” for the West Bank. The terms “security fence” and “seam zone” are used interchangeably in much of the public discourse regarding the West Bank project.⁴ From the IDF’s perspective, both terms describe a multilayered security zone incorporating an electronic fence as the primary barrier. (All components of the project will be discussed in this paper.) From the outset, the seam zone project has generated a great deal of public debate in Israel; bitter opposition from the Palestinians and from European governments; and criticism from Israel’s staunchest ally, the United States.

The purpose of this paper is to explain the military need for the seam zone as a vital component of the overall, multilayered defensive strategy that the IDF has sought to employ in its continued fight against Palestinian terrorism. This strategy stems from the Israeli government’s basic duty to ensure the security of its citizens. The author does not analyze the political aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict such as settlements, borders, and refugees, as these issues can be resolved only during future political negotiations. Moreover, it would be inappropriate for a general on active duty to address such purely political topics. Instead, the chapters that follow approach defense as a professional issue, focusing on the lessons learned from the defensive strategy employed in Gaza; how these lessons should be implemented in the West Bank; the main obstacles to, and criticisms of, the West Bank seam zone project; and whether Israel should continue implementing all elements of this project.

This professional approach is intended to assess the optimal means of sharply reducing terrorist infiltration from the West Bank into Israel. Once such a reduction has been achieved, the conditions will be present for reasonable coexistence between the two peoples.

Notes

1. Israel Defense Forces, “Total of Attacks in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Home Front since September 2000,” updated January 6, 2004. Available online (www.idf.il/daily_statistics/english/2.doc).

2. The phrase “100 percent containment” is used here in accordance with IDF Southern Command military terminology, which defines containment as confining the fight against Gaza-based terrorism to the Gaza Strip proper. Long-range terrorist attacks emanating from Gaza (e.g., rocket attacks against Israel proper) will be discussed later in the paper.
3. Unless otherwise noted, all information in this paper regarding military incidents, terrorist attacks, and casualty statistics was obtained from the IDF Southern Command Archive.
4. Some have objected to the use of the term “fence,” instead calling the primary barrier a “wall.” Yet, walls are used along only 8.5 kilometers of the barrier’s completed portions, in highly populated areas where Israelis working near the barrier itself would otherwise be in constant danger from sniper fire.

Strategic Overview

The Israeli military's overarching operational concept is normatively derived from the strategic goals and directives of the democratically elected Israeli government. From a professional standpoint, military doctrine serves as the basis for all IDF operations and tactics. The IDF's military doctrine is a collection of principles and wisdom gained from deep analysis of wide strategic conditions and enemy threats. Such analysis is ongoing and is influenced by variables such as relevant historical considerations, enemy military capabilities, and lessons learned from the art of war. Indeed, the evolutionary nature of IDF military doctrine facilitates improvement in methods and tactics even as it yields results in the field.

Currently, the IDF's encompassing operational framework is a strategy of defense. This strategy emphasizes the use of terrain, forces, time, space, and other factors that influence the outcome of the IDF's overall mission. With regard to terrain, the IDF emphasizes depth, which provides the flexibility and maneuverability that the military needs in order to reorganize, redeploy, and retool tactics and strategies in a manner allowing for the most successful force layout possible. In other words, the IDF's evolving strategy of defense—of which the West Bank seam zone should be regarded as a vital part—must be understood in its wider context and not simply as a linear defensive layout. It is “cumulative deterrence,” an approach that encompasses a variety of defensive and offensive foiling measures.¹

As opposed to a strategy of offense, the IDF's strategy of defense does not concern itself with conquering Palestinian territory or society. Rather, it focuses on countering Palestinian terrorism. The goal of Israel's fight against terrorism is to prevent terrorists from realizing

their contemptible desire to murder as many Israeli citizens as possible. Because these extremists are harbored inside the Palestinian territories, Israel must mount an enduring intelligence effort that encompasses the entire Israeli-Palestinian arena. Such an effort would provide IDF troops in the field with timely warnings, helping them to thwart terrorist attacks.

Israel's posture of defense stands in sharp contrast to the Palestinian terrorist doctrine of targeting innocents. The IDF has no intention of harming innocent Palestinians, although this tragic consequence does occur—inevitably and inadvertently—from time to time. Yet, Palestinian terrorists have embraced a strategy of attacking Israeli civilians within Israel proper, preferring such “soft” targets to attacks against Israeli soldiers and civilians in the West Bank and Gaza. Since September 2000, the IDF has demonstrated the effectiveness of its robust defensive capabilities in preventing Gaza terrorists from attacking targets within Israel. During this same period, however, the serious weaknesses in Israel's West Bank defensive capabilities have been exposed. Indeed, the IDF's most pressing professional challenge is to improve its defensive posture in the West Bank.

From the perspective of the Israeli people, this is a time of war. (For a discussion of the Israeli legal perspective on the status of the conflict, see chapter 3.) No progress is currently being made in efforts to resume political negotiations, and even if it were, improved military capabilities would remain essential to preventing extremists from torpedoing such negotiations. In the past, even a single suicide bombing has been sufficient to reverse positive momentum and derail attempts to get the political process back on track. Such incidents have produced an endless spiral of action and reaction, a reality that serves to reinforce the importance of continually fighting Palestinian terrorism. The irony in which Israelis are killed while peace talks are being pursued can no longer be tolerated. By thwarting terrorists before they are able to kill innocents, the IDF can actually give negotiators greater flexibility in proposing peace initiatives. The military can thereby broaden the potential for political talks even as it strengthens its ability to safeguard the Israeli people from terrorism.

The Gaza defensive model has already achieved a more or less effective equilibrium between offensive and defensive capabilities, a

balance that has allowed it to prevent terrorist infiltration. In contrast, the IDF's defensive mechanism in the West Bank has been readily exploited by suicide bombers and other terrorists. The chapters that follow analyze the IDF's defensive weaknesses—primarily at the boundary between Israel and the West Bank, but also within Gaza proper—in an effort to improve long-term results against Palestinian terrorism.

Note

1. For more on the principle of cumulative deterrence, see Doron Almog, "Israel's Deterrence Strategy As a Model for Accumulating Deterrence" (a research paper published by Haifa University in September 1996; in September 1999, the paper was awarded the Tshetshik Prize for Strategic Studies on Israel's Security from Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies).

Lessons from Gaza

In order to define necessary conditions for the successful implementation of the Gaza defensive model in the West Bank, one must understand why this model has succeeded. In the mid-1990s, Israel built an electronic fence around the Gaza Strip following a military redeployment stipulated in the Gaza-Jericho Agreement, which was signed in Cairo in May 1994 as the first implementation phase of the Oslo Accords. In that phase, Israel ceded control over approximately 80 percent of Gaza to the Palestinian Authority. The construction of the sixty-kilometer electronic fence was an integral part of the new defensive concept that arose out of these arrangements.

During the first two months of Palestinian violence that erupted in September 2000 (an outbreak that the Palestinians call “the al-Aqsa intifada”), the Gaza fence was largely demolished by Palestinian aggression. Nearly thirty kilometers of the barrier were dismantled and stolen, and the rest was heavily damaged (particularly the vulnerable electronic accessories), representing a total loss of approximately \$25 million. As a result of this development, the Gaza defensive system lost one of its most valuable components.

In December 2000, the IDF Southern Command assessed the reasons for the fence’s operational failure, the extent of the damage, and the circumstances behind it. The lessons learned from that assessment enabled the Southern Command to improve its overall defensive concept in the area under its jurisdiction. A primary consideration in constructing a new model was that no matter how strong the electronic fence’s defensive layout, partial infiltration could occur due to various unavoidable factors such as inclement weather or peculiarities in terrain. Hence, additional features would

be needed to help compensate for potential failures in the fence itself.

At the heart of the improved Gaza fence, reconstructed in 2001, was a defined “security buffer zone,” or one-kilometer fence perimeter.¹ The terrain within this perimeter was bulldozed in order to enable better observation of the Palestinian side of the fence. In addition, the IDF established many important security features, including enhanced interception capabilities, a variety of high-tech sensors, a continuous monitoring and videotaping system, and overlapping observation posts (which enabled Israeli troops to see as far as five kilometers into Gaza during the day or at night). Of course, the Gaza border was also thronged with professional, motivated troops who could use these new features to thwart any terrorist attempt to cross into Israel.

Once these improved operational and tactical intelligence capabilities were combined with enhanced strategic intelligence and new rules of engagement, the Southern Command was able to rapidly process and act upon essential information regarding terrorist movement in and around the new Gaza defensive layout. The resultant synergistic effect helped the military achieve the previously unreachable goal of 100 percent prevention of terrorist infiltration. Indeed, hundreds of attempted infiltrations were thwarted inside the buffer zone before the terrorists ever reached the electronic fence. In only eight instances between June 2001 and June 2003 were terrorists able to penetrate the fence for short distances before being intercepted by the IDF.

In order to replicate this kind of success in the West Bank, all of the essential elements of the Gaza defensive layout must be implemented as a package, without any exceptions. These elements are as follows:

- a suitable defensive strategy;
- strategic, operational, and tactical intelligence capabilities;
- an electronic fence;
- a bulldozed security buffer zone;
- “alarmed” high-tech sensors and sophisticated interception capabilities combined with “dumb” delaying obstacles such as walls, barbed wire, and ditches;
- a system of electronically enhanced observation posts;

- special rules of engagement; and
- professional, motivated troops to carry out the mission.

Most of these components have already been implemented in the new West Bank seam zone project.² Yet, two key components have been omitted from completed portions: the bulldozed security buffer zone discussed above and special rules of engagement.

The IDF's new rules of engagement in Gaza give troops in the field significant autonomy in making key decisions. For example, soldiers have the authority to open fire based on their own assessment of a particular threat. Yet, under the old rules of engagement still employed in much of the West Bank, soldiers must obtain permission from the higher echelons of the IDF before taking such action. These authorities are usually not present in the field, creating a communication delay that negatively affects soldiers' reaction time to potential threats.

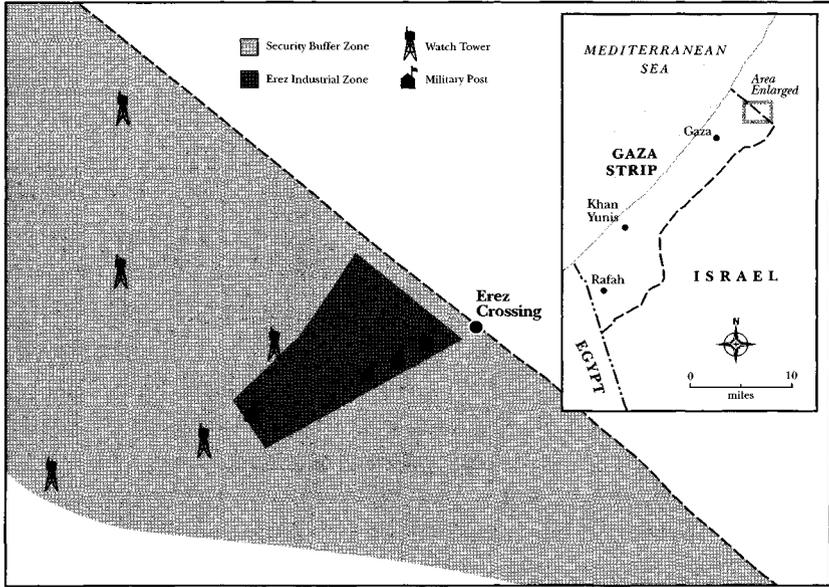
Terrorists have been quick to exploit the omission of a security buffer zone and special rules of engagement in the new West Bank seam zone, and Israeli civilians have consequently paid a heavy price. Drawing on the assumption that the fight against Palestinian terrorism will be a long-term one, the IDF must implement all components of the Gaza defensive model in the West Bank. In the case of security buffer zones, Israel should assert control over vital land that is needed to protect the most precious resource of any democratic state: its citizens. The military should also implement rules of engagement allowing soldiers on the West Bank front to make certain timely decisions on their own authority. Any hesitation on implementing either of these defensive components will result in the Israeli people paying an even higher price than they already have.

Gaza's Economy of Conflict

There is a direct correlation between the West Bank seam zone project and the health of the Palestinian economy. For example, the absence of such a zone in the West Bank increases the prospects that a black market economy will continue to thrive at the border, to the detriment of the legitimate Palestinian economy. Once fully implemented, the seam zone will also reduce the use of the black market as an illegal channel of material support for Palestinian terrorists.

Another important lesson that the Southern Command has learned from its experiences in Gaza is the necessity of fostering an "economy

The Erez Industrial Zone



of conflict” along the Israeli-Palestinian border—that is, viable economic cooperation even in the absence of a negotiated solution to the conflict. Such an arrangement could serve as a counterbalance to military activities and help both parties maintain a measure of peace and stability in a time of crisis.

The Erez Industrial Zone epitomizes the potential benefits of this sort of cooperation, constituting an island of sanity and a message of hope amid the violence. Located within the one-kilometer security buffer zone at the northern boundary of Gaza, the industrial zone contains nearly 190 workshops and low-tech factories, half of them joint Israeli-Palestinian ventures. In September 2000, when the latest wave of Palestinian aggression emerged, 3,000 Palestinian laborers were employed at Erez. By June 2003, that number had jumped to nearly 5,000. Indeed, the Palestinian workforce in the zone demonstrated constant growth throughout 2002, even during a time of deep economic crisis at both the local and global levels.

This joint undertaking is perhaps the best example of how economic cooperation can emerge between Israelis and Palestinians based

on an understanding of common interests. Much of the success of the Erez Industrial Zone can be attributed to two key factors:

1. The IDF's capacity to establish a strong security envelope around the area, including stringent checks on every Palestinian worker and defensive measures such as electromagnetic gates, X-ray machines, walls, delaying fences, and checkpoints.
2. The creation of unique economic conditions for Erez's Palestinian workers, who receive an average daily wage of approximately 100 shekels—much higher than the maximum wage of workers in Gaza proper (albeit lower than the minimum wage in Israel; Israel's minimum-wage laws do not extend to Palestinian workers at Erez).

These factors, and the Erez economic model in general, could be duplicated along various border areas in both southern Gaza and the West Bank, for the benefit of Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Yet, the West Bank's current dearth of systematically maintained security buffer zones makes it impossible to implement the Erez model along the West Bank fence, constituting a significant economic impediment. It must be remembered that the Palestinian economy has remained completely reliant on its Israeli counterpart throughout the course of the ongoing hostilities. Israel is the prime exporter of basic goods to the West Bank and Gaza in large part because Arab states will not supply the Palestinians with many important staples, including food and water. Accordingly, the Palestinian economy depends on the constant flow of Israeli goods and materials into the territories, and the ban on Palestinian workers inside Israel has only exacerbated this dependence. As long as the volume of aggression is high, the Israeli public will not tolerate the return of Palestinian workers to Israel proper. Many Israeli businesses are more likely to hire cheap workers from Eastern Europe or Asia. Moreover, many Israelis remain afraid to conduct business with Palestinians, exacerbating the difficulties that the latter face in securing financial deals. Given the accumulation of animosity and fear on both sides, secured industrial zones such as Erez have become the only safe, stable location in which the two sides can do business.

Because secured industrial zones can also provide key corridors facilitating the flow of goods between Israel and the Palestinian territories, increasing the functionality of these corridors would improve the

daily lives of Palestinians and enhance Palestinian economic prospects, not to mention Israel's own economy. Israeli exports to the territories have been declining steadily, from 8 billion shekels in 2000 to 4.6 billion shekels in 2002.³ This decline was caused in part by heightened border security measures implemented in the wake of escalating hostilities. In particular, Israeli authorities were forced to check goods more carefully in order to prevent the smuggling of arms, ammunition, explosives, and other forbidden materials.

In light of all these factors, additional secured industrial zones should be created based on the Erez model, and existing zones should be improved. Given the volatile situation between the two peoples on the one hand, and the potential power of economic cooperation on the other, it is imperative that Israelis and Palestinians make a meaningful effort to improve their chances for coexistence and create a counterweight to terrorism and extremist tendencies. This effort must be integral, complementary, and practical, with a focus on the most densely populated Palestinian areas (e.g., Jenin, Tulkarem, Qalqilya, Rafah). Establishing industrial zones in these areas could ease the impact of IDF efforts to build security buffer zones there, while improving these local economic environments could in turn bolster the overall Palestinian economy.

It should be pointed out that some Palestinian extremists oppose all links with the state of Israel, including economic ties. From their perspective, Palestinians must completely detach themselves from Israel by establishing economic relationships with Arab states such as Jordan and Egypt. This view is at the heart of the many mortar and suicide bombing attacks directed against the Erez Industrial Zone and other areas of Israeli-Palestinian cooperation—attacks that have killed Palestinians as well as Israelis.⁴ Despite these intensive terrorist strikes, the number of Palestinian workers at Erez has continued to increase as described, highlighting the effectiveness of establishing secured industrial zones in which joint economic ventures can be initiated.

Economic measures cannot erase the animosity between the two peoples. They can, however, soften the cumulative effect of longstanding hostility and increase the influence of Palestinian moderates. Because it will allow for simultaneous improvements in the security and economic sectors, a healthy economy of conflict is a necessary complement to the West Bank seam zone project.

‘Designing Around’: The Terrorist Response in Gaza

The IDF’s complete containment of Gaza terrorism forced Palestinian militants there to pursue new tactics in an effort to circumvent improved security measures, a phenomenon known as “designing around.”⁵ These tactics include the following:

- a sharp increase in the use of indirect fire, including mortars and rockets (mainly Qassam rockets);
- a sharp increase in the development and use of large explosive charges and booby traps; and
- a focused effort on Israeli targets inside Gaza, including settlements, military outposts, convoys, and lone vehicles.

The use of indirect fire. The Palestinian use of indirect fire to attack Israel from Gaza was inspired by Hizballah’s tactic of launching katyusha rockets from southern Lebanon against targets in northern Israel. Like Hizballah, Palestinian militants believe that indirect weapons are tools of terror capable of counterbalancing Israeli military force. For example, in February 2002, Abdel Aziz Rantisi, a Hamas leader in Gaza, stated, “We know that we won’t conquer Israel by the use of [Qassam rockets] but at least we’ll bring a lot of suffer[ing] and damage to the Israeli citizens and manipulate the Israeli government to decide about withdrawal, exactly like [Hizballah] manipulated them in South Lebanon.”⁶

Since September 2000, Palestinian terrorists have fired more than 2,000 mortars and 200 Qassam rockets toward Israeli targets in both Gaza and Israel.⁷ Fortunately, only one Israeli soldier has so far been killed in these attacks,⁸ and property damage has been marginal, affecting only a few Israeli communities. Approximately 98 percent of the mortar strikes were directed at Israeli targets inside Gaza (20 percent of these strikes were aimed at military installations, while the remainder targeted settlements). In contrast, approximately 90 percent of the Qassam rocket strikes were launched against Israeli targets outside Gaza. Indeed, the Qassam rocket was developed as a direct response to the 100 percent containment achieved by the Gaza security fence and the associated defensive measures implemented with its reconstruction. While the Palestinian mortar has a maximum range of about three kilometers, the Qassam III launcher can reach approximately ten kilometers.

Qassam rockets have not yet been used on the West Bank front because of the ease with which suicide bombers are able to enter Israel from that territory. The tremendous lethality of the suicide bomber is greater than that of the Qassam rocket, and the former mode of attack is so far responsible for most Israeli deaths in the ongoing Palestinian violence. Rantisi himself has argued that the suicide bomber is the Palestinians' only effective answer to Israel's F-16 fighters, Apache helicopters, Merkava tanks, and sophisticated missiles.⁹

The use of large explosive charges. More than 600 explosive charges were detonated against IDF targets in the first three years of the current hostilities. Of these charges, approximately 100 weighed more than twenty kilograms. As a result of attacks involving these weapons, the IDF lost four tanks and twenty-one soldiers. In fact, nearly 20 percent of Israeli losses in Gaza during this period were attributed to large, home-made explosive charges. Palestinian terrorists began focusing such attacks on military targets in Gaza primarily because of the Southern Command's successes in containing other forms of terrorism.

Large explosives are readily available in the West Bank as well. There, however, they are used primarily for arming suicide bombers bound for Israel. It is safe to assume that waves of suicide bombers would have been deployed with such explosives on the Gaza front some time ago had the IDF defensive system not achieved 100 percent containment there. Despite the tremendous pain and loss of life caused by large Palestinian explosives, it is important to emphasize the IDF's successes in finding and neutralizing most of these charges before real harm is done by them.

Focused attacks on Israeli targets inside Gaza. In the wake of the Southern Command's successful containment efforts, increased terrorist attacks of various sorts against Israeli targets in Gaza have been responsible for the deaths of twenty-six Israeli civilians and thirty-seven soldiers (in addition to the above-mentioned single soldier killed by indirect fire and the twenty-one soldiers killed by explosive charges). Attacks against civilians have included the following: the murder of a young Israeli couple in E'elei-Sinai on October 2, 2001; the murder of two elderly Jewish men at prayer in the Netsarim Synagogue on March 29, 2002; the murder of five Israeli students (all nineteen years old) at the Atzmona Boarding School on July 7, 2002; and the murder of nine

Israelis in attacks on homebound convoys (eight separate attacks between November 2000 and December 2002 on roads near Rafah, Kisufim Passage, and E'elei-Sinai). Despite the heavy toll in Israeli lives, these incidents represented only 2 percent of planned terrorist attacks in Gaza; Israeli forces thwarted the other 98 percent.

Potential Terrorist Adaptation in the West Bank

If the IDF applies the lessons it has learned from Gaza and drastically improves its terrorist containment in the West Bank, one can safely assume that terrorists there will attempt to bypass the associated security measures by developing new tactics and technologies. As in Gaza, the use of indirect weapons would most likely be the first tactic implemented, in addition to increased direct attacks against military and civilian targets inside the West Bank. The IDF must develop a military response to this probable scenario.

The strategy of defense should guide the military's efforts to confront terrorist adaptation. Static defenses for settlements, army bases, and outposts should be improved, as should dynamic defenses along Israeli driving routes and other terrain. At the same time, Israeli forces in the West Bank should develop overlapping battlefield and strategic intelligence in order to improve the flow of critical information regarding terrorist intentions and activities. Indeed, future challenges obligate the military to continually adapt its tactics, techniques, operational concepts, battlefield procedures, and technology. By doing so, the IDF can achieve its military objectives and create an ideal equilibrium between defensive and offensive strategies.

Notes

1. Although the 1994 Gaza-Jericho Agreement had previously established a one-kilometer security perimeter to be controlled by the Palestinian police, that perimeter was never strictly monitored.
2. The Israeli Ministry of Defense has created a website called "Israel's Security Fence" containing a detailed outline of the project (see www.securityfence.mod.gov.il/Pages/ENG/default.htm).
3. Office of the Israeli Coordination and Liaison Administration, "PNA Economic Tendency" (in Hebrew), October 24, 2002.
4. In the Erez Industrial Zone alone, the IDF lost a total of ten soldiers in four different terrorist attacks (on April 12 and 20, 2002; June 8, 2003; and January

14, 2004). Moreover, a suicide bombing on June 21, 2002, killed three Palestinian workers in the zone and slightly wounded one Israeli soldier. That attack set two precedents: Palestinian workers became victims of a Palestinian Islamic Jihad suicide bombing, and victimized Palestinian families demanded reparations from a suicide bomber's family. More recently, on April 15, 2003, two Arab Israelis were killed in a terrorist attack at Karni Passage.

5. See Alexander George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 38–45, 519–522; Alexander George and Richard Smoke, “Deterrence and Foreign Policy,” *World Politics* 41 (January 1989), p. 177; and Janice Gross Stein, “Calculation, Miscalculation, and Conventional Deterrence: The View from Cairo,” in *Psychology and Deterrence*, ed. Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), pp. 34–59.
6. Abdel Aziz Rantisi, telephone interview, al-Jazeera, February 19, 2002. Remarks translated by the IDF Southern Command.
7. The targeting protocol for these weapons is statistically based; they are aimed at general areas, not precise targets.
8. On November 24, 2001, Sgt. Barak Madmon (res.) was killed in Kfar Darom by a direct hit from an eighty-one-millimeter mortar.
9. Abdel Aziz Rantisi, telephone interview, Arab News Network (ANN), November 17, 2002.

The West Bank Seam Zone Project

Tradition holds that the fool is doomed to repeat failures while the wise will learn from them and succeed. Accordingly, the IDF put forth much effort toward assessing the operational failure of the Gaza security fence in late 2000. As discussed in chapter 2, the most crucial element behind this failure was the lack of a strictly defined and effectively maintained security buffer zone to complement the electronic fence. This fact became readily apparent once the IDF Southern Command began to achieve remarkable success with the implementation of the new buffer zone in Gaza. Israel must now decide how it will apply this lesson in the West Bank.

The decision necessitates a broader view of the strategic situation that has emerged since September 2000. Israel must make fresh observations regarding both its prolonged war against terrorism and the future of Israeli-Palestinian coexistence. Such observations will foster greater clarity concerning several key security issues, including the prospect that the Palestinian Authority will not dismantle terrorist organizations; the limitations on Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation; and the Palestinians' long-term view of statehood in light of their deep-rooted culture of "al-Nakba."¹ Above all, the IDF must heed the call of the Israeli people for better defensive measures against terrorism. The implementation of a new defensive strategy in the West Bank reflects a renewed Israeli determination to undertake significant steps on the ground—steps that, unfortunately, were neglected in the effort to achieve a peaceful solution in a purely political context. The seam zone project is among the most important of these steps.

In light of the enormous monetary investment in the West Bank seam zone and the growing criticism surrounding its implementation, the IDF must define the project's basic assumptions in relation to the goal of enhancing Israel's overall strategy of defense. The following are a few suggested assumptions:

- The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is by nature a continuous one, whether the aggression it fosters is acted upon or repressed.
- Because residual hostility will persist between the two peoples for some time to come, Israel faces a high probability of terrorist attacks even if the conflict is settled politically.
- Palestinian demographic growth is much greater than projected Israeli growth.
- The Palestinian economy will continue its dependence on the Israeli economy well into the future. Because it is better to have a satiated neighbor than a hungry one, it is in Israel's interest to improve the Palestinian economy.
- The Israeli government must dramatically reduce the ease with which Palestinian terrorists infiltrate highly populated Israeli areas. Complete prevention of terrorism is both a strategic imperative and an operational goal.
- In accordance with its legitimate right to defend itself, the state of Israel must take radical, yet appropriate, steps to halt terrorist attacks against it.
- In order to deter future acts of Palestinian terrorism, Israel's short-term tactics and operations must be consistent with its long-term defensive strategy.

The IDF's insistence on striving toward 100 percent containment is similar to that seen in commercial aviation, where planes are built to be 100 percent safe. The redundant measures inherent in such a system drastically minimize the risks of total failure and, naturally, hold greater credibility for clients. The IDF's "clients" are the citizens of Israel; in order to ensure their well-being and prevent their morale from plummeting, the military must put forth maximal effort toward protecting them.

Implementing the Seam Zone

The West Bank seam zone project was approved by the Israeli defense cabinet in July 2001 and reapproved in June 2002. As described by

Israel's Ministry of Defense, the purpose of the project is to provide a viable response to the following threats:

- "Continued terrorist attacks including shootings, explosive charges, booby rigged vehicles and suicide bombers.
- "Smuggling of weapons . . . and explosive charges into Israel.
- "Initiation of violent acts and terrorist activity through the assimilation [of Palestinians] into the local Arab population."²

The project will improve the IDF's defensive capabilities through the following means:

- "Prevention of terror and weapons emanating from [the West Bank] into Israel.
- "Prevention and thwarting of uncontrolled passage of pedestrians, cars and cargo from [the West Bank] into Israel.
- "Minimizing transfer of weapons from Israel to the areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority.
- "Prevention of effective shooting against [the] Israeli population and vital infrastructure installations."³

The main professional considerations for the project are as follows:

- terrain, time, and space;
- security necessities for IDF troops;
- maintenance and operational costs; and
- effect on the Palestinian population.

Terrain, time, and space. The nature of the terrain near the boundary between Israel and the West Bank raises several strategic considerations. High ridges run north to south, with streams and riverbeds running down both sides, to the east and west. Immediately west of the boundary are several dense Israeli population centers. Currently, infiltrators and terrorists can readily use the riverbeds to reach these centers. The IDF should take the high ground and establish observation posts in those areas in order to control such routes.

This approach is based on the principle that early detection of potential infiltration will allow for faster response times, thus improving the chances of successful interception. In order to maxi-

mize prevention of terrorist infiltration, the seam zone's designers must take into account the military's physical reaction time to every infiltration scenario.

The IDF also generally prefers to maintain sufficient operational space so that it can confront terrorists as far as possible from Israeli population centers. For instance, if the fence and a given observation post are located a mere fifty meters from an Israeli village, the military has almost no margin for error in responding to an attempted terrorist infiltration. Any one of a daunting variety of factors (e.g., foggy weather, technical difficulties, human error) could prevent early detection and allow an infiltrator to reach a civilian target almost immediately after crossing the fence. In this scenario, the IDF would likely be unable to intercept the infiltrator in time to prevent civilian casualties. In contrast, defensive control over key terrain through a security buffer zone would give the military the flexible space it needs to ensure effective detection, timely interception, and fulfillment of its mission to protect human life.

Security necessities for IDF troops. IDF troops assigned to the new West Bank seam zone must have confidence that the zone will provide them with reasonable protection even as they risk their lives to ensure the safety of Israeli citizens. Without such assurances, both the morale of frontline troops and the deterrent capabilities of the defensive system itself will suffer. Establishing a one-kilometer-wide security buffer zone alongside the electronic fence is the only means of preventing the seam zone from becoming a death trap for Israeli soldiers. For example, if Palestinian farmers were permitted to cultivate land immediately adjacent to the fence, terrorists could easily tunnel underneath the barrier or use ambushes, snipers, or large explosive charges against Israeli troops as well as civilians. Terrorists could even disguise themselves as innocent Palestinian farmers in order to perpetrate such attacks.

Maintenance and operational costs. The electronic fence currently under construction in the West Bank includes an array of sophisticated sensors that require constant maintenance in order to be effective. Permitting Palestinian infrastructure to develop in close proximity to the fence would raise the daily cost of the barrier to exorbitant levels in terms of both the manpower needed for monitoring and the maintenance efforts required to offset damage done by Palestinian terrorists.

This assessment is based on the IDF's experience in Gaza. The near-total destruction of the Gaza fence in late 2000 was itself quite costly. The rebuilding of the fence doubled this cost and also resulted in the deaths of two workers and two soldiers.⁴ Both the operational failure of the Gaza fence and the casualties sustained during reconstruction were at least partly attributable to the absence of a security buffer zone. If the West Bank fence is implemented without an adequate security buffer, then it will be doomed to the same operational failure, exorbitant costs, and loss of life associated with the first Gaza fence.

Effect on the Palestinian population. Over the course of the ongoing hostilities, Israel has repeatedly been accused of harming Palestinian society. Yet, IDF commanders have always attempted to strike a balance between Israel's military needs and the needs of the Palestinian population. With regard to the West Bank seam zone project, the IDF must consider the massive loss of Israeli life and property alongside the daily inconvenience imposed on Palestinians during the implementation of new security measures.

No Palestinian constituency seems willing to enforce obedience to a single, disciplined authority dedicated to dismantling terrorist organizations. Hence, Israel faces a choice between continuing its war against Palestinian terrorism without a defensive shield in the West Bank (in other words, suffering casualties without an effective solution) or shaping new strategic terms that support long-term Israeli interests.

In the meantime, Israel has striven to adopt the most sensitive, humane approach possible with regard to Palestinian families affected by the seam zone project. Indeed, Israeli decisionmaking has been influenced by humanistic considerations geared toward minimizing the suffering of the Palestinian population. Those designing the seam zone have therefore taken into account the topographical layout most suited to avoiding disruptions to the daily lives of Palestinians.⁵

Obstacles and Controversial Issues

Among the various problematic issues associated with implementing the West Bank seam zone project, two in particular stand out. The first is territorial "overcharge," which includes actions ranging from the

creation of security buffer zones to the seizure or destruction of Palestinian property used by terrorists. Israel regards such overcharge as a legitimate military need. The second is the necessity of expanding the seam zone to encircle large Israeli settlements located inside the West Bank. These are the project's most controversial features, which some may regard as obstacles to future political negotiations.

Territorial 'overcharge.' The Israeli Military Advocate General Corps has legally defined the current hostilities between Israel and the Palestinians as an "armed conflict short of war," a definition that the Israeli Supreme Court also subsequently adopted. Although the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is asymmetrical, the scale and intensity of Palestinian terrorist violence justify the above definition, which allows for the application of international laws of war.⁶ The United States adopted a similar approach to fighting terrorism shortly after the al-Qaeda attacks of September 11, 2001; on November 13 of that year, President George W. Bush issued a military order declaring that the attacks had "created a state of armed conflict."⁷

Under the laws of war, civilian objects or locations that are used for military purposes lose their immunity from attack and become legitimate military targets. Various international conventions of war permit the destruction or seizure of private property under appropriate circumstances. The Hague Regulation of 1907 sanctions such measures provided they are "imperatively demanded by the necessities of war."⁸ Similarly, the Geneva Convention states that

attacks shall be limited to military objectives. Insofar as objects are concerned, military objectives are limited to those objects whose nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose total or partial destruction, capture or neutralization, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers a definite military advantage.⁹

Indeed, in many cases, the only feasible way for the IDF to prevent—or at least reduce—terrorism against Israel is to deprive militants of convenient platforms from which to mount these attacks.

Such targets may be destroyed by military means such as bombing or shelling from the ground or air. Even so, the IDF has largely eschewed such means because they would result in considerable loss of life among Palestinian civilians used for cover by terrorists. The

decidedly more humane and measured approach employed by the IDF is to evacuate civilians from suspect sites (e.g., orchards, buildings) before clearing or demolishing these locations using bulldozers or controlled explosives. This approach all but eliminates the risk of civilian casualties.

It must be emphasized that, before any such actions are taken, IDF commanders are required to use the following guidelines:

- A clear military advantage must be obtainable from the destruction of the property in question.
- The amount of damage inflicted must be in proportion to the military advantage to be obtained.
- There must be no feasible alternative to the destruction.
- Where circumstances permit, property owners must be given the right to a hearing before the destruction takes place, including an opportunity to petition the Israeli Supreme Court.
- Every effort must be made to minimize the damage to non-suspect property.
- Individuals on suspect property must be given sufficient warning to allow them time to remove their belongings (unless operational factors preclude this measure; sometimes it is too risky for IDF personnel to give advance warnings of this nature).

In general, the West Bank seam zone project should be implemented on the assumption that terrorists will continue to exploit the proximity of Palestinian and Israeli infrastructure in order to launch attacks against Israelis through a variety of means. For example, on June 17, 2003, a Palestinian terrorist fired on an Israeli family driving on the Trans-Israel Highway, killing seven-year-old Noam Liebovitch. The terrorist had infiltrated the area near the highway by using the thick greenery on the Palestinian side of the existing security barrier as cover, which allowed him to sneak through a culvert underneath the barrier. If the IDF had established a security buffer zone along this area—which would have entailed bulldozing the greenery and relocating the local Palestinian population to the east—the terrorist would likely have been intercepted before he was able to move within firing range of the highway.

Encircling settlements. Measures such as using electronic fences to encircle large Israeli settlements in the West Bank (e.g., Ariel) must

be viewed in the context of the IDF's mission to provide enhanced defense to as many Israelis as possible. In this sense, protecting settlements is not a political issue. Rather, it is a moral issue that rests on the Israeli government's most basic commitment to its citizens. Political negotiations will eventually determine the future boundaries between Israel and the Palestinians; in the meantime, the Israeli population must have an elementary defensive shield against terrorism.

Political Considerations

Among the most controversial issues associated with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in general, and the West Bank seam zone project in particular, is the question of the 1967 Green Line. Upon its establishment, the Green Line was intended as a ceasefire boundary between sovereign states: the Gaza boundary was negotiated between Israel and Egypt, the West Bank boundary between Israel and Jordan. Although former Egyptian president Anwar Sadat initially claimed that he would regain every last bit of Egyptian territory lost in the 1967 war, he was nevertheless willing to cede all of the Gaza Strip to Israel when negotiating the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty in March 1979.¹⁰ Similarly, in 1988, King Hussein of Jordan formally declared that the West Bank was no longer part of the state of Jordan.¹¹ Then, in October 1994, he signed a peace treaty with Israel, further diminishing the significance of the Green Line.¹² As a result of these developments, the Green Line was transformed from an Israeli-Egyptian and Israeli-Jordanian issue into an Israeli-Palestinian issue. As with Egypt and Jordan, Israel can settle this issue with the Palestinians only in the context of comprehensive political negotiations.

The question of whether the Green Line could serve as a future border between Israel and the Palestinian Authority is largely irrelevant to the seam zone project. Unlike the Green Line, which is a political boundary, the seam zone is a security line—a means of preventing terrorists from infiltrating Israeli population centers. Therefore, military considerations must be given top priority in any discussion of the Green Line as a potential route for the security fence.¹³ For example, the topography along the Green Line is not always suitable for the mission of defense, and forcing the seam zone to adhere to it would be unsound from a military standpoint. Moreover, the Green Line of-

ten crosses over Palestinian towns and settlements; placing the seam zone along this route would therefore contradict Israel's humanistic commitment to minimize the suffering of the Palestinian people by avoiding undue disruption of their daily lives.

Despite these facts, Israel's detractors have portrayed the seam zone project as part of a supposed land-grabbing agenda.¹⁴ The issue of borders between conflicting parties has always been a difficult one, particularly given the potential ramifications for indigenous populations. Nevertheless, Israel's need to safeguard its citizens must take precedence for the immediate future; sensitive political issues such as borders can be addressed once political negotiations resume. The intent of this paper has been to approach such issues—however controversial they may be politically—from a professional perspective, analyzing the basic factors related to the security of the people of Israel and the prevention of future bloodshed.

Notes

1. Palestinians refer to their defeat in the war of 1948 as "al-Nakba" (the disaster). In 1947, the Zionist leadership accepted a United Nations resolution calling for partition of the area into a Jewish state and an Arab state. The Palestinian Arabs and the surrounding Arab states rejected the partition and initiated a war that proved difficult for the Palestinians, who lost hundreds of homes and villages and a great deal of property. The refugee camps established at the end of the war by Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria created and nurtured a new culture that embraced the notion of al-Nakba. Indeed, the camps became a symbol of the 1948 defeat, a source of indignation, and a factory for zealous ideology. The memory of the defeat was sustained in the preservation of the camps, conditioning Palestinians to the idea that the right of return must be implemented by armed struggle (or, more recently, by terror). To this day, Palestinians commemorate al-Nakba annually on May 15, instilling each generation with the desire to reclaim their lost property.
2. Israeli Ministry of Defense, "Israel's Security Fence: Operational Concept," updated November 17, 2003. Available online (www.securityfence.mod.gov.il/Pages/ENG/operational.htm).
3. Ibid.
4. On December 28, 2000, Capt. Gadi Marsha and Sgt. Maj. Jonathan Varmelon died when a booby trap exploded near the electronic fence at Sufa Passage. On May 10, 2001, a large explosive charge killed two Romanian workers—Konsantin Startela and Vargil Martines—who were reconstructing a section of the destroyed fence two kilometers south of Kisufim Passage.

5. For specific examples of how the project has been designed to minimize such disruptions, see "Execution Aspects" on the Israeli Ministry of Defense's "Israel's Security Fence" website (www.seamzone.mod.gov.il/Pages/ENG/execution.htm#5).
6. See Office of the IDF Military Advocate General, "The Fight against Terror: The IDF Legal Perspective," June 2002.
7. President, Military Order, "Detention, Treatment, and Trial of Certain Non-Citizens in the War against Terrorism," *Federal Register* 66, no. 222 (November 16, 2001). Available online (www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011113-27.html).
8. *Hague Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land* [Hague IV], section II, chapter I, article 23, October 18, 1907. Available online (www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague04.htm#art23).
9. *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I)*, part IV, section I, chapter III, article 52, June 8, 1977. Available online (www.icrc.org/IHL.nsf/1595a804df7efd6bc125641400640d89/f6c8b9fee14a77fdc125641e0052b079?OpenDocument).
10. The text of the treaty is available online (www.knesset.gov.il/process/docs/egypt_eng.htm).
11. Moshe Zak, *King Hussein Makes Peace: Thirty Years of Secret Talks* (in Hebrew) (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1996), pp. 13, 25, 32, 177–178, 180–182, 190, 206, 209–210.
12. See *ibid.*, pp. 319–346.
13. It should be noted that the United States has long seconded Israel's prioritization of security with regard to the Green Line issue. For example, President Lyndon Johnson's administration asserted that Israel's borders should not necessarily be constructed along the 1967 ceasefire lines. See *ibid.*, pp. 13, 29. See also Mahmoud Riad (former Egyptian foreign minister), *The Struggle for Peace in the Middle East* (London: Quartet Books, 1981), pp. 80–81.
14. "Israel's Security Barrier: A Safety Measure or Land Grab?" *Economist*, October 11, 2003.

Conclusion

On October 4, 2003, while writing the last lines of the manuscript that would eventually be published as this Policy Focus, I heard the announcement that nineteen Israelis had been murdered in Haifa by a suicide bomber from the West Bank city of Jenin. Among the victims were members of my family: Lt. Col. (ret.) Ze'ev Almog; his wife, Ruti; their son, Moshe; and their grandsons Tomer and Assaf.¹ Two more victims died of their wounds in the days following the attack, and many of those injured are still in the hospital, including other members of my family.

This attack was a result of the unbearable ease with which terrorists are able to penetrate Israel from the West Bank. If a strong defensive system had already been in place there, the Haifa bombing would likely have been prevented.

In choosing to fulfill their strategic ends by means of terrorism, the leaders of the Palestinian Authority have opened a Pandora's box that they are unable, or unwilling, to close. Hence, the mission of preventing Palestinian terrorism now rests squarely on Israel's shoulders. Even if political negotiations resume and eventually result in the establishment of a Palestinian state, such a development would not by itself curb the evil forces of extremist Islamic ideology. In fact, those forces will probably continue fostering new waves of terrorism well into the future. The Israeli-Palestinian political process—which includes the visionary Roadmap plan formulated by the Quartet (i.e., the United States, the United Nations, the European Union, and Russia)—depends on the substantial support of a strong defensive system in the West Bank, one capable of foiling terrorist attempts to infiltrate Israel.

The effectiveness of any such system will be determined by several key factors:

- the stringent implementation of security buffer zones, high-tech sensors, and delaying elements;
- the improvement of overlapping intelligence capabilities, from the strategic to the tactical level;

- the implementation of special rules of engagement that give soldiers in the field increased authority to make timely decisions;
- the combination of defensive and offensive capabilities to be carried out by determined soldiers; and
- the creation of appropriate economic models for security buffer zones along the boundaries between Israel and the Palestinian territories.

In general, terrorists strive to develop new tactics that will help them outflank any defensive measure in their path. Accordingly, this paper has emphasized the need for a multilayered defensive system in the West Bank—that is, a comprehensive defensive strategy to guide Israeli military activity, as opposed to a lone physical obstacle such as a fence.

With regard to practical implementation, it seems necessary to balance contentious measures such as security buffer zones and fences with creative compensatory steps aimed at minimizing negative effects on the Palestinian population. For example, Israel could undertake the following measures:

- enhance economic prospects along border areas by encouraging further joint ventures between Israelis and Palestinians;
- create secure, modernized corridors that would facilitate the flow of imports and exports to and from the Palestinian territories for the benefit of both peoples; and
- classify certain security buffer zones as nature reserves.

Economic measures in particular could play a key compensatory role, counterbalancing Israel's uncompromising efforts to protect its citizens. Large-scale infrastructure projects in secured industrial zones could dramatically enhance the performance of the Palestinian economy and improve the standard of living throughout the territories.

Israel's long-term military strategy against terrorism must be based on a comprehensive defensive approach such as the one outlined above. In fact, cumulative deterrence, which encompasses a variety of defensive and offensive foiling measures, may be the only effective preventive strategy against suicide bombers who are guided by a fanatical ideology (assuming such individuals can be deterred at all). Compre-

hensive foiling capabilities are indispensable if Israel is to confront terrorists wherever they are, impede their activities, and inhibit their instigators. The West Bank seam zone project is an important component of this strategy, one that can provide the Israeli military with the space it needs to establish the most effective defensive layout possible. A fully implemented West Bank seam zone, when combined with the Gaza defensive layout, would help optimize operational conditions, enabling the IDF to achieve cumulative tactical victories over the entire arena of conflict.

Given the success of the Gaza defensive layout in preventing terrorist infiltration into Israel, it is imperative that the Israeli government implement a similarly strong, lasting defensive system in the West Bank, one capable of safeguarding the vast majority of the country's six million citizens. Such a system would help eliminate the waves of terrorist attacks whose *raison d'être* is to undermine the existence of Israel.

Note

1. Lt. Col. (ret.) Ze'ev Almog was among Israel's pioneering group of naval submarine commanders. He was a heroic figure in the Israeli Navy, a member of the delegation that accompanied the first submarines to Israel, and commander of the vessel *Livyatan* (twin sister to the famous submarine *Dakar*, which sank on its way to Israel in 1968). Following his retirement from the navy, he served as head of the Israeli Naval Officer Academy in Acre for nearly twenty-three years.

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